



## Responsive Caregiving: The Foundation of Quality Infant and Toddler Care




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## Objectives



- Define responsive caregiving and some of the critical components
- Describe the steps associated with providing powerful interactions
- Describe how to extend conversations to support powerful interactions




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## Head Start Program Performance Standards

1304.51(a)(1)



1307.3(b)(2)(i)-(ii)



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Photo courtesy of EHS NRC

What is responsive caregiving?



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## Responsive Caregiving Is...

- ✓ "Being tuned-in," a keen observer of children and families
- ✓ Understanding the cues of infants and toddlers, then sensitively responding in ways that are helpful
- ✓ Using the environment to support development and extend learning



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**“Responsiveness is defined as caregiver-child interactions in which the caregiver demonstrates concerned and prompt responses to child cues in an individualized and appropriate manner.”**

Ota, Carrie Lou. "The Impact on Caregiver Responsiveness." Master's thesis, Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College, (December, 2005), 5.




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### Why Responsive Caregiving?



Photo courtesy: EHS NRC




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### Science Tells Us...

**For Children**



**For You!**



Photo courtesy: EHS NRC




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Three Core Concepts in Early Development

# 2 Serve & Return Interaction Shapes Brain Circuitry

NATIONAL SCIENTIFIC COUNCIL ON THE DEVELOPING CHILD  
Center on the Developing Child HARVARD UNIVERSITY

<http://developingchild.harvard.edu/news/expression/developmental/serve-and-return/>

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## Components of Responsive Caregiving

Photo courtesy: EHS: NCCU

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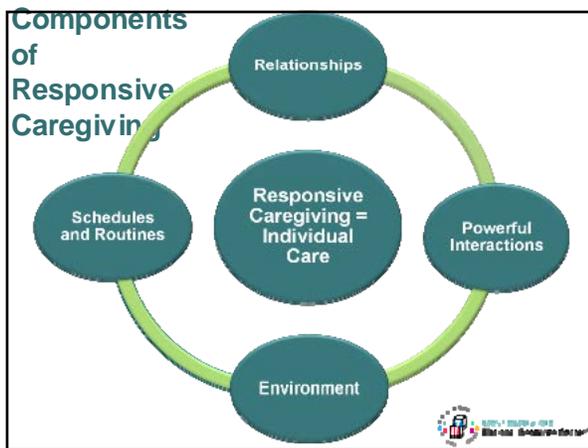
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## Responsive Caregiving = Individual Care

- ✓ Engage the families!
- ✓ Adapts the environment
- ✓ Modifies daily schedule/routine
- ✓ Scaffolds child's learning
- ✓ Reflect and use information from observation and assessment tools to guide planning



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## Components of Responsive Caregiving

Relationships



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## Relationship-Ready Staff



Photos courtesy EHS NRC



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## Responsive Caregiving: Understanding Baby's Cues



Photos courtesy EHS NRC




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## Responsive Caregiving



Healthy infant and toddler development and learning happen within the context of secure, nurturing relationships with parents, family members, and other caring adults.

by EHS NRC




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## Components of Responsive Caregiving

# Powerful Interactions

Dombro, Jablon, & Stetson, 2011




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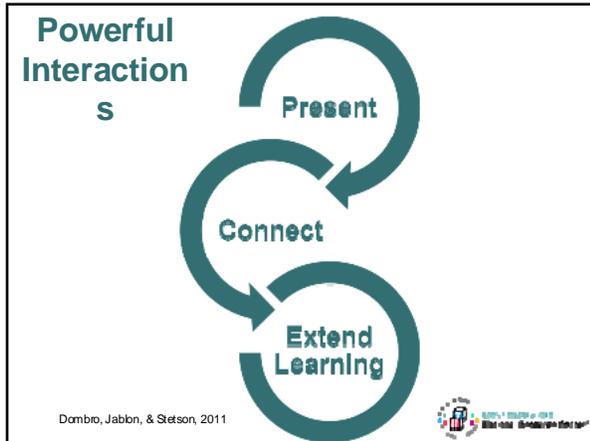
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## CONVERSATIONS

### INFANTS AND TODDLERS

**Opportunities during daily routines:**

- Arrival and departure
- Diapering and toileting
- Dressing and undressing
- Mealtimes
- Play experiences
- Transitions

Photo courtesy of EHS NRC

Contributed by NCQTL

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## KEY CONVERSATION ELEMENTS

In meaningful conversations with infants, toddlers, and preschool children, teachers:

- Move to the child's level.
- Watch and listen actively.
- Match the child's mood and feelings.
- Wait for a response and encourage back-and-forth exchanges.

Contributed by NCQTL

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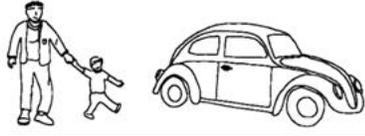
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# PROMOTING CONVERSATIONS

## C. A. R.

- Comment
- Ask
- Respond



Follow the child's lead and then:

- Comment and wait, or
- Ask a question and wait, or
- Respond by adding a little more and wait.

Adapted with permission.  
Cobb, K., Madhok, M., Nisari-Syversen, A., & Lin, Y.S. (2006). Language is the key: Video programs for building language and literacy in early childhood. Seattle, WA: Washington Learning Systems.  
StoryQUEST: Celebrating beginning language and literacy. Early career annual report (April 2004). Unpublished report. California Institute on Human Services, Sonoma State University, Rohnert Park, CA.

Contributed by NCQTL



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# START THE CONVERSATION

## WITH INFANTS AND TODDLERS

C.A.R. for infants and toddlers!

- Comment or ask a question.
- Pause, give the child time to respond.
- Follow the child's lead.
- Watch for cues that child is tiring.



