

# Your 7 Year Old

Speech and Language Tips



## 7 year olds are chatter boxes

By 7 years of age, your child is picking up speed when it comes to talking. They use sentences to tell stories and talk about their day, the things they see, and what they know. Some 7 year olds are very chatty, especially when you talk about something they're interested in.

## 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

- **When your child tells you a story or what happened that day, add words like then, so, and because.** This helps your child bring ideas together using these connecting words.
- **Talk about what your child did each day.** Help them include the important details and organize their thoughts by asking “Wh-” questions: who, what, where, when, why, and how. For example, ask questions like, “What game did you play at recess today? How do you play that game?”
- **Talk about what you do with different objects in your home.** Talk about what groups they belong to. For example, ask your child what they need to sweep the floor (a broom) and what group it belongs to (things that clean). Talk about what else belongs in that group (mop, sponge, vacuum).

### Listening tips

- **After you tell your child to do something, ask them to repeat what you said.** This will help them remember what they hear and what they need to do. For example, you could say, “What are you going to do?”
- **When reading a story together, help your child make a picture in their mind of what is happening.** Share what you see in your mind. Use lots of describing words, such as big, beautiful, and colourful. Making pictures in your mind helps you remember what you hear and read.
- **When reading or watching TV together, talk about what happened.** This gives your child practice listening and remembering what they just heard and saw.



For more information scan this QR code or visit: [ahs.ca/talkbox](https://ahs.ca/talkbox)



## Activities to try

### Children learn by doing

- **Practice who, what, when, where, and why questions.** Before you read a book or tell a story, tell them you're going to ask them questions after. When you're done, take turns asking questions about the book or story that start with these words. This will help your child understand what they hear and organize what they say.
- **Ask your child how something will feel before they touch it.** For example, ask how a coconut or a pinecone might feel. This is a great way to learn new words, like rough, jagged, fluffy, woolly, and mushy.
- **Take turns giving each other 2 to 3 directions to follow.** You can play this game in the kitchen, in the car, or just about anywhere. For example, when you're in the car, you might ask your child to look out the right window and name 1 thing they see, look out the left window and name 1 thing they see, and then clap their hands 4 times. This is even more fun when your child gives you directions to follow.

### 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:

- **Make sure that your child is reading books that are interesting to them and that are at their reading level.** If a book is too hard, your child may get frustrated and give up. If a book is too easy, it may not be challenging enough. If your child has trouble reading or understanding more than 5 words on the first page, it's too hard for them. Ask your child's teacher or a librarian for a list of books that are right for your child.
- **Encourage your child to reread books that they love.** This helps your child speak smoothly, understand new words, and use expression when they're reading out loud.
- **Talk to your child about what was funny in a story, how the people in the story felt, and why things happened in the story.** Ask your child what they think will happen next and why they think it will happen. Continue to read out loud to your child. Let your child choose books that interest them.



## 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 7 year olds:

#### Talking

- say all of their speech sounds correctly and are easy to understand
- speak in sentences 7 to 8 words long and use connecting words (because, so, then, before, and after)
- tell you what you do with an object (you eat an apple) and what group it belongs to (an apple is a type of fruit)
- tell complete stories that have many details

#### Understanding

- are beginning to understand simple metaphors and similes, like soft as a pillow
- learn new words by listening to books being read aloud, by talking about these new words with an adult, and by using them in everyday activities
- understand how things are different and how they are the same

#### Social skills

- are learning that respect and personal space (not standing too close) are important
- know how to start, maintain, and end a conversation
- are learning how to work with a partner

### Most 7 year olds:

- read a story and retell it in the correct order
- tell you the middle sound in a short word (cat has the a sound in the middle)
- tell you the sounds in a short word (dog has the sounds d, o, g)
- play with words by taking away one sound (take away the d in dog, it says og)



## 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](https://ahs.ca/pedrehab) or call Health Link at 811.

### For more ideas:

- [curriculum.learnalberta.ca/parents/en/home](https://curriculum.learnalberta.ca/parents/en/home)
- [schools.healthiertogether.ca/en/](https://schools.healthiertogether.ca/en/)
- [alberta.ca/family-resource-networks](https://alberta.ca/family-resource-networks)

### Screens and your child

Children learn language best from conversations with others. Time spent on a screen is a missed chance to talk. Minimize screen time. Screen time is using a tablet, phone, television, or other screen. To learn more about screen time, ask a healthcare provider or visit [caringforkids.cps.ca](https://caringforkids.cps.ca).

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.

