

Using Fill in the Blank with Children Who Use Words

Ideas for Using Fill in the Blank During Activities



Play

- Sing a familiar song to the child and pause. *“Three little monkeys jumping on the...”* Wait for the child to fill in the blank before continuing the song.
- When a child is placing puzzle pieces into a puzzle board, establish a phrase such as, *“Hi pig, hi cow, hi horse,”* as the child places each piece. After a few pieces are completed, begin the phrase and pause to allow the child to finish. *“Hi...”*
- When handing blocks to a child, hold one back and wait for the child to request the block. Once the child requests the block, give the child the block and continue playing. If the child doesn't respond, start a phrase like, *“I want...”* If the child still doesn't respond, model *“more blocks,”* and give the child the block.



Daily Routines

- When setting the table for lunch, pause before handing a plate to a child, waiting for a request for the plate. Or, the child can finish a sentence such as, *“I want a...”*
- If a child sees a cup of water and reaches for the cup, the adult may model, *“May I please have some...?”* to see if the child will say *“water.”*
- Review rules with the children and allow them to fill in the blanks about how to behave. *“In the hallway, we have calm...”*



Books

- Pause during familiar stories to allow children to fill in the blank about what happens next. This should be used at meaningful points during familiar stories.
- Look at the cover of a book together and name the title of the book, pausing for key words you think the children know. If they don't fill in the blank, say the word for them.
- Pause when reading familiar books to give children the opportunity to participate. To help children know what to say, use books that repeat the same lines often. When reading *“Brown Bear, Brown Bear,”* say, *“I see a red bird looking at...”* and allow the children to say *“me.”*

To help children who have difficulty saying words, combine actions with fill in the blank. This helps children with certain language issues get words out more easily. For each word, jump, wave your arms, or gesture with the child, then pause both your words and actions to encourage the child to fill in the blank.

Fill in the Blank

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

