

What's in a name?

In recent years, baby-naming has become a massive industry. A quick Google search of, "baby names" will yield over 7 million results! Whether it's most popular names, most enduring names, or most unique names - it's all about the name. There are baby naming books, websites, seminars and consultants. Baby names even make the headlines - think Apple, Moses or Suri.

It's no surprise then, that personalized baby gifts have become all the rage. Millions of dollars each year are spent on customized books, toys, wall plaques and CDs singing your child's name. CDs are especially popular, since long before we can read, we learn to love the sound of our name. To adults and children alike, our own name is one of the most comforting sounds we can hear.

As well as being comforting, a baby's name is crucial in testing auditory development. Infants respond to the sound of their name as early as 3-6 months. At 6-10 months babies will start to seek out the sound source, most often for familiar sounds, like their name, especially if spoken by a parent. Female voices tend to get more response, likely due to the time in the womb. A fetus usually begins to show responsive hearing as early as 16 weeks.

Another powerful sound is of course, the sound of music. For years, music therapy has been used in pediatric hospitals around the world, with stunning results. In one study, Brahms' "Lullaby" was played six times a day for five minutes in a premature baby nursery. Infants there experienced faster weight gain than babies hearing only regular speech on the same schedule.

So it's not surprising that the combination of music AND the child's name would become a hit. Song lyrics tend to be repetitive, which aids with learning and retention. How many childhood concepts did YOU learn with a little help from a song? Most of us in North America still learn the alphabet by singing Twinkle

Twinkle Little Star. Just think of how much more engaging the experience is when the child's name becomes part of the song!

As a gift, customized CDs have become an alternative to the usual books, toys and clothes. And with a unique gift, we're spared the dreaded necessity of the gift-receipt! For a new-born, the baby gets to hear his or her name sung as a lullaby, adding that personal touch to the song. And toddlers get a huge kick out of hearing a song being sung, just for them! This is especially true for CDs with interactive lyrics like the Songs Just For Me CD. ([www.justforme.com](http://www.justforme.com)) Unlike most personalized CDs, this collection, aimed at kids 0-5, features popular, recognizable tunes, rather than "generic" unknown melodies. This familiarity helps the child latch on to the song, and start the learning process more quickly. Modern musical arrangements also make the CD more parent-friendly, so you don't mind that your child wants to hear it again and again.

With all the time and effort parents put in to naming their child, it's no wonder why name-based gifts have become so popular. So much for, "A rose, by any other name..."