



Talk Box

A parent's guide to creating language-rich environments

How to use the Talk Box

Introduction...

Welcome to the Talk Box! The Talk Box was put together by speech-language pathologists to share ideas about creating language-rich environments for preschool and school-age children. It emphasizes that the most important part of language learning is the interaction between children and their parents.

Target audience...

The Talk Box is designed for parents of children from birth to 12 years of age. It can also be used by other family members and those who work with parents and children such as Parent Link centre staff, early childhood professionals, teachers, preschool teachers, public health nurses, and speech-language pathologists. It is written in a parent-friendly way, using plain language.

Why parents are important...

Children learn language everyday. They learn about their world by seeing, touching, listening, tasting, and doing. Parents play an important role in their child's speech and language development. They help their child learn language by talking about what their child is doing, touching, tasting, seeing, and hearing. They also help by playing and doing everyday things *together*. Parents do not need to have fancy toys or plan special activities. Using everyday activities and basic toys creates language-rich environments. Parents should use their own language with their child.

Parents are encouraged to use their own language with their child.



Parents play an important role in their child's speech and language development.

Contents and descriptions...

The Talk Box shares ideas and activities for creating language-rich environments. It has everyday tips, information about what to expect in speech and language development, when to get help, and where to get help. This information is shared in newsletters, activity sheets, and information sheets that can be reproduced and handed out to parents. In the future, a DVD will be included which also shows ideas, activities, and what to expect.

The Talk Box consists of 2 boxes. One box is for preschool children from birth to 5 years and one box is for school-aged children from 5 to 12 years.

What's in the Talk Box...

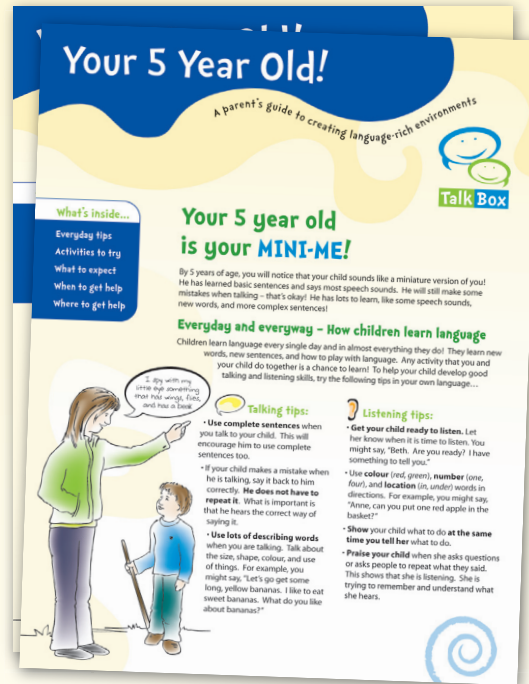
- **How to use the Talk Box:** A brief description of what is included in the Talk Box, why it was included, and how to use it.
- **Newsletters:** Newsletters for each age with everyday tips, activities to try, what to expect, when to get help, and where to get help.
- **Speech Sounds:** A checklist outlining the development of speech sounds and what to expect at different ages.
- **Where to Get Help:** A card with information on how to make a referral if a parent is concerned about speech and language development.
- **Learning More Than One Language:** This gives information to families that speak a language different from English, or families that use more than one language. It reminds parents that all of the tips and activities in the Talk Box can be used in any language. It also suggests that it is okay for parents to use their own language at home.
- **Resource List:** A list of additional books, DVDs, videos, and web sites with more information about speech and language development. There is one for parents of preschool children and one for parents of school-aged children.
- **Poster:** A poster that can be put up to encourage parents to ask about the Talk Box.

- **CD:** PDF files for all the written material. These files can be easily printed to replace copies that are given out to parents. There is also a file on the CD called How to Create a Talk Box. This give you ideas on how to store and organize the resources.



The Preschool Talk Box also has...

- **Monthly activity sheets:** Additional ideas and activities for each month. A wall file holder is included to hang up and display monthly activity sheets. Parents can take these sheets home. A label for the wall file holder is also included.
- **19 Toy Cards:** Cards with suggestions of different ways to use toys to create language-rich environments. The toy cards can be displayed in Parent Link toy lending libraries, play area centers, or in pamphlet racks for parents to take home.
- **Talking and Listening:** A checklist outlining the development of language skills and what to expect from birth to 5 years.



The School Talk Box also has...

- **Good Times With Games:** A list of game ideas and commercially available games that can be used to create language-rich environments. A wall file holder is included to display this activity sheet. A label is also included.



Using everyday activities and basic toys creates language rich environments.



How to use the Talk Box...

The Talk Box is designed for parents and those who work with parents and children, such as Parent Link centre staff, childcare workers, teachers, and public health nurses.

Parents are encouraged to look through the Talk Box on their own. The poster can be displayed, encouraging parents to ask about the Talk Box. Parents can also ask someone to go through the box with them.

Staff members are encouraged to become familiar with the contents of the Talk Box. This will help them know what to suggest when parents ask them about the Talk Box. Here are some possible scenarios when parents:

- Ask for information regarding speech and language development, guide them to the newsletters in the Talk Box. There is one newsletter for each age with the exception of ages 10-12 years.
- Ask for ideas on what to do at home, guide them to the newsletters, the monthly activity sheets, and the games sheet.
- Seem unsure about how to talk with their child, guide them to the toy cards and the newsletters.
- Ask about what games or toys are good for their children, guide them to the game list or the toy cards.
- Want to learn more about speech and language development or get more ideas for activities, guide them to the resource lists.
- Are not comfortable reading in English, read through the material with them. The DVD will also be an ideal way to share information. This will be available in the future.
- Have concerns regarding their child's speech and language development, give them a newsletter, one of the checklists, and the referral card.

The Talk Box is not meant to replace a speech and language assessment. If parents are concerned about their child's speech and language development, they should contact a speech-language pathologist.

Who we are...

The Talk Box was designed by a group of speech-language pathologists from the Capital Health and the Calgary Health Regions. The project was funded by the Alberta Children and Youth Initiative.



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