



All Children Considered

VOL. IV • 2003/04

A NEWSLETTER FOR PEOPLE WHO CARE FOR CHILDREN

Teachable Moments What to Know, What to Do

TURNING A MESS INTO THAT TEACHABLE MOMENT	1
CHILD CARE INFOLINE MAILBAG	2
REAL LIFE EXAMPLES OF TEACHABLE MOMENTS	3
MAKE TEACHABLE MOMENTS HAPPEN AFTER SCHOOL!	4
TIME WITH NANA, A LEARNING EXPERIENCE	4
DE: THE POWER OF FAMILY LEARNING— FIND THOSE TEACHABLE MOMENTS	5
DSS: HEAD START AND EARLY HEAD START IN CT— PROGRAM PROFILE 2003	6
DPH: CT'S EARLY CHILDHOOD PARTNERS INITIATIVE PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE	6
LEAD POISONING PREVENTION RESOURCE— SESAME STREET LEAD AWAY! VIDEO	6
BOOSTER SEATS SAVE LIVES	7

Published by



University of Connecticut

COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SYSTEM
College of Agriculture & Natural Resources,
and the School of Family Studies

In collaboration with



Connecticut
Departments of
Social Services
and Public Health

Turning a Mess into that Teachable Moment

Mary Emerling, R.N.
Nurse Consultant
CT Department of Public Health
Quality Enhancement Unit/Division of
Community Based Regulation
800.282.6063

Assisted by two little preschool “helpers,” you walk into the kitchen area to retrieve a morning snack and find that a staff or family member has left evidence of having been there. You can tell what they made themselves for breakfast, how they made it, what they ate with, and whether or not they liked the meal. The place is a mess! What do you do?

Of course, the first thing you might like to do is find the human tornado that trashed the place and “discuss” the issue! On the other hand, maybe you could go to the center director and remind him/her that you were hired “as a child care provider, not a sanitarian.” If yours is a family-based day care, perhaps you would seek out “the offender” and remind him/her that you “aren’t the maid!” (I’ve used that one myself!)

Instead of exercising any one of those options, why not turn it into a teachable moment? Look at it as an opportunity to instill lessons on health and safety. Include the children in cleanup all the

(Continued on page 2)

From the editor...

Catch Those Fleeting “Teachable Moments”

Late summer, with its possibilities for outdoor exploration and discovery, is a good time to reflect on one of the principles of learning: Insight and knowledge can often result from unanticipated events and your spontaneous responses. This current issue helps us think about capturing those “Teachable Moments” to stimulate curiosity and increase the learning opportunities for youth in our programs.

Articles on the following pages discuss opportunities for recognizing those times when the critical learning attributes of motivation, content, and an appropriate environment are present: These conditions can be present in the family room,

in the make-believe corner of a child care program, in a thunderstorm, in the yard with Nana, in the middle of a quarrel, or in the kitchen right after you have discovered a big mess. No matter where you encounter the “teachable moment”, it can be the door to learning that lasts and lasts.

Please let us know if you find information in these pages to help you in your work with children and youth, or if you have suggestions for future articles. In addition, be sure to checkout our new All Children Considered website at: <http://www.canr.uconn.edu/ces/acc>

Harry Mangle, Editor



while talking with them about a clean environment. You could solicit their ideas and opinions about why it's so important to pick up after ourselves and maintain a clean living space.

For instance, while picking up the dishtowel, pan lid, and banana peel left on the floor, compare that mess to the problem of leaving toys and backpacks in pathways. Talk about the dangers of just leaving the items out on the floor and how good it is that the kitchen has adequate lighting so you could pick them up without tripping or slipping on them. Ask the children what they think could happen if things are left in walkways or their space is too dark to see clearly.

As you clean off the countertop, talk about how dangerous it is for a knife to be left out and why only adults should handle sharp objects, such as knives. This may also be a good time to mention that running with other sharp objects, like scissors or a fork,

can be dangerous, too. Cleaning up the food and carton of milk left on the counter would be a good opportunity to talk about how some foods need refrigeration. Point out that germs like to grow on spills and other food items, which is why food preparation areas



and eating utensils, in particular, must be routinely cleaned.

