

Making It Happen! Continuity of Care for Infants and Toddlers in a Mixed Age Setting

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Infants and Toddlers Need:

- Nurturance
- Security
- Encouragement
- Predictability
- Focus
- Expansion
- Support

Meeting Those Needs:

The needs of infants and toddlers can be met through care that provides for *intimacy*.

Intimacy=

- Close, consistent, relationships...
- ...in a peaceful, engaging setting

Attachment

Attachment=

A strong emotional bond between a young child and a caring adult who is part of the child's everyday life

Attachment

Young children are capable of forming attachment with more than one adult.
Children are not born with attachment.
Rather, attachment develops over time.

Attachment

The formation of a secure attachment affects all areas of a child's development.

Attachment

Development of secure attachment depends on:

- time together
- sensitivity of the caregiver

Attachment

Attachment is interrupted by having a child move to a new caregiver every six months, year, or even year and a half.

When that attachment is interrupted, all of the child's learning is interrupted as well.

Therefore, continuity of care is *critical*.

Continuity of Care

Definition:

The policy of assigning a primary caregiver to an infant at the time of enrollment in a child care program and continuing this relationship until the child is three years old or leaves the program.

Continuity of Care

Frequent transitions and interruptions of attachment cause stress in children.

Stress negatively impacts development.

Continuity of Care

Specifically:

- Fewer changes of primary caregivers during the day has been linked to fewer exhibited behavior problems in child care.
- Higher numbers of changes in center or family child care providers in the earliest years have been linked to less outgoing and more aggressive behaviors among children at ages four and five.

Continuity of Care

Cryer, D.Wagner-Moore, L., Burchinal, M., Yazejian, N., Hurwitz, S., & Wolery, M. 2005. Effects of transitions on infant/toddler distress and behavior. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*. 20, 37-56

Continuity of Care

This study examined variations in children's developmental outcomes when continuity of care had and had not been experienced, based on dosage of this type of care.

Continuity of Care

Children who had received three years of center-based care utilizing a continuity of care model achieved higher vocabulary scores and lower problem behavior scores than their peers in the other two groups.

Continuity of Care

Children who had experienced *less* than three years of care utilizing a continuity of care model *still* achieved higher vocabulary scores and lower problem behavior scores than their peers who had not experienced any continuity of care.

Ways to Achieve Continuity of Care

1. Entire same age group moves with the caregiver to another space more age appropriate
2. Caregivers modify the environment to meet the group of same age children's changing needs
3. Mixed age group model

Benefits of Mixed Age Grouping

Peer mentoring:

Mixed age environments allow you to maximize the opportunities for children to learn from one another.

Benefits of Mixed Age Grouping

So many beautiful examples of nurturing occur that do not occur in a single age classroom.

Benefits of Mixed Age Grouping

Children can experience the *whole* range of what the environment has to offer:

- Look ahead to see "where they are going"
- Look back to reflect on "where they came from"

Benefits of Mixed Age Grouping

The mixed age structure *truly* supports individualizing the care that is provided.

Benefits of Mixed Age Grouping

A mixed age model supports the development of a strong sense of community:

- Strong emphasis on cooperation supports each child being respected as an individual.
- Older children pass down rituals and routines.

Benefits of Mixed Age Grouping

A mixed age classroom more closely resembles a family setting.

Benefits of Mixed Age Grouping

Mixed age grouping fits with our Montessori philosophy

- Emphasis on the importance of a three year cycle for children
- Supports children's needs while they are in the sensitive period for order

Benefits of Mixed Age Grouping

This model has benefits for teachers too:

- It makes you more flexible as a teacher.
- It provides more variety in your day.
- Only one third of your class is new each year, creating less stress at the start of the year.

Everyone's journey is different.

Remember...

Intimacy=

- close, consistent, relationships...
- ... in a peaceful, engaging setting

Primary Care

- The primary caregiver system sets the stage for deep connections.
- Each teacher is assigned a small group of children for a significant part of each child's day in care.
- Each child and family has an assigned primary caregiver.

