Keep the Conversation Going

Conversations naturally continue when you follow the child’s lead by making interesting comments and asking questions that a child wants to answer. To keep the conversation going, build on children’s interests, and wait expectantly for a response – pausing for a few seconds so the child has time to respond. Here are some fun ways that you can keep interactions going and build language with young children:

**Play Time**
Relate what happens during play to the child’s own personal experience. For example, if the child is playing with a cash register and paper money, ask about their experience at a real grocery store. Ask what they bought with real money at the store. Make comments to keep the conversation going back and forth for at least five turns.

**Daily Activities**
While having snack, ask the child a “What if?” question to encourage conversation. For example, “What if I opened this bag of crackers, but instead of crackers, I found Lego inside?” Try to keep the conversation going for many back and forth turns.

**On the Go**
When the child points out a delivery person while out on a walk, follow their lead and ask a question that will inspire some back and forth conversation. Instead of asking a testing question like, “What do we call the person who delivers mail?”, ask something open-ended, like, “What do you think is in the package they’re delivering?”

**Book Reading**
Pause at an exciting point in a familiar book and wait for the child to do or say something. For example, if they point to a picture and say, “Bird”, follow their lead and say something about the bird such as, “The bird is eating a worm.” Wait to see what the child says or does next. Then make a related comment.