You could ask the children why they think the cabinets have childproof locks on them. Show them the "poison" logo on the cleaning products (if there is one) and discuss how dangerous it is for kids to eat or drink any-

thing not given to them by a trusted adult.

Last, but not least, you could bring your little assistants to the sink for a little talk about handwashing and why it is such an important practice throughout our day. Especially after cleaning up a mess and before preparing and eating your morning snack. Ask them what other times during their day would be a good time to wash their hands.

These are just little suggestions for taking an otherwise aggravating situation and turning it into a learning experience. You may also recognize that these practices are addressed in Section 19a-79-6a *Health and Safety* of Child Day Care Center and Group Day Care Home regulations and Section 19a-87b-9 *Requirements for the Physical Environment* of Family Day Care Home regulations. ♣

CHILD CARE INFOLINE MAILBAG

Question: I am presently providing care for my 14-month-old granddaughter while my daughter works. I have been approached by a neighbor to watch her child also. I think it would be a good idea to consider taking other children into my home so that she has others to play with and also for an additional source of income. I have always worked well with young children. Can I start watching other children?

Answers:

It is commendable that you are considering expanding your services as a child care provider, but, in Connecticut, you must be licensed to care for non-relatives in your own home. The CT Department of Public Health (DPH) is the agency that regulates day care licensing in Connecticut. For guidance about the process of obtaining a license, please call 2-1-1 (Child Care Infoline), a toll free call from anywhere in the

state. An added plus for relative caregivers participating in Care 4 Kids, the state's child care subsidy program, is that the reimbursement rates are higher for licensed providers. A few of the necessary requirements for licensure are as follows:

- The applicant must be at least 20 years of age
- The applicant and all persons over age 16 living in the home must have a criminal background check and fingerprinting completed. These services are available through your local police department. Call in advance to determine if there are specified times and costs.
- Four references must be provided.
- The home must be inspected and approved for child care by the



Connecticut
Department of Public
Health.

- The applicant must have current health immunizations, physical, and an approved tuberculosis screening.
- The applicant must maintain First Aid certification.

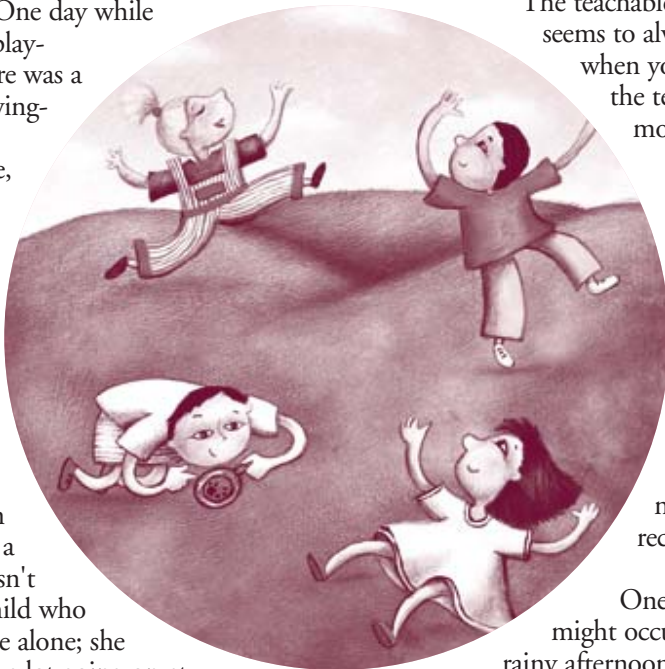
Call 2-1-1 Child Care for specific information regarding the child care professional organizations, child care resources, educational workshops and trainings, business loans, food program, and medication administration training. The website at <http://www.infoline.org/> also provides information on quality child care tips and a link to the DPH website for complete regulations and licensing procedures. For more information, please contact us at 211 or 800.505.1000. ♣

Real Life Examples of Teachable Moments

Susan Gallagher, Peggy Kelly, Roni Whiting
School Age Programs
Education Connection Regional
Educational Service Center
800.852.4314

