

# EDUCATION: EDUCATING FAMILIES THROUGH TEACHABLE MOMENTS

A teachable moment is simply any time during the course of a health visit when the child health professional identifies an opportunity to teach the child and family. Teachable moments are the moments when the child and family are ready to learn.

1. Recognize “teachable moments” in health visit
2. Clarify learning needs of child and family
3. Set a limited agenda and prioritize needs together
4. Select teaching strategy
5. Seek and provide feedback
6. Evaluate effectiveness of teaching

### Four characteristics of the teachable moment

- Provides “information bites” (small amounts of information)
- Is directed to the child’s or family’s specific need
- Is brief (e.g., a few seconds)
- Requires no preparation time

Teaching strategies	Advantages
■ Telling (explain, provide information, give directions)	Works well when giving initial explanations or clarifying concepts
■ Showing (demonstrate, model, draw)	Illustrates concepts for visual learners
■ Providing resources (handouts, videos, Web sites)	Serves as reference after family leaves the office/clinic
■ Questioning (ask open-ended questions, allow time for response)	Promotes problem-solving, critical thinking; elicits better information; stimulates recall
■ Practicing (apply new information)	Reinforces new concepts
■ Giving constructive feedback (seek family’s perspective, correct misunderstandings, restate, clarify)	Affirms family’s knowledge; corrects misunderstandings

Source: Adapted with permission from Green M, Palfrey JS, Clark EM, Anastasi JM, eds. 2002. *Bright Futures: Guidelines for Health Supervision of Infants, Children, and Adolescents* (2nd ed., rev.)—Pocket Guide. Arlington, VA: National Center for Education in Maternal and Child Health.