

After-the-Moment Teaching

In-the-moment teaching is not always feasible for a variety of reasons including your child is very upset or out of hearing range; you are busy with another child; you do not want to draw attention; or you or your child need a break. Just because a teachable moment passes does not mean the opportunity is lost.

After-the-moment teaching is a debrief or revisiting of something that happened for any of these purposes:

Helping a child make sense of a situation that was confusing.

Celebrating when a child did something positive.

Helping a child learn to cope with strong feelings or sensory-based challenges.

Increasing a child's understanding how others react to the child's words and actions.

Helping a child understand difficult abstract concepts like causation, thinking, and feelings.

Building language and vocabulary.

Creating an opportunity for back-and-forth conversation and positive, social connection.




In-the-moment teaching Do's:

- ✓ Keep your interaction as light, informal, and brief as possible so your child stays engaged. Stay neutral when discussing negative behavior.
- ✓ Try to revisit an event as close as possible to when it happened, when the memory is fresh for your child. But if your child is hungry, thirsty, tired, upset, etc., best to hold-off until later.
- ✓ Consider “captive audience” situations, such as riding in the car, as great opportunities for both in-the-moment and after-the-moment teaching.
- ✓ Be sure to reinforce positive behaviors as you and your child debrief; e.g., praise your child for paying attention to the conversation.
- ✓ Enhance your teaching with photos or video: when possible, use your cell phone to capture a situation for use later during after-the-moment teaching. But please don't share photos/videos that include other children without their parents' consent!
- ✓ Cartoon-style graphic organizers are an excellent visual tool for facilitating communication and teaching. We include two examples in this section.

Every child with autism is different and there is no one-size-fits-all approach. Consult with your child's team for their suggestions on after-the-moment teaching


Examples of cartoon-style graphic organizers for use during after-the-moment teaching.



Mom and Bella create this together after a birthday party where Bella got very upset by loud noise. A visual description of what happened broken down frame-by-frame helps Bella makes sense of a stressful situation. Use of thinking bubbles helps Bella understand how the others reacted to her screaming. When Mom and Bella work together on the "Next time it's loud" frame, Bella gets to problem-solve on how to cope in a situation like this.

<p>what happened</p>	<p>what Bella was thinking</p>	<p>Because it was loud Bella did this</p>
<p>At birthday party, kids singing LOUD</p>  <p>LOUD!!</p>	 <p>Kids Too LOUD!</p>	 <p>loud scream, no words</p> <p>Bella screams</p>

<p>When Bella screamed</p>	<p>Next time it's loud:</p>
 <p>? Why is Bella screaming?</p> <p>I wish, Bella would say what she is thinking. I want to help Bella.</p> <p>MOM →</p>	 <p>Kids too loud! Help!</p> <p>ok! let's go to a quiet room.</p> <p>I'm so happy Bella said what she is thinking!</p> <p>I want quiet!</p>

At the playground, Michael took another boy's shovel without asking, and then was confused and upset by the boy's reaction. Back at home, Dad and Michael create this together to help Michael understand why the other boy got upset and what Michael can do the next time he is in a situation like this. Combining a visual like this with some role play to give a child practice of what to say or do "next time" can really help.

What happened	What Michael was thinking	What Michael did
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Boys are playing in sand box. - Michael is filling cup with sand, then pouring sand out of cup. - Boy is building a tower. 		<p>Michael takes the shovel.</p>

Because Michael took the boy's shovel	Next time Michael wants a turn
 <p>Boy grabs his shovel from Michael. Boy won't let Michael play with shovel.</p>	

There are many options for how to do visually-based after-the-moment teaching. What will be most effective with your own child depends on her or his individual needs, challenges, and strengths. We encourage you to show our graphic organizer examples to your child's team for advice and suggestions. While our two examples focus on negative behaviors, we encourage the use graphic organizers to celebrate, describe, and reinforce positive behaviors, too!

Our two graphic organizers draw on concepts that are taught in *Thinking about Thinking* and *Talking about Thinking*. You can find sample pages of these on our products page (moobooautism.com) to see if they might be helpful to your child.