Just a little talk

Great teachable moments can come at any time; they just need to be recognized. Snack time and outside time are great times for teachable moments. One day while out on the playground, there was a child just swinging on the swings alone, I took that opportunity and sat on the swing next to her. While sitting there, I started a conversation and learned a lot. She wasn't just a shy child who wanted to be alone; she actually had a lot going on at home and was very withdrawn. She really wanted to interact with the other girls, but didn't know where to start. I took a moment to tell her it's okay to be shy and told her I was there if she ever needed to talk. Then I suggested joining the girls in a game and we joined in together. For the next week or so, I helped her approach the girls and before you know it, she was leading the group. I could have easily continued circling the playground, but instead I took advantage of a teachable moment. I felt good knowing I made a difference. And, who knows, maybe that same girl one day might approach a child in a similar situation. -Susan Gallagher



What IS Thunder, Anyway?

I remember a day during the summer when I happened to be down in Newtown at the Summer Adventure Program during an especially severe thunderstorm. I tried to distract and calm the kids by making a game out of answering the question: What is thunder? You know how much kids love to answer questions like that. Well there were some humorous answers, too, which produced some giggles. So, it really did distract them from their fears, and, at the same time, they learned about thunderstorms and feared them less. -Peggy Kelley

Timing is Everything!

The teachable moment seems to always occur when you are not in the teachable mood. The lessons we teach or the activities we prepare don't have quite the same impact as handling that teachable moment correctly.

One example might occur during a rainy afternoon. You could follow the raindrops from the roof, along the gutters, past the window, onto the ground, and down the storm drains (this during naptime of course, when the child is supposed to be sleeping!). Another might be to use a day when the children are particularly energetic and wiggly (and not willing to sit and learn anything) to discuss how our bodies get energy from food and how our muscles work (they use the food to create the energy so then they can sit for the intended lesson!). Roni Whiting ♣

ALL CHILDREN CONSIDERED VOL. IV • 2003-04

The *All Children Considered* newsletter is published by the University of Connecticut Cooperative Extension System in partnership with the UConn School of Family Studies and the Connecticut Department of Social Services. We welcome readers' comments and contributions related to childcare. Please send correspondence to the editor via e-mail: Harry.Mangle@uconn.edu, (860) 570-9077 or to UConn Greater Hartford, 1800 Asylum Avenue, West Hartford, CT 06117-2659.

2003-2004 EDITORIAL TEAM

Harry Mangle, Editor and Educator
UConn Cooperative Extension System
Elizabeth Brown, Legislative Director
Commission On Children
Devon Conover, Acting Director
Division of Community Based Regulation
Department of Public Health
Dawn Cook, Regional Director, the
YWCA of the Hartford Region
Mary Ann Dayton-Fitzgerald, Program
Administration Supervisor, Department of
Children and Families
Patsy Evans, Editorial Consultant
Office of Communications and
Information Technology
Poshen Wang, Graphic Designer
Office of Communications and
Information Technology
Patrice Farquharson, Director
West Haven Child Development Center
Harriet Feldlaufer, Education Consultant,
Family and Student Services, Bureau of
Early Childhood, CTSDE
Charlotte Madison, Director
UConn Child Development Laboratory
Sherri Sutera, Vice President of Child Care
Services, United Way of Connecticut
Arlene Swatson
Connecticut School Age Child Care
Alliance
Tracy Zolnik, Child Care Manager,
Child Care Infoline

You are encouraged to reproduce articles or excerpts from the *All Children Considered* newsletter. Please give credit to *All Children Considered* published by the University of Connecticut Cooperative Extension System and the Connecticut Department of Social Services.

The University of Connecticut Cooperative Extension System is an equal opportunity employer and program provider. To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W; Whitten Building, Stop Code 9410; 1400 Independence Avenue, SW; Washington, DC 20250-9410, or call (202) 720-5964.

Make Teachable Moments Happen After School!

Susan Krampitz
CT School Age Care Alliance (CSACCA)
Connecticut's After School Professional
Organization
203.483.1846 staff@csacca.org

Catching those wonderful teachable moments in afterschool programs requires **planning** and **flexibility** on the part of caregivers or staff in after school programs. Planning is important to ensure that supplies are adequate and that the time is spent constructively. In addition, flexibility by caregivers is necessary in order to seize a “teachable moment” when it occurs. When such an opportunity occurs, caregivers, serving as facilitators, can frame the learning in a way that it is important to all present. In addition, they need to offer a time to reflect so the individuals or the group can talk and think about what was learned.

