

# Section 1: Your Role



## The Importance of...

- **Questioning**
- **Modeling Language**
- **Teachable Moments**
- **On-Going Training & Self-Assessment**

# Effective Teaching Involves...

## Asking Questions

Asking the right questions challenges children to think and use their own creativity to solve problems. It also opens the door to back-and-forth conversations. While very young children may not yet be able answer orally, they can share ideas using non-verbal communication. More advanced children, on the other hand, should be asked open-ended questions that invite them to think. For instance, "How are you going to use those materials to make a boat that will float?" The Gee Whiz curriculum includes open-ended questioning as part of our approach to teaching and learning.



## Modeling Language

Children build vocabulary and language skills by listening to you! Think of them as little sponges...absorbing everything they hear long before they can speak the words themselves.

Be sure to model language during the ENTIRE day...not just during "teaching time." Talk with children about what they are doing as they engage in free play or during routine times such as snack. For instance, you might say something like this when the children are playing outside: "You are using that small bucket as a shovel to fill the large bowl." Doing this helps the child link your spoken language with his/her actions.

The Gee Whiz curriculum includes tips every day to help you model language as you interact with children. We even help you do this during routine times like diapering and meals!



## Teaching "Intentionally!"

Know your children and teach with them in mind. Each child is different and has his/her own background of knowledge, strengths/areas for growth and unique needs. Keep this in mind when planning activities and experiences each day. Remember..."one size does not fit all" and you will need to modify or adjust activities to meet the individual needs and interests of the children in your group. The Gee Whiz curriculum provides guidance to help. Additionally, pages 11-21 of this guide include concrete examples of how you can individualize the Gee Whiz Education curriculum. This section also helps you learn how to record anecdotal notes and reflections to help you build a curriculum that is responsive to the each child's needs.

# Teachable Moments

## What Is a Teachable Moment?

**ANY** moment can be a teachable moment...

- *Jules just found a butterfly in the backyard*
- *Andrew fell and bumped his knee*
- *Juanita went to the dentist for the first time*
- *Max and his friend are having trouble sharing the tricycle*
- *Isabella desperately wants to carry a bucket full of water but it is too heavy for her to carry by herself*

As an educator, your job is to keep your eyes and ears open for these types of moments. Take the opportunity to use them as a time for children to learn, develop and grow. Teachable moments are not limited to cognitive areas but instead encompass all other areas of development...social, emotional, and physical. Asking open-ended questions and engaging children in conversation is a sure-fire way to turn an everyday moment into a teachable one. Taking advantage of these teachable moments can help children become confident and successful.



The photo above shows a "teachable moment!" While interacting with the child, you could ask questions such as, "What happens when you use the magnifying glass to look at the flowers?" and "How do the flowers look different when you look at them with the magnifying glass? Why do you think that is?" As the child continues to explore while using the magnifying glass, who knows where his interests may go! Asking questions and engaging the child in conversations enables you to plan future experiences based on his interest.

# On-Going Training and Professional Development

On-going training and professional development are a big part of the Gee Whiz curriculum. At Gee Whiz, we recognize that it is extremely important for you, the provider, to have access to information about child development, best practices and more. To help you be, "the best provider you can be," you will find the following training and self-assessment tools included in the curriculum at no additional cost.\* This User's Guide is also an indispensable training resource for the Gee Whiz curriculum. Please consider printing it out and putting it in a 3-ring binder so you can refer to it frequently.

**Gee Whiz Cohort** The Gee Whiz Cohort is a wonderful way for current Gee Whiz customers as well as all providers in the field to receive training on both the curriculum and current ECE topics. The cohort is also open to Quality Specialists and those who work with providers. It is FREE to everyone.

**How Does the Cohort Work?** Approximately every month, Gee Whiz hosts a live webinar for customers, non-customers, Quality Specialists, etc. These webinars are held in the evening on a weekday so providers can attend without traveling or giving up their weekends. Since the cohort started in July 2019, we've hosted numerous webinars! At the conclusion of the webinar, those who would like a Certificate of Attendance MUST complete a post-assessment quiz. We also record these webinars and post them on our website under the "Training & Support" tab and on our YouTube Channel ... Gee Whiz Education Curriculum for FCC (<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UcklYj0hTLIDxscdcb7Xftd9g/videos>). Recording the webinars and posting them allows providers who might not be able to attend the live version to still benefit from the training.

**Approved in Pennsylvania for PQAS hours!** Providers in Pennsylvania can now get PQAS hours when they register for Gee Whiz webinars via the PD Registry. We are also an Automatically Accepted Training Agency in Nebraska. We hope to be approved in more states in the future!



\*Subject to change in the future.

# On-Going Training and Professional Development

At Gee Whiz, we believe that training on the curriculum should not be limited to webinars or “formal” PD. So, we build “training” into the Gee Whiz curriculum in a few different ways. First, we help you better understand the “why” behind each experience and then link the “why” to the developmental areas/goals. Here’s how!

## The “Why” Behind Experiences:

Each activity in the Gee Whiz curriculum explains the “why” behind it in the first bullet point. In addition, picture codes are used to identify the developmental areas addressed by the experience. Here is an example:



### Exploring Together: Scurry Like a Squirrel

(all ages, 😊 🖐️ ❤️ 🔑 🎨 🎵 📖 🗣️)

- Squirrels are a forest animal that also lives in parks, neighborhoods and backyards. If squirrels frequent your backyard, plan to watch them from the window with the children as part of the experiences planned for today. During this activity, the children will have the opportunity to pretend to be squirrels as they engage in dramatic play. In the process, they will build gross motor skills and practice self-regulation.

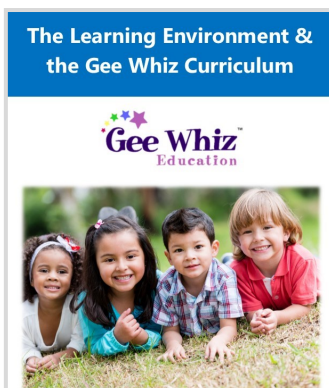
*First bullet point of EVERY Gee Whiz experience explains the “why”*

*Each Gee Whiz experience uses picture codes to help providers connect developmental areas to the experience.*

Additionally, there is a chart in the back of each Teaching Guide that details the specific Learning Indicators (skills) addressed by each experience. You can find the Learning Indicators on pages 35-36 of this User’s Guide. For the experience above, the list of Learning Indicators would be: AL2, AL3, PD4, SE2, SE3, SK1, SK3, CA1, CA4, LK3, LK4, LK5, LD1, LD2, LD3, LD4

## The Environment & Gee Whiz Booklet

This helpful booklet contains a wealth of information about your role in the learning environment as well as the importance of asking open-ended questions, choosing materials and more. The information contained is designed to help you prepare for your environmental ratings assessment (e.g., FCCERS-R or CLASS). You can find this booklet on our website under “Educational Resources” or you can click the picture to open this document.



## Parent Involvement, Family Engagement & Gee Whiz Booklet

This booklet is packed full of information about parent involvement and family engagement. Not only does it explain the differences between the two, it provides helpful printables and tips for increasing and enhancing both parental involvement and family engagement in your program. Details are also provided about the many materials included in the Gee Whiz curriculum designed to help in both of these areas. You can find this booklet under the “Educational Resources” tab on our website or you can click the picture to open this document.

