EVERYDAY MOMENTS ARE TEACHING MOMENTS

An Infant & Toddler Educator's Guide

Meaningful learning doesn't only happen during planned activities. For infants and toddlers, everyday routines, relationships, and play provide opportunities to explore, connect, and develop new skills. Intentional teaching happens when educators observe, respond, and build on these experiences.

WHAT LEARNING LOOKS LIKE THROUGHOUT THE DAY

Everyday Moment	Developmental Learning	Intentional Teaching
Diaper changing	Social-emotional, language, body awareness	Respond to cues, describe actions, invite participation
Mealtimes	Fine motor, communication, independence	Allow time to try, notice cues, encourage participation
Container play	Cognitive, fine motor, persistence	Observe interests, offer materials, introduce language
Comforting a child	Social-emotional, emerging self-regulation	Recognize feelings, respond sensitively, offer comfort
Outdoor exploration	Gross motor, sensory, cognitive	Follow interests, encourage movement and exploration
Books and conversations	Language, early literacy, social connection	Follow attention, name objects, respond to sounds and gestures

---

CONNECTING OBSERVATION TO LEARNING

What I observed: A toddler repeatedly filled and emptied a container.

What learning I noticed:

- **Cognitive:** Exploring cause and effect
- **Physical:** Practicing fine motor skills
- **Approaches to learning:** Demonstrating curiosity and persistence

Documentation tip: Describe what the child actually did before connecting it to developmental skills.

A MOMENT FOR REFLECTION

What did I notice about a child's learning today, and how did I respond?
Remember, meaningful teaching often happens during the moments that aren't part of a planned activity.

A LITTLE REMINDER

Caregiving is teaching. Play is learning. Relationships are the foundation.
The small, intentional decisions educators make throughout the day support children's development, confidence, and sense of belonging.

Little Years Big Impact
Small moments. Meaningful connections. Big impact.
littleyearsbigimpact.com