

# Using Books to Enhance Your Child's Communication

Books provide great opportunities to let your child increase their language skills.



## Basic strategies

Use these strategies to make book time more meaningful:

- Be face-to-face.
- Be animated with your facial expressions.
- Vary your voice.
- Change your volume and pitch as you go.
- Follow your child's lead.

## Types of books to use

There are many books that help children improve their communication. Look for books that have these characteristics:

- Simple books with one concept or idea per page
- Contain repetitive phrases or words
- Include large, simple illustrations (not a lot of detail).

## Examples of good books to use

Look for these books at the library, bookstore, thrift shop or online. Ask the librarian at your local library or child's school for help. Most are available in Spanish.

- "Brown Bear Brown Bear, What do You See?" and others by Eric Carle
- "I Went Walking" and "Let's Go Visiting" by Sue Williams
- "Daddy Hugs," "Mommy Hugs," "My First Ramadan," "My First Kwanzaa," the "Where is Baby" series, and others by Karen Katz
- "Going to Bed Book," "Belly Button Book" and others by Sandra Boynton

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## To Learn More

- Speech & Language Services  
206-987-2104
- Ask your child's healthcare provider
- [seattlechildrens.org](http://seattlechildrens.org)

## Free Interpreter Services

- In the hospital, ask your nurse.
- From outside the hospital, call the toll-free Family Interpreting Line, 1-866-583-1527. Tell the interpreter the name or extension you need.

### Making book time therapeutic

Use these tips to make book time fun and help your child's communication:

- Simplify your language.
- You do not need to say every word on the page.
- Find a repetitive line. Say it the same way each time so your child can learn the routine, such as "Brown bear, brown bear, what do you see?"
- Plan your child's turn to repeat a line or fill in a word or rhyme. For example, say "Brown bear, brown bear, what do you \_\_\_\_\_?"
- Work on the whole package of communication. This includes using eye contact, gestures and verbalizations. For example, your child might end the sentence "I see a black cat looking at me" while pointing to themselves.
- Use pauses to let your child repeat words, point or use other actions.
- Model the language you want them to use.
- If your child is saying one-word phrases (or signs), pause at a time when they can use one word or sign (e.g., I see a dog looking at... "me").
- If you want your child to start putting two words together, model this throughout the book (e.g., green nose, elephant stomps, pick pumpkin).

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### Going the extra mile

Try the following to make book time even more therapeutic:

#### Visuals

You can copy and or laminate pictures from the pages and put them around the room. Your child can find them and match them to the book.

#### Act out the book

You can use objects or your own body to act out the actions in some of the books (e.g., point to yourself, clap hands, pretend to walk).

#### Play

Incorporate ideas from the book into your child's play. For example, play with farm animals when reading "I Went Walking." Hide objects and look for them around the room when you read the "Where is Baby's" books.

#### Prepare

Read books about holidays and experiences that are coming up to prepare your child for what is to come. Try "Spot Goes to School" by Eric Hill or "Where is My Valentine" by Karen Katz.

#### In the car

Have your child "read" their books to you while in the car. You can also listen to books on CD while in the car with your child. Many libraries have children's books on CD.