Nature, current events, games, cooking, and even conflict provide teachable moments that can lead to an instructive “lesson.” Carol Weisberg, after school consultant and former director of an

after school program, shared an example of a “teachable moment” in her program. Carole wrote,

Children seem to always be looking for some material reward or award for work they do or for winning competitions. A “teachable moment” happened when I was engaged in a highly competitive game of tabletop hockey with a first grade girl in our program. I tried my hardest, and so did she. It was a close game up until the end when she put away the winning shot. We, of course, had an audience who, along with my skillful competitor, cheered gleefully for her when she won. However, her first words after beating me in the game was “what do I get?” My response to her was to smile very broadly, give her a “high five,” and say in my most enthusiastic voice, “You win the intrinsic knowledge that you played your best and did a job well-done!” “Good Job!” I’m not sure she completely got the message I was hoping to convey, but I also think she wasn’t disappointed and may actually have been quite satisfied with herself.

In *Adventures in Peacemaking*, authors William Kriedler and Lisa Furlong introduce the idea of using a “Peace Place” as a conflict resolution tool in an after school program. Planning is definitely

necessary to use this tool. Staff introduce the idea, set up the “Peace Place” with a problem solving process posted, and train the children in the process. When conflict occurs, the “teachable moment” occurs and the children can ask to go to the “Peace Place” or are sent there. Once they’ve worked out their problem, either alone or with adult help, they report what they have agreed to and then go back to the group activities.

Other teachable moments that can occur in an after school program may be as a group sits quietly under a tree and observes nature around them. Or, it may be in a cooking session as children learn math as they measure with measuring cups and spoons or practice reading and critical thinking skills as they read a recipe.

Good planning leads to good programming, but flexibility to seize that “teachable moment” can lead to unexpected rewards!

Resource:

William Kriedler and Lisa Furlong, *Adventures in Peacemaking*, Project Adventure, Inc. 1955. 🌱

Time with Nana, a Learning Experience

Elizabeth Brown, Legislative Director
CT Commission on Children
860.240.0042

My favorite notepaper sums up the joy of being a grandparent: It says, “If I had known that grandchildren were so much fun, I wouldn’t have had children!” Fast-forward from child rearing to grand parenting, and each experience opens the kaleidoscope of a child’s world. What is a teachable moment? Everyday objects become adventures: For example, the household flashlight becomes a pointer on the ceiling to be chased or to form letters and numerals. Pillows on

the floor become x’s and o’s in a grand game of tic-tac-toe.

The sink becomes an underwater explorers’ habitat, for bouncing corks. A two year old learns the principle of buoyancy. Measuring cups, pouring amounts from big to little, throw in an imaginary cake mix, egg, and water, and a culinary delight appears in chocolate, strawberry, or even purple/pink cake (Heather likes purple and Meghan likes pink.) Grandmothers can make any kind of cake!

Old magazines unfold colors, letters, and make wonderful collages (on paper plates no less). The refrigerator becomes the art wall and boasts colorful drawings and paintings of budding artists, delighted to find out that mixing blue and red makes purple! I never realized what

treasures my closet holds- red shoes become Dorothy’s magic shoes, (Julia’s favorite) black shoes double for tap shoes, and my old sneakers make great hiking boots for our backyard play.



The couch becomes a gymnast’s delight. Remove the seat cushions and presto- a trampoline. Hold on tight, and climbing up

the back becomes a trip up Mount Everest (definitely Katie's favorite). Please note that this activity is only for two-years old and younger. I draw the line somewhere!

Ordinary things become extraordinary opportunities to engage a child's imagination that leads to language and cognition. I find such times are excu-

sions into the "moment" of a child's life-including hugs, oohs and ahs, repeating sounds, singing songs, dancing, or just walking hand in hand. Seeing things for the first time together excites and instills self-realization and inquisitiveness- the real underpinnings of a successful learner.

