

CONVERSATION
STARTERS
BABIES

while

DISCOVERING

together

“Look,

you just threw down your cup!”

Acknowledges something
without judgment.

“Tell me
more.”

Pause several seconds.
Listen to baby’s babble.
Hmm . . . That’s interesting.

Encourages baby
to babble or communicate.

“I wonder

how you can reach your toy car.”

Shows curiosity and a desire to
learn more.

CONVERSATION
STARTERS
TODDLERS

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“I notice

you are wearing two different colored socks.”

Acknowledges something without judgment.



“I wonder

why the car moves faster when it's going down the ramp.”
Pause. If the child can't say why, describe the slant of the ramp.

Shows curiosity and a desire to learn more.



“Tell me about this.”

Pause. If you cannot understand all your child is saying, say what you notice.

Encourages children to express their ideas

CONVERSATION
STARTERS
PRESCHOOLERS

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“I notice

you colored the sky green.”

Acknowledges something
without judgment.

**“Tell me
more**

about your design.”

Encourages children
to express their ideas.

“I wonder

how we could make the car move
more slowly.”

Shows curiosity and a desire
to learn more.

**CONVERSATION
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PLAYING

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“How are these two items
the same or different?”



Pause for baby to feel the items.
Allow time for baby to babble to you. Describe the items.

Helps babies compare and contrast.

“What else can
you do with that?”

“You’re using a spoon to hang on the pot.
What else can you do with the spoon?”



Challenges babies to
think in new ways.

“What can we do
together?”

“Let’s play pat-a-cake together.”

Encourages collaboration.



while

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“How are these two items
the same or different?”



“Let’s see how these two dolls are the same and different.
What do you think?”
Also, “How do they look like you?
How do they look different from you?”

Asks children to compare and contrast.

“What can you do

to build a taller tower?”



Challenges children to
improve their work.

“How can we
work together?”

“What would you like me to do?”

Encourages collaboration.



while

CONVERSATION
STARTERS
PRESCHOOLERS

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“What’s the
same and different

about these two tools?” Pause for child’s response.
“How do they look? What are they used for?”

Asks children to compare and contrast.



“How can
you

make the base of your tower stronger?”

Challenges children to
improve their work.



“How can we
work together?”

“What would you like me to do?”

Encourages collaboration.



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**CONVERSATION
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“Oh! Look at this!”

Let the baby hold the object.
Describe the object.

Prompts children to
observe closely.



**“Let’s see what
happens when**

you drop this toy in the bath water.”

Encourages children to consider
cause and effect.

**“I wonder what’s
going on here.”**

“This shoe doesn’t fit because
it is made for the other foot.”
Share information.

Provides babies with new information.



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“What do you notice

about this leaf?”
Pause. Offer further description.

Prompts children to observe closely.



“What would happen if
you moved that block to a different spot?”

Encourages children to consider
different approaches.

“Let’ see how we
can find out more

about trains.”

Encourages children to seek out
new information.



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**“What do
you notice**

about this leaf?”
Expand on what the child observes.

Prompts children to
observe closely.



**“What would
happen if**

we didn't use any tape next time?”

Encourages children to consider
different approaches.

**“How do you think
we could
find out more**

about trains?” Pause for child's response.
“Where do you think we could find out
more information?”

Asks children to seek out
new information.



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CONVERSATION
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REFLECTING

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“Do you like how
this tastes?”

Watch baby’s expression as baby tries
a new food.

Pause for baby to react.

Express what baby may be feeling.

Asks baby’s opinion.



“How are you
feeling?”

From baby’s facial expressions and
body language, use words to reflect
how baby may be feeling.

Focuses attention
on emotions.



“What else
can you do?”

“You like to hold the ball.”
See if the child does anything differently.
If not, you might say, “Try rolling it.”

Encourages children to
consider different options.



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“What was
easy or hard
for you to do?”

Asks children to
evaluate their skills.



“How do you
feel about what
you did?”

Watch child’s expressions.
Acknowledge what child says.
Suggest feeling words based on
what you have observed.

Focuses attention
on emotions.

“What else can
you try?”

“You like to drop that ball from your high chair.
Let’s experiment with bouncing
different kinds of balls.”

Encourages children to consider
different approaches.



while

REFLECTING

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CONVERSATION
STARTERS
PRESCHOOLERS



“What did
you learn?”

Asks children to evaluate
their skills.



“What are
you most
proud of?”

Focuses attention
on emotions.



“What would
you try
differently

next time?”

Encourages children to consider
different approaches.



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**CONVERSATION
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BABIES**

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READING

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“What’s this?”

Following where baby is looking, point to an object in picture. Say the name of the object. Pause for baby to babble back.

Helps baby understand and express new words.

“How do you think this baby is feeling?”

Point to picture of baby’s or characters’ face. Pause. Offer a suggestion.

Helps build empathy.

“What do you think will happen next?”

“Look, here is a picture of a baby eating ice cream.”
Pause. Add your ideas.

Exposes baby to sequencing.

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“What do you think
is happening here?”

Point to the pictures on a page.
Pause to allow time for child to respond.

Encourages children to express
their ideas.



“How do you think this
character feels?”

Choose a picture of a character that shows emotion. .
Pause. If the child does not respond, offer suggestions.
Talk about a time when your child
may have felt that way.

Helps build empathy.



“What do you think
will happen next?”

Pause. Child may point to something in the
picture or respond verbally.
Repeat the child’s response or provide your own
based on child’s gestures.
“Now let’s see what happened in the book.”

Prompts children to make predictions.



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“Why do
you think

the character did that?”

Encourages children
to explain their ideas.



“How would
you feel

if you were in that situation?”
Help the child remember a time they felt that way.

Helps build empathy.



“What do you think
will happen next?”

Listen to and acknowledge child’s response.
“Now let’s see what the author chose
to have happen.”

Prompts children to make predictions.

