Take Advantage of Teachable Moments

What Is a Teachable Moment?

ANY moment can be a teachable moment...

- Jules just found a butterfly in the backyard
- Andrew fell and bumped his knee
- Juanita went to the dentist for the first time
- Max and his friend are having trouble sharing the tricycle
- Isabella desperately wants to carry a bucket full of water but it is too heavy for her to carry by herself

As an educator, your job is to keep your eyes and ears open for these types of moments. Take the opportunity to use them as a time for children to learn, develop, and grow.

Teachable moments are not limited to cognitive areas but instead encompass all other areas of development...social, emotional, and physical. Asking open-ended questions and engaging children in conversation is a sure-fire way to turn an everyday moment into a teachable one.

Taking advantage of these teachable moments can help children become confident and successful.

How to Change an Everyday Moment into a Teachable One!

Here’s an example:

Michelle is playing outside and notices a robin in the tree, building a nest. She points out her discovery to you. What do you do?

Ask Michelle questions about her discovery to find out what she already knows and what she wants to know. For instance:

- “Do you know the name of that bird?”
- “What materials do you think that bird is using to make the nest?”
- “Why do you think the bird chose to build its nest there?”

And then extend the learning to an activity. For instance:

- Make bird nests with mud and grass
- Look at the bird through a pair of child-safe binoculars and then have children draw pictures of what they saw.
- Go for a walk to look for other birds and nests. Take photos of the birds and nests. Attach the bird photos to blocks and the nest photos to empty boxes. The children can put the birds in and out of the nests.