



Benefits of Mixed Age Groups for the Child

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Developmentally Appropriate:

- The mixed-age group environment is a very normal and natural setting.
- The real world is full of people of all ages, just as in the child's family, neighborhood, and community.
- Although schools and many daycare centers choose to segregate children by ages, this does not reflect real life.



Provider Continuity:



- Children are not moved to a new classroom and new teacher when they have a birthday or master a certain skill.
- It is difficult for parents and children to frequently have to transfer feelings of trust, comfort and affection to another caregiver.

Individual Attention:

- Family child care providers are more accepting of uneven development.
- They are able to focus on each child as an individual rather than on just one child in a group of babies/children.
- Teachers of same age groups may be more tempted to expect children to learn at the same pace.



Family/Sibling-Like Relationships:



- These relationships can be fostered, and are sources of trust, affection, comfort, and closeness.
- Research has shown that age is not an important factor for friendship choices.

Experience Different Roles:

- Each child has the opportunity to play various roles such as the youngest, middle, or oldest of the group, and therefore have exposure to different learning experiences.



Social Development Enhanced:



- Each child has the opportunity to interact with a variety of behavior and continuously practice cooperative work and play skills (sharing, taking turns, expressing feelings, being helpful to others, etc.).

Builds Leadership Skills and Self-Esteem:

- The older children have the opportunity to lead, instruct, assume responsibility, and nurture others.
- They also strengthen their own skills and knowledge already acquired through the process of tutoring others.



Learning from Other Children:



- The younger children are exposed to more complex play, advanced language, and educational activities by observing and imitating the older children.
- They often learn better from other children than from adults.

Therapeutic for “At Risk” Children:

- Children with difficulty following rules are encouraged to remind the younger ones of the rules and therefore often learn to obey and control their own behavior.
- Children with low self-esteem have the opportunity to refine their social skills and interact in a non-competitive way around the younger children.



Minimizes Competitive Pressures:



- Many children are at various learning levels and will have age-specific needs at different times.
- In mixed-age groups, they are not usually compared to their same-age peers and therefore will not usually feel the need to compete.

“Waiting Time” is Minimized:

- Many activities are open-ended or coordinated for all ages – with all children involved.
- The older children are usually able to be helpful and assist with holding the door open, hand washing, putting away toys, setting the table, etc.





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