

Give Your Child a Chance to Take Turns: When you read to your child, you shouldn't be the only one communicating. Give her opportunities to take turns throughout the activity. Don't think of reading as something you do *to* your child. Think of it as something you and your child do *together*.

Birdie. The Birdie goes bye-bye.



Mom changes the words in the book and adds a gesture to make sure Graham understands.

Change the Words in the Book: Feel free to change the words in the book and to tell the story in your own simple words. Not all children's books are well-written, and some have words in them that are much too difficult for your child to understand. Change the words in the book so they're easier for your child to understand and so you can repeat them. The more often she hears the words, the more likely she is to understand them and try to imitate them.

Use the Four S's – Say Less, Stress, Go Slow and Show: It's better to **say less** when reading a book. Use familiar vocabulary and shorter sentences to help your child understand and learn. **Stress** important and interesting words and add sound effects that your child will enjoy, like the sounds of animals or cars.

Make stories come alive by creating different voices for the characters and using actions and facial expressions to make them really interesting. **Go slow** – tell the story at a slower pace – to make it easier for your child to understand the words and to give her time to take her turn. **Show** your child what the words mean by pointing to the pictures as you talk about them and by using actions and gestures. Use toys or other objects to bring stories to life. For example, if you're reading a story that has a ball in it, have your child's own ball close by so the two of you can roll it and throw it – just like the characters do in the book.

Repeat, Repeat, Repeat: Children love hearing the same stories again and again – even after you've grown tired of them. Every time you read a story to your child, you have a chance to repeat the same words and sentences. But it's not enough for your child to hear the words many times. Particularly if she is a First Words User or a Combiner, she needs a chance to talk about what you're reading and to imitate the words. The more chances your child has to talk to you about the ideas in the book and the more she hears you repeat some of these words, the more her vocabulary will grow.