

# Your 5 Year Old!

A parent's guide to creating language-rich environments



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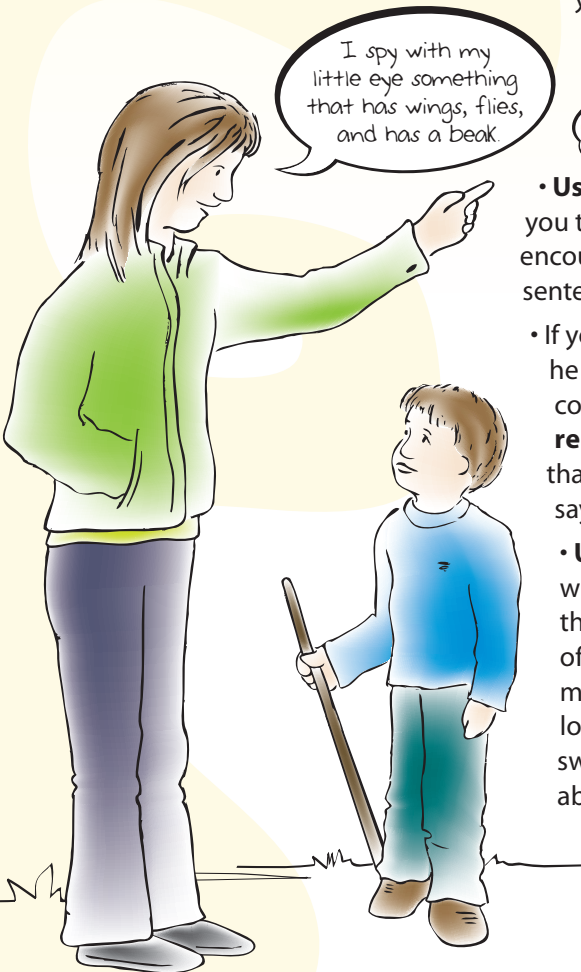
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## Your 5 year old is your **MINI-ME!**

By 5 years of age, you will notice that your child sounds like a miniature version of you! He has learned basic sentences and says most speech sounds. He will still make some mistakes when talking – that's okay! He has lots to learn, like some speech sounds, new words, and more complex sentences!

### 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...



I spy with my little eye something that has wings, flies, and has a beak.

#### Talking tips:

- **Use complete sentences** when you talk to your child. This will encourage him to use complete sentences too.
- If your child makes a mistake when he is talking, say it back to him correctly. **He does not have to repeat it.** What is important is that he hears the correct way of saying it.
- **Use lots of describing words** when you are talking. Talk about the size, shape, colour, and use of things. For example, you might say, "Let's go get some long, yellow bananas. I like to eat sweet bananas. What do you like about bananas?"

#### Listening tips:

- **Get your child ready to listen.** Let her know when it is time to listen. You might say, "Beth. Are you ready? I have something to tell you."
- Use **colour** (*red, green*), **number** (*one, four*), and **location** (*in, under*) words in directions. For example, you might say, "Anne, can you put one red apple in the basket?"
- **Show your child what to do at the same time you tell her** what to do.
- **Praise your child** when she asks questions or asks people to repeat what they said. This shows that she is listening. She is trying to remember and understand what she hears.



# 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:

- **Go on field trips** to the zoo, museum, grocery store, or playground. Taking your child to different places lets you use different words.
- Involve your child in games and activities. **Activities with groups of children**, such as swimming or playing at the playground, help him learn how to listen in a group, make friends, and take turns. Games give your child a chance to practice waiting and taking turns.
- **Play games like *I Spy* and *Simon Says***. These games help your child listen, use describing words, group things together, and take turns.

## 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:

- **Read books with your child every day.** It's okay to read the same book every night for several weeks if your child likes it!
- Choose books that have **lots of pictures** and not too many words on a page. Have fun talking about the pictures.
- **Let your child finish a sentence** in a familiar story. For example, if you are reading *The Three Little Pigs*, you could read "Little pig, little pig, let me come in." Let your child finish with "Not by the hair of my chinny chin chin."
- Choose books that have **lots of rhyming words**. Point out the words that rhyme by saying, "Hop, pop. These words rhyme. They sound the same at the end."
- Talk about how longer words, like *elephant*, are made up of smaller parts or syllables (*e + le + phant*). Clap, tap, or stomp out the parts of the word 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 5 year olds:

#### Talking

- say most speech sounds correctly and are easy to understand
- speak in sentences that are 5 to 6 words long
- ask questions using *who*, *what*, *where*, and *why*
- use the present, future, and past tenses (*She walks to the park. She will walk to the park. She walked to the park.*)
- retell a story by naming the characters and talking about what happened
- use different types of words, like action (*kick*) and describing words (*yellow*, *cold*)

#### Listening/Understanding

- follow 3 directions at a time
- understand many concepts, such as *colours*, *location words*, and *numbers*
- put things into basic groups, such as *fruits*, *animals*, and *toys*
- understand most adult conversation, including sayings like *Time to hit the sack*
- understand and answer most questions appropriately
- like to listen to rhymes and make up their own rhymes

#### Social Skills

- make eye contact with other children and adults
- take turns and wait for their turn during activities
- sit quietly and listen to the teacher during circle time
- say *hi* or *hello* and *goodbye* appropriately

Some 5 year olds may still have trouble:

- saying the sounds *sh*, *ch*, *j*, *s*, *z*, *v*, *r*, and *th*. The *s* and *z* sounds may be *lisps*.
- asking questions that start with *when*.
- understanding the words *above* and *below*.

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



## When to get help

You should be concerned if your child...

- speaks only in very short sentences
- makes many mistakes when talking in sentences
- is hard to understand
- has trouble following directions
- has trouble understanding what people say
- uses vague words like *stuff* or *thing* and points instead of using the right word



## 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](http://www.healthlinkalberta.ca)



Go to [www.parentlinkalberta.ca](http://www.parentlinkalberta.ca) for more Talk Box ideas.

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