

Don't Wait for a Teachable Moment...Create One!

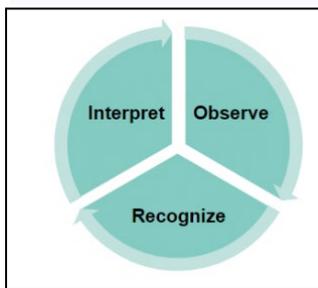
A teachable moment is an unplanned or random event during the day that provides an opportunity for a teacher to connect or link back to:

- Previous information,
- Expand upon a concept,
- Scaffold, or
- Enrich the activity with additional learning.

Taking advantage of teachable moments help make the concepts easier for the child to understand, because they are getting new information in the context of their real world, and can immediately apply the skills into their play!

Creating a Teachable Moment

According to researchers Eunsook Hyun and J. Dan Marshall (2003) there are three steps that teachers of early childhood students must take in order to take advantage of teachable moments: observe, recognize, and interpret the spontaneously occurring interests of diverse learners.



#1 Observe the Children

Teachers can look for children's interests or signs of eagerness to learn more about something and listen to hear if they are asking questions.

Teachers can reflect and ask themselves:

- What do I see happening?
- What do I hear the children saying?
- What are children's interests?

#2 Recognize Opportunities

When teachers are familiar with the children's interests and familiar with the curriculum and learning objectives, they can plan and connect the content with the child's activities. We are more likely to provide individual support and practice opportunities for the children when we narrow down the learning objectives. Teachers can reflect and ask themselves:

- What are some learning objectives that I currently have to work on?
- Is there a way to connect the children's interest with the theme?
- What vocabulary words connect to the activity?

#3 Interpret

The third step of taking advantage of teachable moments is to take the time to process what we observed and recognized to understand the child's point of view and then interpret their behaviors to decide on how to respond to their needs. We want to use intentional teaching strategies to enhance the children's learning and reinforce their skill development:

- Modeling for the children to demonstrate an activity or language,
- Creating open-ended questions to encourage their thinking and language,
- Providing explanations and demonstrating our thinking process by sharing it aloud with the children and,
- Being flexible by problem solving as the context and setting changes in the classroom.
- Offer a child-centered environment for exploration, skill practice, and language opportunities.

A mindful teacher and ready learners can spontaneously share an educational experience- have fun!