

**Birth to
Five**

FACILITATING THICK CONVERSATIONS WITH **YOUNG INFANTS**

Even before infants can speak words, you can encourage them to express their own ideas and promote their thinking when you lay the foundation for “thick” conversations. Here are four key ways, each with specific strategies you can use, to extend communication with young infants.

<p>Encourage back-and-forth exchanges.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask questions and make comments about what young infants are doing or are interested in. • Give them time to respond. • Model taking turns (with several two-way exchanges).
<p>Extend communications with young infants.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe clearly and accurately what you think they are communicating. • Use rich language with a variety of words to increase the words and sentences they hear. • Match the tone of your voice to the infant’s feelings or emotions.
<p>Focus on the routines and experiences young infants are involved in.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comment on what they are doing. • Interact with them and their play materials, and comment on what you are doing. • Ask questions—respond to their gestures and vocalizations. Ask about what you see them doing, or what you have planned for them.
<p>Promote connections and understandings.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share what you know or understand. • Relate what they are doing now to their previous experiences at the program or at home. • Introduce new concepts and skills.