I am blessed with four healthy, ener-

getic granddaughters, 2 two year olds and 2 four year olds. Grandmothers get to do things we never did as mothers. So I hear, "Ma, I can't believe you are letting them eat in the living room!" from my own daughter with that look that says, "You never let me do that!" Now, isn't that worth the wait? Don't forget to catch those teachable moments. They go so fast. ♣

CONNECTICUT STATE AGENCY UPDATE

Department of Education

<http://www.state.ct.us/sde/>



The Power of Family Learning – Find those Teachable Moments

Harriet Feldlaufer and Judy Carson, Education Consultants
CT State Department of Education
860.713.6774

Families are engaged in learning all the time, often without even knowing it. Everyday family life activities offer a wealth of opportunities for learning. These happen in many social interactions and physical settings that are a part of families' natural environments.

Spending time together engaged in family learning activities helps make families stronger. Here are some great ideas for caregivers to share with families that involve typical, everyday activities as a source for learning. They are the building blocks for reading and learning and are fun!

When You ...	This helps your child ...
Make a family scrapbook, photo album, or memory box and tell stories about family history.	Learn that a story goes with pictures and about the elements of a story – such as characters, settings and that events take place in order.
Take a walk in your neighborhood. Notice street and store signs and talk about what they mean.	Learn to recognize symbols and read them.
Play bank, store, or restaurant using blank deposit slips, newspaper coupons, or clean, empty food containers.	Learn that most careers use reading and writing.
Talk about your day over dinner.	Build vocabulary and language skills.
Make up silly rhymes.	Hear the small sounds in words and the rhythm of language.
Sort and fold laundry together.	Learn the names of shapes- triangles, squares, and rectangles- and ways to group objects. These are essential math skills.
Write notes to put in pockets or lunchboxes; read messages on greeting cards.	Connect letters and words with important information.

Remember that everyday activities are a great way to learn. It's important to let families know that what they do at home makes a difference!!! For more information on family learning, visit <http://www.state.ct.us/sde/deps/Family/Literacy/index.htm> ♣

CONNECTICUT STATE AGENCY UPDATE

Department of Social Services (DSS)

<http://www.dss.state.ct.us/ccare/>

Head Start and Early Head Start in Connecticut – Program Profile 2003

Grace Whitney, Director
Connecticut Head Start
Collaboration Office
860.424.5066

Head Start and Early Head Start are comprehensive child development and school readiness programs that last year served 8,106 chil-

dren and 7,517 families in Connecticut. The vast majority of children and families participated in services offered by 27 Head Start programs for preschool-aged children and their families. However, over 500 pregnant women, infants, and toddlers and their families received services from one of the 10 Early Head Start sites in the state.

Information about Head Start and Early Head Start is contained in Head Start in Connecticut – Program Profile 2003 which was recently released. This report contains a description of the federal Head Start program, a variety of data on education, health, and other services, as well as contact information for individual programs. To obtain a

copy leave your name and address at the number above or
grace.whitney@po.state.ct.us



Department of Public Health (DPH)

(800) 282-6063, (800) 439-0437, (860) 509-8045, and
<http://www.dph.state.ct.us/>
Bureau of Community Health

Connecticut's Early Childhood Partners Initiative – Planning for the Future

Charlie Slaughter, Project Coordinator
Department of Public Health
860.509.7840

Adults who provide care for infants, toddlers, and other young children have a major influence on their social, emotional, physical, and cognitive development. The development, both healthy and unhealthy, that takes place in early childhood has a powerful impact on the child's later success in life.

The State of Connecticut is undertaking a two-year planning process – the Early Childhood Partners Initiative. We

will identify what has been successful and what gaps continue to exist concerning the relationships and environments needed to support a young child's healthy development. By the end of the two-year period, a strategic plan will be developed with the input of hundreds of people involved with young children and their families. The plan will guide Connecticut in its efforts to strengthen young children's healthy development.

The plan will engage parties interested in early childhood health and development and build on the success of earlier federal and state initiatives, including Healthy Childcare America, the Head Start Collaboration, School Readiness, and HUSKY. It also recognizes the privately funded community programs throughout the state.

The Department of Public Health has contracted with the Child Health and Development Institute, the

Commission on Children, and the Yale Consultation Center to assure a process that is broad-based and family driven.

Your insights and perspectives are valuable to the development of a realistic strategic plan. We have been and will continue to involve a number of the child care community's state organizations in the planning process and the development of the strategic plan. We will also be holding several community meetings around the state that will provide child care providers an opportunity to have input at the meeting.