The Role of the Primary Caregiver

- Develop a close relationship with the child.
- Provide most of the daily care, responding to the child's physical and emotional needs.
- Create a relationship of trust and exchange daily information with the family.
- Work as a team with other caregivers.
- Provide a reassuring presence to other children in the group when their primary caregiver is unavailable.

Team 1- Teacher 1	Team 1- Teacher 2
Toddler	Toddler
Toddler	Yearling
Yearling	Infant
Infant	

Team 2- Teacher 1	Team 2- Teacher 2
Toddler	Toddler
Toddler	Yearling
Yearling	Infant
Infant	

More on individualizing

- Observation
- Lesson plans- individual and group
- The way the day is structured- flexible enough to meet the needs of each child

Environmental Design

Areas For Care Routines

- Eating
- Sleeping
- Diapering and Toileting

Spaces for a Variety of Needs

- Soft, quiet spaces
- Spaces to be alone
- Spaces to work individually
- Spaces to work with a small group
- Spaces to gather as a community

Curriculum Areas

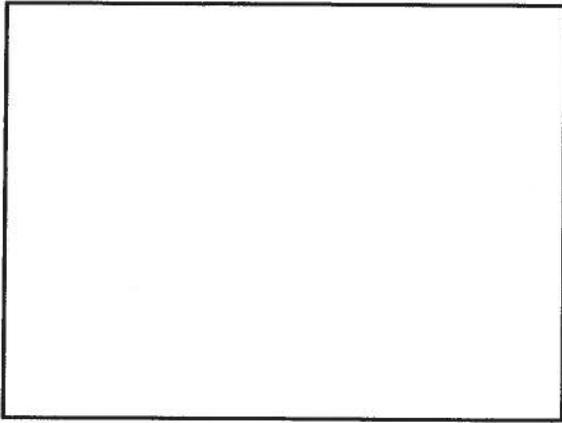
- Math
- Manipulative
- Language
- Practical Life
- Science
- Sensorial

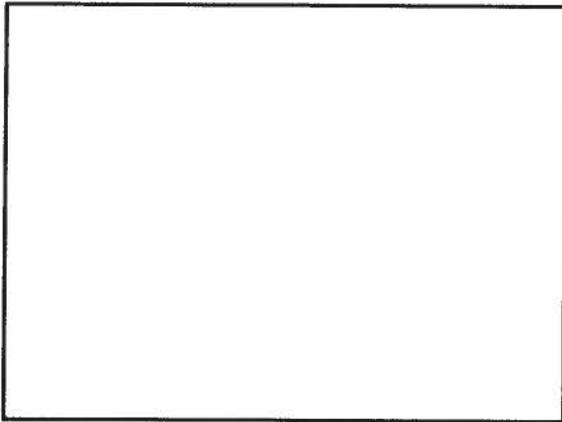
Curriculum Areas

- Gross Motor
- Art
- Music
- Dramatic Play
- Block Play

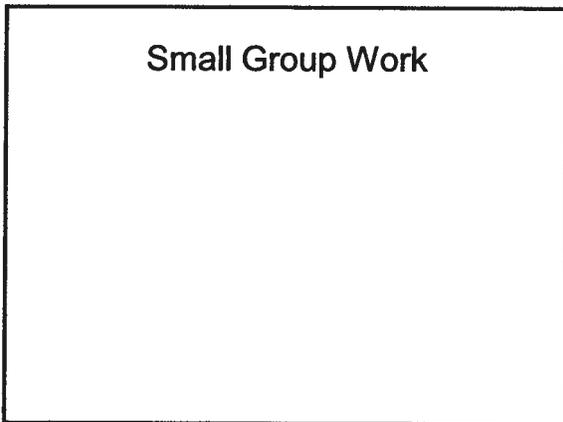
Safety Considerations

- Room Arrangement
 - Visibility
 - Creating spaces
- Awareness of the entire room
- Using your own body
- Pull down works





Small Group Work



Mixed Age Settings Meet the Needs of Infants and Toddlers

- Nurturance
- Security
- Encouragement
- Predictability
- Focus
- Expansion
- Support

Thank you for attending! Please feel free to contact us in the future.

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