



# Ways to Use Fill in the Blank

## Pause when singing a familiar song

Leave off a word and pause to give children an opportunity to finish the phrase.

*"The wheels on the bus go round and..."*

## Use the same familiar phrase to encourage talk during book reading

A phrase such as, "I see a..." can be used in any book, so children can become familiar with filling in the blank to name the picture you are pointing at.

## When a child needs something but isn't talking, help them with a starter phrase

Look at the child expectantly and wait 3-5 seconds. If the child doesn't initiate some communication, start a phrase for them such as, "I want the ..." and let them fill the word in or help them point to what they need.

## Think PEAR when you are using Fill in the Blank

### Pace

Pace your pause. Give children enough time to process and respond, but say the word and move on if they do not.

### Express

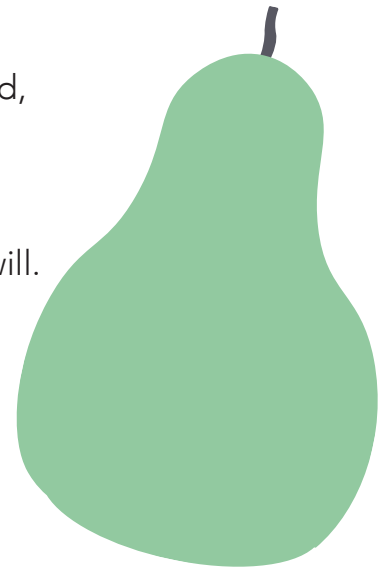
Your facial expression and tone of voice can cue your child to fill in the blank. It is okay if the child doesn't respond, but act as if they will.

### Acknowledge

The child may make a noise, gesture, or say the word. Say something positive back!

### Repeat

Repeat the phrase often. The more you say the phrase over time, the more likely the child is to respond when it becomes familiar to them.



## Fill in the Blank

Plan a delay in a predictable routine, song, or common phrase to encourage the child to communicate.



*Fill in the Blank is also called "time delay," and is used when the child is familiar with the routine and knows what to expect. If the child doesn't communicate during the pause, simply model the word and continue.*

*Your interactions should remain positive when children do not fill in the blank.*

*After waiting for the child to fill in the blank, fill it in for them.*