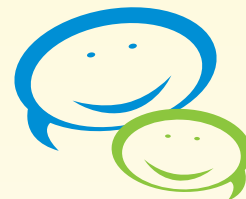


Your 9 Year Old!

A parent's guide to creating language-rich environments



Talk Box

What's inside...

Everyday tips

Activities to try

What to expect

When to get help

Where to get help

Your 9 year old is finally getting to the point!

Your 9 year old is learning to have fun with language! She knows that words and sentences can sometimes mean different things and even have hidden meanings. She thinks about how to remember what she hears. She knows when to ask for help. Your child's stories are getting longer and more creative. She also realizes that sometimes getting to the point is more important than telling you everything she knows!

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:

- **Repeat what your child says** using different words that mean the same thing. For example, if she says, "I'm so cold today," you could say, "Are you **frozen**?"
- When you tell a story or talk about movies, books, and TV shows, start by **telling the main idea** of the story. For example, "I saw a great movie on Saturday. It was about a man who found a time machine."
 - When you watch TV shows and movies, or read books, **guess what you think will happen next**. For example, "I think the man who found the time machine is going to get stuck in the future." Ask your child to guess what will happen next. Ask questions like, "What clues make you think the story will end that way?"



Listening tips:

- When you talk, use words and phrases that **help your child see or picture what you're talking about**. For example, use phrases like *His feet were as big as boats*, *I'm drowning in money*, or *She sings at the top of her lungs*. Then tell your child what you meant – *He had really large feet*, *I have a lot of money*, or *She sings loudly*. Use these sayings many times around your child.
- **Teach your child different ways to remember things**. Show her how to write short notes, jot down important words, or draw quick pictures to help her remember what she hears and what she has to do. Remind her to repeat things over and over again, and make pictures in her mind of the things she needs to remember.
- Have your child listen to the radio, CDs, and TV. **Ask her questions that will help her to listen more closely**. Ask questions like *Who has the highest voice?*, *Who spoke the most?*, *How old are the people?*, or *Is the story real or make believe?*

What was the movie about?

It was about a penguin who was lost in the Antarctica.



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 a quick drawing game when you read a story.** Take turns drawing cartoons or stick people of what happened in a story. Read one or two lines of the story while your child quickly draws what you read – then switch! When you finish the story, take turns retelling it using the pictures that you have drawn. This is a fun way to practice making pictures in your mind and a great way to help you remember things.
- **Play word games** in which you and your child come up with as many different meanings as possible for a word. For example, the word *trunk* means *the back of a car, the long, brown part of a tree that sticks in the ground, or the nose of an elephant.* The word *rock* means *to rock in a chair, rock music, a rock that you throw, or rock hard.* See who can come up with the most meanings and keep score!
- Ask your child to **name two words that sound the same, but have different meanings.** They may be spelled

I know! A trunk can be the back of a car, the long brown part of a tree, or...the nose of an elephant. I get three points!



differently, such as *blue* and *blew*. Ask him to tell you what each word means. Give points for each correct set of words. This game will also help reading comprehension and spelling.

- When you're working around the house, out walking, or out doing errands, make up a short story about what you are doing. Ask your child to give the story a name. This type of game teaches children to listen for the main idea. It also teaches concentration and comprehension. You can also talk about why one title might be better than another!

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:

- Encourage your child to **read to his younger brothers and sisters.** Older children like to show off what they know to other people in their family.
- Encourage your child to read things like menus, signs, labels on food items, movie signs, billboards, and cartoons in the newspaper. Take **everyday opportunities for reading** when you are out and about!
- **Pick a special time for reading** that is outside of homework time. Let your child see you reading when you have spare time!
- Encourage your child to **tell you about the book in one sentence.** For example, "This book is about a ___ who ___".
- **Read books full of riddles, jokes, and sayings with hidden meanings.** Talk about how we can play with words and language and make unusual comparisons to make things clear. A great way to learn sayings like, *You can't teach an old dog new tricks,* is to draw them or act them out with your child.

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 9 year olds:

Talking

- say all of their speech sounds correctly and are easy to understand
- speak in long, complete sentences and use words like *if, now, though, and anyways*
- explain the different meanings of words (*a trunk is the back of a car or the nose of an elephant*)
- tell riddles, jokes, and word plays
- tell you opposites (*black/white, hard/soft*), synonyms (*sad/upset*), and subcategories (*animals-jungle animals, forest animals, sea animals*) of different words
- give the function or the use of a word when asked what it means (*A saw is something that we use to cut wood.*)
- tell the main idea of a story or the most important idea of what they learned

Listening/Understanding

- understand that words have several meanings
- understand idioms or sayings (*hard as a rock, blind as a bat, raining cats and dogs*)
- understand that some words have many different meanings and can be used to describe feelings (*cold, bitter, blue*)
- understand that sometimes they need to do different things to help them remember information like repeating it over and over, picturing it in their mind, writing it down, or drawing pictures

Social Skills

- change what they have said by repeating it, rewording it, or by adding information to it so that other people understand
- makes adult-like guesses or predictions about what will happen in a story
- begin to laugh at themselves when they realize they have made a mistake, or said something strange

Remember, 9 year olds still make some mistakes. It's alright if they have trouble:

- using words like *however, therefore, or whenever* correctly in their sentences.
- using figures of speech or phrases with hidden meanings in their own speech.



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



When to get help

You should be concerned if your 9 year old:

- has trouble saying any 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...

- call your local health unit
- call Health Link Alberta :
 - 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.