

Your 10 to 12 Year Old

Speech and Language Tips



10 to 12 year olds talk about talking

From 10 to 12 years of age, you'll notice small but important changes in the way your child is talking. They use bigger words that they learn at school and ask questions about what they hear. They tell the main things that happened, tell why something happened, and retell stories using the important points. In short, they sound a lot like an adult.

How children learn language

Children learn language every 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.

Try these tips in your language

Talking tips

- **Ask your child about their day.** Say, "I'd like to hear about your day." Help them include all the important parts by asking questions, like "Who was there? What happened? When was this? or How did you feel?"
- **Ask your child what they think about different topics.** It can be something as simple as, "Do you like pizza? Why or why not?" Ask something that's a bit harder, like "If you were invisible, what would you do?"
- **Relate new words to something your child has done before.** For example, "Remember when we were at the lake and we saw those big, fluffy, white clouds? Those are called cumulous clouds."

Listening tips

- **Use key words to help your child remember directions.** For example, "You have 3 jobs to do after school. First, put your backpack away. Second, do some reading. And third, set the table for dinner."
- **Show your child what to do when you don't hear their whole message.** Tell them why you missed what they said. "I couldn't hear you over the music." Repeat the part you heard, like "You said you went somewhere?" Then ask them to repeat what you missed. Ask your child to use these same steps when they miss what others have said.
- **Talk about how people feel based on what their faces look like.** Use many different feeling words like blue, bitter, and sweet. Explain what these words mean.



For more information scan this QR code or visit: ahs.ca/talkbox

Activities to try

Children learn by doing

- **Play If I Gave You 3 Things.** Take turns naming 3 objects, like a piece of chalk, a box of vitamins, and a tumbler. Each person will say which object they would return and what they would do with the other 2 things. This helps your child learn how to explain the choices they make. To make it trickier, name something that your child doesn't know. They will have to ask what it is first. This will help them learn new words.
- **Play I'll Give You a Point.** Ask your child to find a new word in a TV show or commercial. Ask them to write it down. You may have to help with the spelling. After the show is over, talk about what the word means. Look it up. Challenge them to use the new word in a sentence. Give a point for each sentence they make up.
- **Start a story.** When you're driving in the car or waiting for the bus, say 1 part of a sentence at a time. Ask your child to finish your sentence and start the next one. Keep adding to each other's sentences, trying to keep the same people and thoughts, until you have a whole story. This game will help both of you practice good listening, memory, storytelling, and vocabulary. The story can become really silly and it's lots of fun.

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 others.** Like younger siblings, cousins, or friends.
- **Read when you're out.** Encourage your child to read menus, signs, labels on food items, movie signs, billboards, and cartoons.
- **Ask them to tell you what happened in a book.** After your child has finished reading, ask them what they liked about the book and what they didn't like.
- **Talk about how the people in the story felt.** Talk about what they said and the words that were used to describe their feelings.



What to expect

Children's experiences and personality will shape how they communicate. However, they do learn the same things in a similar order.

Most 10 to 12 year olds:

Talking

- tell you what a word means by saying the group or category it belongs to (an apple is a fruit, a truck is a vehicle)
- use the connecting words if, now, though, anyways, otherwise, anyway, therefore, and however
- give their opinion
- tell and write stories in an order that makes sense

Understanding

- use key words (main idea) and connecting words (if, however) to help them understand
- remember information using strategies, such as picturing the information in their minds, breaking information into smaller chunks, and repeating the information
- use what they already know to help them understand what they're learning

Social skills

- change how they talk depending on where they are and who they are talking to, such as talking to a teacher at school, talking to you at home, or talking to friends
- know how people are feeling from what they hear and what they see
- know when they weren't understood and know how to fix it

10 to 12 year olds are not done learning language. As they get older, they are still learning more complex words and sentences, and ways to play with words and language.



When to get help

Reach out for help if your child:

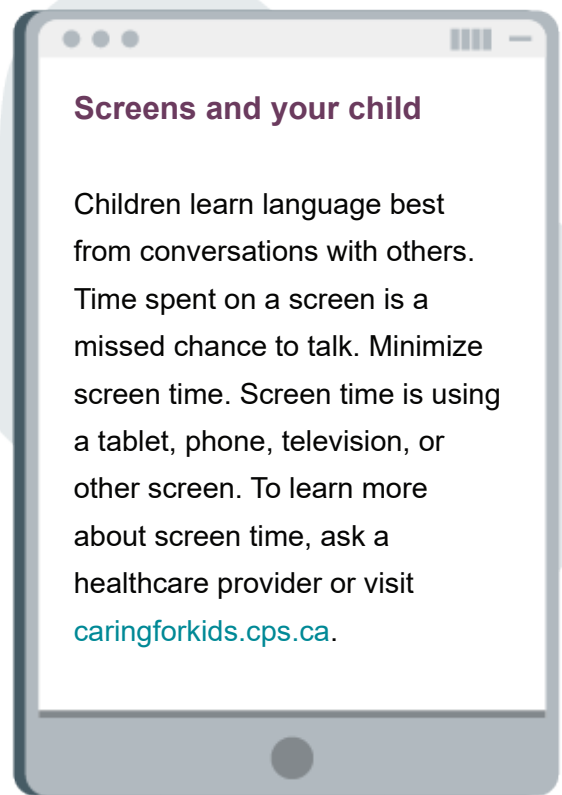
- has trouble saying speech sounds
- is difficult to understand
- uses short sentences when talking
- has difficulty telling you what happened in a story or at school
- has trouble with the rules of conversation, such as taking turns, staying on topic, or letting you know that they do not understand

Where to get help

Are you concerned about your child's speech and language development? Speech-language pathologists can help. For more information, visit ahs.ca/pedrehab or call Health Link at 811.

For more ideas:

- curriculum.learnalberta.ca/parents/en/home
- schools.healthiertogether.ca/en/
- alberta.ca/family-resource-networks



Some children use apps or devices to communicate, which is called Augmentative and Alternative Communication. These programs are designed to support communication and are not considered screen time.

