

Introduction to CHILDES (CHILd Language Data Exchange System)

CHILDES is a database of transcripts of children's speech. The transcripts themselves are quite heterogeneous because they were contributed by a myriad of researchers with different conventions and goals. This introduction will help you understand and navigate it. **Be prepared to discuss this information in class.**

1. *Take a few minutes to peruse the site on your own.* Start at <https://chilides.talkbank.org/>.
 2. *Learn the history and formatting.* In the third column of the home page, under the heading Manuals, select [CHAT](#). Read pages 5-86; 90. You can skim section 3 (pp. 12-16), and you will find that you can skim much of the other material as well. This material should be read once through so you are familiar with the transcription system. You should not try to memorize it.
 3. *Peruse the corpora.* . In the center column of the home page, in the top section ("Database"), click on ****Index to Corpora****. Select Eng-NA (English, North American). What you see now (on the left) is a list of researchers or project names. Pick a few of them and read the pages to get an idea of where these transcripts come from.
 4. *Peruse the database.* Go back to the center column of the home page and find Browsible Database. Select the Eng-NA directory on the left side. A list of researchers or project names should appear on the left. Each one is a folder containing transcripts from one to 50 children.

Select Bloom1970, and then Peter. You should see a list of files (to the left). Click on any one of them and take a look. The formatting should look familiar from your reading of the manual. Make sure you can follow the "conversation" between adult and child—know who is who and which lines are speech lines.

Browse through any others you like.
5. Test yourself.

Close the browser. Find CHILDES site again.

Find Kuczaj/020424.cha.

What is the child (Abe's) 6th utterance?