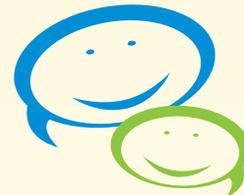


Your 8 Year Old!

A parent's guide to creating language-rich environments



Talk Box

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Your 8 year old-walking and talking in other people's shoes!

Your 8 year old is learning so many new things from talking with his friends and family, from reading, from classroom discussions, and from family outings. He talks about what happened to him and compares and connects that to what happened to other people. He is beginning to think about what he says. He changes what he says to make it more clear. He changes what he says if he is talking to a friend or a teacher. He even changes what he says depending on how someone else feels. He is walking and talking in other people's shoes!

Everyday and everyway – How children learn language

Children learn language every single day and in almost everything they do! They learn new words, new sentences, and how to play with language. Any activity that you and your child do together is a chance to learn! To help your child develop good talking and listening skills, try the following tips in your own language...



Talking tips:

- **Use different types of sentences** when you talk to your child. For example, instead of saying, "Please eat your lunch," you could say, "Why don't you eat your lunch?"

- **Add joining words** like *instead of*, *or*, *if*, and *until* that connect your child's sentences together. For example, if she says, "I want the banana. I don't want the apple," you could say, "So you want the banana instead of the apple?"

- **Use new words** when you talk to your child. Explain what the words mean. For example, you might say, "We need to wash the dishes **frequently** so that we don't run out of them. We need to wash the dishes **many times** during the week." Use these new words many times.



Listening tips:

- **Talk about words that look or sound the same but mean something different.** For example, "*Petal* is a part of a flower. *Pedal* is the place where we put our foot on a bike."

- **Teach your child different ways to remember** what he hears. Ask him to repeat what he hears out loud. Later, he can practice saying what he hears silently to himself. You can also talk to him about making pictures in his mind of the things he needs to remember.

- Teach your child to **ask for help** when he doesn't understand what he hears. Tell your child to ask questions or to ask people to repeat what they said, to make sure he understands. For example, if he doesn't understand a new word, he could say, "I didn't understand that word. Can you tell me what it means?"



Activities to try...

Children learn by doing!



There are many activities that you can do with your child to help him learn language. You probably do some of these already! Use the **everyday and everyway** tips when you try these activities:

- **Play games** like *I Spy*, *Taboo Junior*, *Outburst Junior*, *Guess Who?*, *Pictionary Junior*, *Charades*, *Cranium Junior*, *Three for Me*, *word searches*, and *crossword puzzles*. Your child will learn new words and get practice describing things. Plus, these games are lots of fun for the whole family!
- Play **simple memory games** like *I Went on a Trip*. One person starts by saying, "I went on a trip and I packed a shirt." Take turns repeating what was said and then add something new. For example, "I went on a trip and I packed a shirt and a towel." Keep going until someone cannot remember all of the things in order. This game can be played in the car, at home, or on a family outing.

- Play **word games** with your child. Ask him to name as many things as he can from a group. For example, ask him to name things that you see at the park, at the beach, or in a classroom. To make it trickier, put a time limit on it, like 1 minute!

Children learn by reading!



Reading and language go together. Reading can help your child learn to talk and listen. Talking and listening help make reading and writing easier. All of these skills are important in school. Here are some tips to keep reading fun:

- Even if your child is reading books on his own, **continue to read out loud** with your child.
- Ask your child to **guess what the story is about** before reading it. Look for clues in the title and the pictures on the front page. Read the first page and then make more guesses about what the story is about. Ask questions like, "What do you think will happen next? Why? How do you know?"
 - After you read a story together, ask your child to **retell the story in his own words** to you or to another family member.
 - **Talk about the ending of the story.** Ask your child questions like, "What did you like most about the story?", "What did you learn from the story?", or "What would you do if you had the same problem?"
 - After reading the story, talk about **what you think happened after the story ended.**
 - Ask your child to **make pictures in his mind** of what he reads.

Want more ideas for fun language games? Read the *Good Times With Games* newsletter.





What to expect in speech and language development

Children learn different words based on their own experiences and they communicate differently because of their personalities. Even though they develop speech and language at their own pace, they do learn the same things in a similar order.

Most 8 year olds:

Talking

- say all of their speech sounds correctly and are easy to understand
- use connecting words like *instead of, or, if, and until* (*We can't go inside **until** it opens.*)
- use words like *could, would, and should* when they talk about their favourite books, movies, and things that happen
- use different types of sentences, such as *The cat chased the dog, The dog was chased by the cat, and Was the dog chased by the cat?*
- use questions that start with *Why don't you...*
- describe things using many different describing words (*A horse is a type of **animal** that is found on a **farm**. It is **large** and has a **mane**. You put a **saddle** on it and **ride** it.*)

Listening/Understanding

- know who the pronouns are talking about in a sentence (*My **sister's** friend gave a present to **her** on **her** birthday.*)
- know that sometimes they can't remember everything without doing something to help themselves, like saying it over and over or making a picture of it in their mind
- understand words that tell *position, order, time, quantity, and space* and use them to help understand the things they learn in school, like in science class. For example, a teacher may say, "**After** you add **some** of the baking soda, make sure you stir the mixture **frequently**."

Social Skills

- stay on topic when talking to a friend or when talking in a group
- work towards solving a problem in a group
- understand that their friends may have different opinions or ideas



Remember, 8 year olds still make some mistakes. It's alright if they have trouble:

- talking about the most important thing rather than the details.
- coming up with different meanings for one word.
- reading between the lines or coming up with hidden meanings in what they hear or read.

Want more information on speech and language? Read the Talk Box Resource List.

When to get help

You should be concerned if your 8 year old:

- has trouble saying speech sounds
- is hard to understand
- uses only short sentences when talking
- makes mistakes in grammar
- pauses or hesitates a lot when she talks
- has trouble remembering what she has been told to do
- has trouble answering questions
- has trouble clearly telling you what happened in a story or at school
- has trouble with the rules of conversation, such as taking turns, staying on topic, or letting you know that she does not understand

Where to get help

Are you concerned about your child's speech and language development? Speech-language pathologists can help. To find one in your area...

- contact your local health unit
- call Health Link Alberta at:
 - Calgary area: 403-943-LINK (5465)
 - Edmonton area: 780-408-LINK (5465)
 - Toll free: 1-866-408-LINK (5465)
- go to www.healthlinkalberta.ca



Go to www.parentlinkalberta.ca for more Talk Box ideas.

It is never too late to help your child with speech and language development.