Children have a natural curiosity that can open the door to all kinds of meaningful conversations, from why the sky is blue to why ants walk in a straight line. These everyday occurrences that may seem ordinary to most adults can be an ideal way to introduce kids to new concepts and experiences. In this activity, you’ll learn how the kitchen can become an ideal place to seize teachable moments.

**What We Learn**

- Observe & follow-up
- Use unplanned events
- Follow kids’ leads

**How-To**

The kitchen is an ideal place for teachable moments because it’s a place where children are always going to be engaged in—trying to come in and get some food, trying to spend some time with Mom, or help out a little bit. We know that there’s going to be a lot of spontaneous teachable moments that come up, so it makes sense to be prepared for these teachable moments.

**Stovetop**

The entire kitchen is an opportunity to teach children about safety issues, but safety is especially key in relation to a stove. The stove is obviously a very dangerous place for children to be around. Teach children that as the steam is coming up, you should never come around this area. Use this as a spontaneous opportunity to give all those kind of safety guideline that are so important. Show them that when you’re making something on the stove, this is really something not to touch.

**Kitchen Sink**

The kitchen sink is also a really great area for teachable moments. There are lots of bubbles and lots of things that happen that children are curious about. You can use the opportunity to talk about how you clean the dishes. You could talk about drying the dishes. You could talk about differences in water temperature. All those things will come up spontaneously because children can feel when there’s a different change in temperature with the water. Drying the dishes is a great moment to instruct children how wet dishes aren’t put away in the cabinet until they air dry on the dish rack.
Refrigerator Magnets
A lot of us have magnets on our kitchen refrigerators. If you have magnets that include letters of the alphabet, you can use this as an opportunity for to talk about things that start with a particular letter, for example, foods that start with the letter “G.” It is a really simple and easy way to use the magnets, but in a more intentional manner.

Sorting Food in the Refrigerator
Inside the refrigerator, there are lots of opportunities for teaching children about sorting. You can show how you separate your fruits and vegetables, for example. You can also sort foods according to their various sizes. For example, you can show how there’s things that go on the door, and there are things that go in a different part of the fridge because they are a different size and wouldn’t fit in the door. You can use all those opportunities of children helping you find the appropriate place where they go.

In addition to the refrigerator, you can talk about how the freezer works and how it turns water into ice cubes. You discuss with your child why certain foods, like ice cream, need to be frozen and why you might store certain foods, like meat, in the freezer.

Preparing a meal with your children is always a great opportunity to teach children about new things. Remember, too, that when children help prepare a meal, they are much more likely to actually eat it.

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