



Early Learning: Help Your Child With Conversation

Parents who use an elaborate conversation style with their child, in which they draw them out to elicit detailed memories about past, shared events, can help their child:

- Form a more secure attachment
- Develop a sense of self worth
- Aid memory development
- Help the child become more socially competent.

What is an elaborate conversation style? When you have an elaborate conversation with your child, you:

- Provide rich detail
- Give lots of background information
- Attempt to get them to provide new information from memory as the conversation progresses.

Children are much more likely to participate in conversation like this. For example:

1. Ask open-ended questions—these are questions that require more than a yes or no answer. “Did you have a good day?” is a closed ended question. Your child can simply respond yes or no. Instead, try: “What was one of your most favorite things you did today? What was your least favorite?” “Why?”
2. Ask for more information in a kind, interested way. “Tell me more!” “And then what happened?” are great ways to help extend the conversation.
3. Prompt memory by saying something like: “Do you remember when you did that last year? How did you feel then?”

By conversing with your child openly, in an interested and kind manner, they learn to understand their world and themselves better.

This information is from a study by the University of Illinois.

For more information about the study, you can go to the web address:

www.medicalnewstoday.com/medicalnews.php?newsid=53443 or you can find the actual study in a September 2006 special edition of the journal *Attachment and Human Development*.
<http://www.tandf.co.uk/journals/titles/14616734.asp>

For more tips, or if you need more information or would like to talk to someone:

In Washington State: Call the Family Help Line at 1-800-932-HOPE

Outside of Washington State: contact your local Circle of Parents agency at

www.circleofparents.org