



Making Learning Meaningful is important to children's understanding of the learning concepts and the world around them. Teachers make learning meaningful when they:

- Link new learning to children's previous experience.
- Relate concepts to children's lives.
- Provide children with hands-on learning.

WHAT STRATEGIES CAN I USE TO MAKE LEARNING MEANINGFUL FOR CHILDREN?

Here are some suggested strategies and examples of what this looks like in action. There are many other ways children's learning can be made meaningful. Please note that some examples may include more than one strategy.

Create opportunities to link children's NEW KNOWLEDGE to WHAT THEY HAVE LEARNED.

What this looks like in action:	What it is not:
When playing on the playground the children see beetles on the grass. The teacher says, "We talked about different kinds of insects when we read our story this morning. What kind of insects do you see?"	When on the playground the children see a beetle and the teacher says, "Oh look, there's a beetle. Can you say beetle?"

Relate new learning to CHILDREN'S EVERYDAY LIVES.

What this looks like in action:	What it is not:
While playing with clay at centers, the teacher makes a clay taco shell. She asks the children, "What should I put in my taco? What do you eat in your tacos at home?"	When playing with clay at centers the teacher makes a taco and fills it herself, saying, "Look, I made a taco."

Bring concepts to life by PUTTING LEARNING INTO ACTION.

What this looks like in action:	What it is not:
After spending a week learning about construction through books and having a "construction center," the teacher arranges for kids to visit a local construction site to see how concrete is poured out of the concrete mixer.	Kids are taught about construction through reading books and looking at pictures of a construction site.

NOTE: Please note that the strategies for "What this looks like in action" and "What it is not" are examples specific to those strategies. The behaviors in the nonexamples may be appropriate in other instances depending on children's learning goals.

WHEN DURING THE DAY SHOULD I DO THIS?

Making learning meaningful for children can be accomplished throughout the school day in many classroom activities, including centers, whole group instruction, meal and snack time, as well as transition. What is important is that teachers think *intentionally* about finding opportunities to do this at different times during the day, and not just during a structured instructional activity.