

Let's talk about...a NAC Accreditation Standard: *The teacher takes advantage of "teachable moments" to weave unplanned, age-appropriate activities and/or relevant conversation into the daily schedule.*

The major mode of learning for preschool children is through naturalistic experiences...those initiated spontaneously by children as they go about their daily activities. Many "teachable moments" arise that have not been preplanned and included in the lesson plan.

The master teacher recognizes when an opportunity arises for a "teachable moment." It may be an unexpected occurrence, a discovery, a question or a sudden interest of the child/children that opens up the opportunity to share information, bring in additional resources, or plan related activities.

The master teacher responds with flexibility and encouragement. Flexibility permits diversion from what the teacher has planned to what the child/children are interested in doing. Encouragement supports a child's interest/participation. Teachers encourage by giving verbal description of the child's actions, elaborating on the child's comments, smiling, nodding. These behaviors allow a child to continue in an activity and extend his/her interest in the subject.

Informal learning occurs when the teacher takes advantage of unplanned opportunities to:

- Facilitate further thinking
- Ask open-ended questions that lead to the child finding the solution
- Provide books about the subject
- Initiate a related activity
- Engage in relevant conversation

"Teachable moments" may occur during routine activities such as meal/snack time when conversation about food may lead to a discussion of 'food that is good for you.' A "teachable moment" may occur while a baby's diaper is being changed and the caregiver talks about the feeling of the 'wet' diaper and then the 'dry.' A police car or a bus going past the school, spring flowers pushing through the soil, weather events, and news stories are possible opportunities for "teachable moments."

Making "teachable moments" into learning experiences depends upon the teacher's response when such opportunities arise.

Ideas for implementing "teachable moments" into your day:

Share information with staff

Discuss "teachable moments" that have occurred in recent days

Have teachers describe their response

Are there additional/other responses that could be used to make the moment into a learning experience?

"Catch" someone making a learning experience from a "teachable moment" and share the experience with others.