



Turn Book Reading into a Conversation



Sharing books with your child is about a lot more than reading the words on the page. It's about connecting with your child, having fun and building their language during back-and-forth interactions. When you turn book reading into a conversation, you actively involve your child by encouraging them to share their interests and ideas. Being actively involved and taking turns in the conversation helps build your child's language, which lays the foundation for learning to read and write. It also creates a special time for you two to connect.

Here are 5 ways to turn book reading into a conversation:

1. Get Face to Face

Sit at your child's level so you can easily see one another. Being face to face allows you to:

- See what your child is interested in and communicating about
- Notice any turns your child may take – with or without words
- Show your child you are interested and ready to communicate



2. Let Your Child “Read” the Book Their Way

Letting the child “read” their way makes it fun for them – and that is what is most important.

Letting your child “read” their way means:

- Letting them choose which book to look at
- Letting them hold the book
- Letting them turn the page
- Letting them decide what to look at and talk about

3. Observe, Wait and Listen™ on Each Page

To encourage your child to be actively involved when reading a book, it's important to:

- **Observe** what they are looking at and interested in. Watch for any facial expressions, gestures or actions they may use.
- **Wait** expectantly to give your child a chance to take their turn. Lean in, smile and show your child you are interested in what they have to communicate.
- **Listen** for your child's turn. You may hear sounds, words or short phrases.



Wait up to 10 seconds for your child to communicate when you turn to a new page or show them something on the page. You may not need to wait the full 10 seconds, but if you do, and your child doesn't take a turn, make a comment about something they are looking at or are interested in, and keep reading.

4. Then, Follow Your Child's Lead

Once your child takes a turn, follow their lead to encourage them to take more turns. Follow your child's lead by making a comment that relates to what your child communicated.

When you follow your child's lead, your child will enjoy the book more and your interactions will last longer.



5. Change the Words in the Book



Instead of reading every word in the book, change the words to make it easier for your child to understand. You can also use words that relate to your child's interests and what they have communicated. Repeat the words that capture what your child is interested in and use them in short, grammatical sentences. Emphasize these words by saying them louder or stretching them out (e.g., "That's a huuuuuge dog"). Show the meaning of the words by pointing to pictures and using gestures or actions.

When you turn book reading into a conversation, you help your child become an active participant, which means they have more opportunities to interact, communicate and learn.

Learn More

Turn Book Reading into a Conversation is a strategy from the It Takes Two to Talk® guidebook. Learn more about how this guidebook can help you support your child's communication at www.hanen.org/ITTTguidebook.