Photo courtesy of DHS NIC

Adapted with permission.  
Cobb, K., Madhok, M., Nisari-Syversen, A., & Lin, Y.S. (2006). Language is the key: Video programs for building language and literacy in early childhood. Seattle, WA: Washington Learning Systems.  
StoryQUEST: Celebrating beginning language and literacy. Early career annual report (April 2004). Unpublished report. California Institute on Human Services, Sonoma State University, Rohnert Park, CA.



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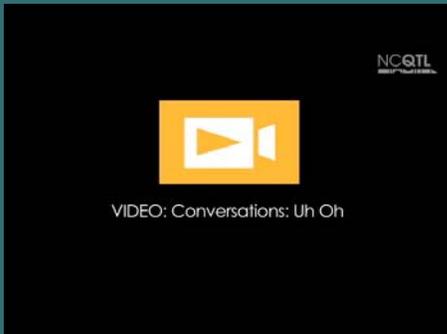
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Contributed by NCQTL



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## VIDEO REVIEW CONVERSATIONS: UH OH

### INFANTS AND TODDLERS

- Listening to the child
- Matching tone and emotion
- Expressing and expanding on what the child is trying to say
- Following the child's lead
- Giving time to respond
- Several back-and-forth exchanges



Contributed by NCOQL

Contributed by NCOQL




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## What are Extended Conversations?



PHOTOGRAPHY BY ERIN BAC

Extended conversations are **rich, back-and-forth exchanges** that help children develop more complex language and thinking skills.

Contributed by NCOQL




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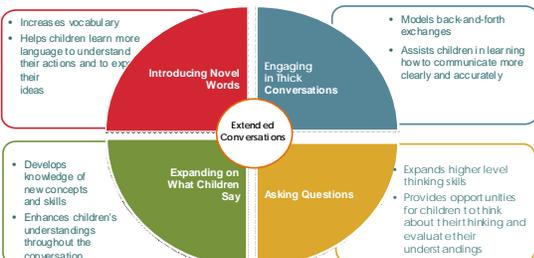
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## How Do Extended Conversations Benefit ALL Children?



Contributed by NCOQL




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## Thick Conversations

# THI

# THICK:

- Children use and hear limited language.
- Questions only require one word answers.
- Stops thinking process

- Include multiple two-way exchanges
- Children use and hear a variety of language.
- Respond to children's interests and ideas.
- Promote higher level thinking skills.
  - Explaining
  - Connecting
  - Comparing
  - Imagining possibilities




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Photo courtesy of EHS NRC

### Thin Conversation Example

Teacher: Look how nicely you lined up the ducks!

[Smiles].

Child: Was it hard to do?

Teacher: [Child shakes his head "no."]

Child:




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Photo courtesy of EHS NRC



### Thick Conversation Example

Teacher: You did some interesting things with the rubber ducks. Tell me about what you did with the small ducks.

Child: I lined the ducks.

Teacher: Ah, you put the small ducks in a line. You used so many that the line stretched across the water table. I wonder how many small ducks you have. How can we find out?

Child: I count - 1, 2. [Teacher joins in: 3, 4, 5, 6, 7.]

Teacher: Was your first ten seven small ducks? What are you doing with the large ducks?

Child: I lined more ducks.

Teacher: Lining the line looks different than the line with the small ducks. How are you lining these ducks up?

Child: I make bigger.

Teacher: Like you're lining these ducks up by size - small, medium, and large - just like in the book we read this morning. Now you have two lines of ducks. What will you do next?

Child: I make swim (splashes the water, making the ducks move). I did it. Ducks swim in the pool!

Teacher: Yes, and they look like they're having fun swimming in the pool. But oh no, the ducks aren't in lines anymore! What will you do?

Child: I fix ducks. (Child starts to put small ducks in a line.)




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## Extended Conversations Summary

Extended conversations are rich, “thick,” multiple back-and-forth exchanges that help children develop more complex language, thinking skills, and social skills.



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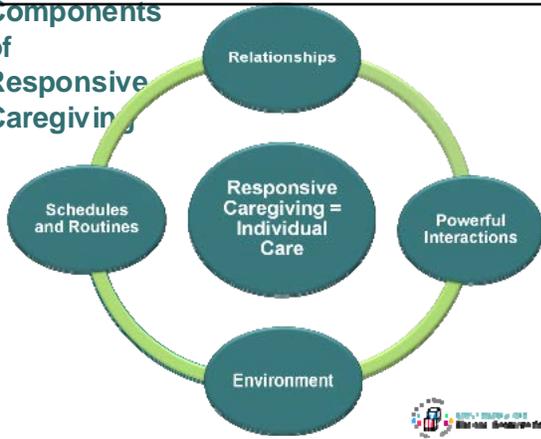
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## Components of Responsive Caregiving



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## Responsive Care Practices

What do leaders need to do to strengthen staff's responsive care practices?



<http://elcdfsval.com/uploads/psd/091613%20ITRCC%20-%20Resource%20Guide%20-%20-%20GS%20-%20202%20-%20-%20FINAL%20202013.pdf>



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## Supporting Learning Through Responsive Caregiving Practices - Reflections

- What is working?
- What do you still wonder about?
- What will you take with you?
- How will you encourage more and deeper conversations?



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**Thank you.**

Please complete the evaluations!



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## References

Dombro, Amy L., Judy Jablon, and Charlotte Stetson. *Powerful Interactions: How to Connect With Children to Extend Their Learning*. Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children. 2011.

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Early Moments Matter, Copyright © 2011 Vulcan Productions. <http://www.earlymomentsmatter.org/learn-more>



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## Resources

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## Resources

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## Resources

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<http://earlylearningtexas.org/mentoring-toolkit.aspx>



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