

Birth to Five

TIPS FOR ENGAGING **YOUNG INFANTS** IN CONVERSATIONS

Conversations aren't just for older children. Very young children and adults can have conversations too! Adults can help when they watch for cues and respond to children's facial expressions, gestures, vocalizations, and words.

SET THE STAGE:

- Make sure the infant is calm, comfortable, and ready to interact.
- Bring the infant to your level.
- Draw the infant's attention.

START THE CONVERSATION:

- Observe. What is the infant doing? What does she show interest in?
- Match the tone of your voice, your facial expressions, and your mood to the infant's.
- Make a comment about what the infant shows interest in or is doing.
- Pay attention and respond to her cues.
- Ask a question. Even young infants can respond with a vocalization, facial expression, gesture, or body movement!
- Pause and give the infant enough time to respond.
- When the infant babbles or gestures, copy her sounds or gestures.
- Follow the infant's lead for a while, then change your response slightly to create novelty and help her stay engaged.
- Watch for cues that the infant is tiring, and then stop.

