



This is a general guide to how children develop speech and language between 5 and 7 years.

Often by 5 or 6 years, children have good communication skills. They are better at using language in different ways e.g. discussing ideas or giving opinions.

Children develop skills at different rates, but beyond 5 years, usually children will:

- Focus on one thing for longer without being reminded
- Rely less on pictures and objects to learn new words
- Use their language skills in learning to read, write and spell
- Learn that the same word can mean two things, such as 'orange' the fruit and 'orange' the colour
- Learn that different words can mean the same thing such as 'minus' and 'take away'
- Understand feelings and descriptive words like 'carefully', 'slowly' or 'clever'
- Use language for different purposes such as asking questions or persuading
- Share and discuss more complex ideas
- Use language in a range of social situations.

How to Support Your Child

There are lots of things you can do to encourage children at this stage:

- Help them to learn new words, such as words to do with positions, times and size.
- Make time to talk about your day
- Give a child time to talk to you
- Ask open questions like 'tell me something you liked about today'.

This is a guide to how children develop speech and language between 7 and 11 years.

Speech, language and communication development is a gradual process. Children develop skills at different rates but beyond 8 years, usually children will:

- Use language to predict and draw conclusions
- Use long and complex sentences
- Understand other points of view and show that they agree or disagree
- Understand comparative words e.g. 'it was earlier than yesterday'
- Keep a conversation going by giving reasons and explaining choices
- Start conversations with adults and children
- Understand and use passive sentences where the order of the words can still be confusing for younger children e.g. "the thief is chased by the policeman"

How to Support Your Child

Good communication is two-way and requires good listening skills. To help a child, you will need to demonstrate good listening skills yourself. Make sure that you have time for this in your day. You may need to explain words that a child still does not know.

A child's vocabulary will be growing. Help them to understand new words they learn by talking about their meaning. Make sure they are not afraid to ask if they don't understand a word. If you don't know the exact meaning of a word - look it up in a child-friendly dictionary such as Collins Co-Build.

Just by having good conversations with children, you are supporting their language. So, talk to them. Ask them how their day was and how their friends are. Hopefully they don't need too much encouragement to talk. Try to encourage conversations rather than just you doing the talking.

This is a guide to how children develop speech and language 11 + years.

Language development at this stage is a gradual process. Changes still take place but they are harder to see. Children need to learn to develop relationships and join in social activities on their own.

What to expect between the ages of 11 and 14

At this stage children will:

- Use longer sentences; usually 7-12 words or more
- Build their sentences using a range of conjunctions or joining words, such as 'meanwhile', 'however', 'except' so that they can convey complex ideas
- Know how to use sarcasm. Know when others are being sarcastic to them
- Be able to change topic well in conversations
- Use more subtle and witty humour
- Show some understanding of idioms, such as "put your money where your mouth is!"
- Know that they talk differently to friends than to teachers and be able to adjust this easily
- Understand and use slang terms with friends. They keep up with rapidly changing 'street talk'.

How to Support Your Child

There are lots of things you can do to encourage young people at this stage:

- Encourage opportunities to talk without making them feel under pressure
- Use opportunities for chatting, like mealtimes
- Give everyone a chance to talk about their day, including you
- Help by explaining any words or phrases that they don't understand
- Show that you are interested by making time to listen.

See more at the 'Ican' website.