

One Page Resources: Small Groups



Why have small group activities?

Research in the early childhood field has indicated how important the teacher-child relationship is an indicator of quality. Small Groups allow teachers to build and support a relationship with each child. Not to mention the opportunity to model social and problem solving strategies.

Teachers should reflect on what small group activities would work with different children. Just like not all children enjoy the block area not all children are going to like playing a board game. However, maybe a small group activity could be sitting round the play dough table, if that is what a child enjoys most.

Small groups should have a clear purpose. This time could be used to develop or support a skill or it could be for safety reasons that a small group is best. Teachers should always be sensitive to the children's limits. However, small groups can support the development of attention spans.

You can discover more about a person in an hour of play than in a year of conversation.

~ Plato

Tips to Keep in Mind:

- Activities planned should be broad enough so that each child can participate and be successful at his/her own level
- Activities are in depth enough to keep children interested for 10-15 minutes
- Small ratio's allow for large amounts of individualized attention

Required or Optional?

Small groups can be done a variety of ways. As a teaching team you need to work together to find which way is going to work best for your classroom and your group of children.

If your teaching team decides to do small group during self selection this gives the children the opportunity to choose whether or not they would like to participate in the activity.

If done this way one teacher can lead the

small group providing teacher supports as necessary and engaging with the children, on in depth level, while the other teacher in the room still engages with the students participating in self selection in the play areas.

If your teaching team decides to dedicate a specific part of the day to small group the children can be divide into 2 or 3 groups with one teacher leading each activity. You may also dedicate one group to work independently on an activity.



For an effective small group teacher student ratio should be maximized to 1:6



Some options for small group work...

Read or act out a story with the children using...

Flannel board

Puppets

Drawing board

Or your own idea!

Play games with teacher supports....

Board game

Puzzles

Dramatic play

Manipulatives

(sorting, classifying)

Create a science/ sensory experience....

Make play dough

Cooking activity

Sensory exploration (touch, taste, smell, sight, hearing)

Provide an art experience....

Exploring clay/play dough

A project related to each child's interests

Open-ended material exploration and creation