Conversation Starters:

How did you choose your child's name?

Is there a special meaning to your child's name?

How did your child earn his or her nickname?

What are your hopes and dreams for your child?

What is sure to capture your child's attention?

What especially delights your child? What brings on the giggles?

How did your child respond when he first succeeded at something challenging, for instance, walking, learning a new word, or singing?

What do you think is unique about your child?

When do you first remember being head over heels in love with your child? What brings on those moments for you?

When was the first time your child's behavior made you want to pull your hair out? How did you cope?

What do you think would surprise us most about your child?

How would you describe your child's personality?

In what type of setting is your child most likely to be quieter? More outgoing?
What situations overwhelm?

How does your child express contentment or happiness?

What behaviors do you notice when your child is frustrated or confused?

What helps your child warm up to new situations?

How does he or she respond to disappointment? How long does it take to
recover from disappointment?

What are good ways to help soothe your child?

What are good ways to get and maintain your child's attention?

How would you describe your child's activity level?

How do you know when your child has had enough playtime?

How do you keep your child calm during a storm or hectic times?

When faced with a new challenge, how long does your child usually persist? How does he or she go about problem solving?

How does your child respond to changes in normal routine? What are good ways to help your child cope with a change?

Are there siblings in the family? How do they get along? What types of things do they enjoy? What issues do they struggle over?

Are there special activities the family especially enjoys together, such as gardening, singing in a choir, going to a water park, or volunteering for nonprofit projects?

What extra activities are children enrolled in outside of child care, such as tap dance lessons or swimming?

Do extended family members live with you or nearby?

What are the names your child uses for his grandparents, aunts, or uncles?

What about your culture or beliefs is most important for your child right now?

Are there traditional family games or songs your child enjoys? Are there some you are willing to share in the classroom?

What does your family consider 'good behavior' for your child's age?

What are some family routines your child really likes?

At what ages do you encourage self-help skills to develop, such as self-feeding, self-dressing, or picking up toys?

In what ways will you expect your child to contribute to family life during childhood?

If there is a pet in the home, how does the child play with it and help take care of it?

How does your child like to start the day?

What makes your child feel cozy and relaxed?

What does your child do when he wants attention at home?

What motivates your child to cooperate?

What kinds of things is your child stubborn about?

How does your child behave around those she is most fond of?

Are there ways to tell that your child has had enough cuddling or wants to play on his own?

What can trigger a temper tantrum or aggression, such as biting? How do you de-escalate a tantrum? How have you responded when your child has hit or bitten someone?

What situations or events scare or startle your child?

Are there special objects your child is especially attached to, such as a keepsake or favorite item for naptime?

What coping strategies doe your child use?

What does your child think she is really good at?

How can you tell your child feels good about his successes?

What are ways your child goes about making a friend?

What are typical signs of illness? Do fevers come on slowly or spike quickly? Are there signs of illness you want to know about immediately?

Are there allergies present or that run in the family? What symptoms should we watch for? How should symptoms be treated?

What are your child's sleeping routines?

What are good ways to ease your child to sleep? Good ways to help her wake up from nap?

What are sure signs your child is hungry? Tired?

What are his food preferences and how are they prepared?

What are some ways you introduce new foods?

How does your infant like to be held during feeding?

Are there games or songs your child enjoys during diapering time?

How would you like us to go about working with your child on toilet training?

Are there safety dangers your child seems drawn to?

What self-help skills is your child especially proud of?

When playing alone, what does your child enjoy doing? With adults? With peers?

How does your family feel about playing outside? How does your child respond to 'messy' play? Does your child have a preference for indoor or outdoor play?

What does your child like pretending to be? What make-believe situations does she act out?

At what times is your child most likely to be talkative?

What kinds of movement does your child enjoy?

Does your child enjoy imaginary friends? In what ways?

How does your child show his/her creative side?

What kinds of books or stories does your child enjoy?

What are sure signs your child is overwhelmed by something?

Have you noticed play choices your child favors, such as block building, working puzzles, drawing/painting, or educational computer games?

Questions for families with children with special needs:

How would you like us to comment on your child's special needs when children or parents ask about them?

Are there resources that would help us understand and respond to your child's special needs?

How have you arranged your family life and home environment to adjust to your child's special needs?

What have you learned from raising a child with special needs?

Are there times your child's special needs become overwhelming? If so, what are ways you and your child cope?

Are there chronic conditions, such as asthma or diabetes that we should be aware of? What are ways you'd like them addressed in our program?