If you would like to receive electronic updates about the planning process, including announcements about the community meetings, please send your name and e-mail address to:

Charlie.Slaughter@po.state.ct
Connecticut Department of Public Health
410 Capitol Ave.
Hartford, CT 06134

RESOURCES FOR CHILD CARE PROGRAMS

Lead Poisoning Prevention Resource – “Sesame Street” Lead Away! Video

Ana Chambers, MPH, CHES, Health Education Coordinator
Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program
860.509.7745

The “Sesame Street” Lead Away! video kit contains materials that were designed to present the complicated subject of childhood lead poisoning in a manner that is easily understood by children and their families. The video kit includes an English videotape, Spanish and English audiotape, and ten copies of the family booklet “Lead: The Silent Threat,”

available in English and Spanish. The kit features “Sesame Street” characters children know and love as they discuss the dangers of lead



poisoning.

Both the video and audiotape can be utilized in child day care centers, physician offices, or even at home. Some of the learning points of “Sesame Street” Lead Away! include:

- Children should wash their hands before they eat and after playing outdoors.
- Children should stay away from peeling paint.
- Children should receive a blood lead test at ages 12 and 24 months.
- Shoes should always be removed when entering the home and left at the door.

The video and audiotape teach children to sing songs with the “Sesame Street” characters that point to all of these learning points. Children come away with an understanding that lead poisoning is harmful, that their younger siblings need to be protected as well as themselves, and that they can play a part in keeping themselves and other children away from lead. By learning the songs and acting out the lyrics, children



come away with a lasting understanding of the dangers of lead poisoning.

To purchase these resources:
<http://www.sesameworkshop.org/EducationalResources/>

You can also write to the Sesame Workshop, One Lincoln Plaza, New York, NY 10023. Other publications available from the Sesame Workshop include “Talk, Read, Write!,” “A is for Asthma,” and the “Family Activity Book.”

For questions about childhood lead poisoning, feel free to contact the Department of Public Health, Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program at 860.509.7745. ♣

Booster Seats Save Lives

Marian Storch, Health Program Associate,
Family Health Division/Injury Prevention
860.509.7791 &
Pat Zainc, Child Passenger Safety Coordinator,
Waterbury Health District

The National Highway Safety Administration (NHTSA) has launched a new campaign to increase awareness among parents and caregivers of the need for booster seats. NHTSA estimates that only 10 to

20% of the children who should be in booster seats actually ride in them.

Safety belts are designed for adults and do not provide the best protection in a traffic crash for many children. When children outgrow their child safety seats, typically when they weigh around 40 pounds, they are not yet ready to ride in safety belts. Children ages four to seven years who ride in safety belts are 59% more likely to be injured in a crash than children riding in booster seats. The lap belt may ride up onto the stomach, which can cause serious injury in a crash. Because the shoulder belt also may not fit, children or their caregivers often place the shoulder belt behind the back or

under the arm. These practices are also dangerous and can lead to injury or death.

NHTSA recommends that children ride in belt positioning booster seats until the safety belt fits right, typically when the child is around eight years old, about 80 pounds and 4 feet 9 inches tall. Does your child need to ride in a booster seat? Take this simple 5-step test and find out.

- Does your child sit with his/her back against the vehicle seat back?
- Do the child’s knees bend naturally at the edge of the vehicle seat?
- Does the lap belt fit low and snug across the upper thighs?

- Does the shoulder belt cross the collarbone and center of the chest?
- Can the child stay seated like this for the whole trip?

If you answered NO to any of these questions, your child should be in a

booster seat. Booster seats “boost” the child up so that the lap and shoulder belt fit properly and protect your child. Always use both the lap and shoulder belt with belt positioning booster seat - never just the lap belt. Additional information and educational resources are available from:

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
<http://www.nhtsa.gov/CPS/>
CT SAFE KIDS Coalition
<http://www.ctsafekids.org> 🌸

University of Connecticut
Cooperative Extension System
1376 Storrs Road, Unit 4036
Storrs, CT 06269-4036

NONPROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
STORRS, CT
PERMIT NO.3

Please share the newsletter with all staff.