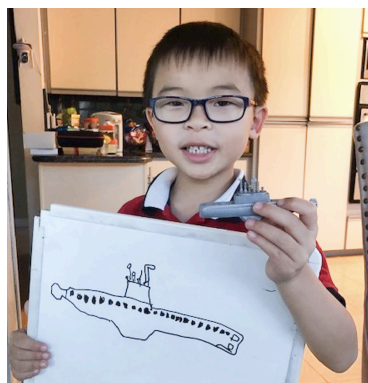


## Tips for Helping Your School-Aged Child with Language

As a parent, you play a critical role in your child's language development because you can support your child's talking and understanding during daily routines. Here are some simple ways to help your elementary school-aged child with language.

**Talk to your child:** As you do everyday activities, turn off the television, put away your cell phone, and talk to your child about what you are doing. Avoid asking "test" questions (e.g., "What is this?"). Describe what you are doing and what your child is doing. ("This water is so warm and soapy. After we finish rinsing the dishes, let's dry them together.") If you are multilingual, it is important that you speak your native language with your child. When you speak your native language, you will speak more with your child, support their overall language growth, and give them the gift of bilingualism.



**Limit screen time:** The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends 1 hour or less of screen time for kids aged 5 and under and less than two hours of screen time a day for kids aged 6-18 years. When it comes to learning language, nothing is more effective, important, or valuable than human interaction. Children learn through experience and interacting with others. Increased screen time reduces time when a child can be listening, talking, creating, drawing, or playing with others.

**Expand your child's language:** If your child is looking at something or says something about what they are interested in, you can expand what they say, adding new information or new language: Child: "Look, bird!" Parent: "Yes, there's a woodpecker! Look at it pecking the tree! It eats bugs in the tree."



**Go on outings.** A trip to the zoo, the park, the beach, or even the grocery store will open up a whole new world for your child. They'll want to learn the names of all those fascinating new things they have seen and experienced! Talk to your child about the outing before you go, while you are there, and afterwards. Talk about photos of your adventures together to support meaning.



**Read books together:** Reading aloud to children has been shown to be effective in helping children increase their vocabulary and understanding of story structure. The amount of time a parent spends reading with their child is also a predictor of the child's future reading success. Don't force your child to read if they are resistant; rather, read TO your child or take turns reading. If your child is not interested in the story, talk about the pictures together. Again, avoid asking too many questions. The main purpose is to expose your child to new vocabulary and to enjoy a book together. (Parent: "This dog is so cute! Look what he did!" "I wonder what will happen next!")

**Be positive.** Never criticize your child's speech or language. Instead, repeat their statements back with the correct pronunciation, word, or grammar (Child: "Him big doggie!" Parent: "That's right, he's a big dog. He's going for a walk."). Give your child lots of praise for their efforts. Communication should be fun and rewarding.



What are some routines and activities in which you can help your child with language at home?