

Birth to Five

WAYS TO ASK YOUNG INFANTS QUESTIONS

Asking questions is an important way to extend conversations, even for young infants! Whether you ask open- or closed-ended questions, you are engaging in a back-and-forth exchange that involves young infants in the sounds and rhythms of language. And that deepens your relationship with them at the same time.

The first column below lists strategies for asking questions. The second column provides examples for each strategy.

<p>Ask, wait, watch, and wonder!</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask a question. Use your body language, tone, and facial expressions to animate the question. • Slow down your speech so that the infant can follow you. • Wait for a response. Watch for facial expressions, gestures, and body language. Listen for vocalizations such as coos, squeals, and babbling. • What is the infant trying to tell you? Respond back using similar vocalizations and facial expressions. • Repeat!
<p>Ask children about what they see, do, and feel.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You're reaching for the ball. What are you going to do with it? • Where are you crawling to? • How can you make the rubber ducky squeak? • Which book shall we read today? • Let's look out the window. What do you see?
<p>Ask questions that help children connect with their own lives.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Let's look at this family photo album together. Who is holding you? • Where is your belly? • Are you letting me know you want me to pick you up? • Which bib would you like me to put on you—the smooth one or the soft one?