

## CHILD CENTERED ACTIVITIES BEST FOR ONE YEAR OLDS

Becky writes:

Hello, my name is Becky. I recently came out of retirement after 8 years and I am having a hard time explaining to new teachers the benefits of hands on learning for one year olds vs. teacher directed activities. Any suggestions?

Jean replies:

First of all, explain to the new teachers, that one year olds do not usually play or learn well together. One year olds are all about learning about themselves and their world by self-exploration. Remind them, that is the teachers job to make sure that they are playing in a safe environment with safe toys.

One year olds, are too young to be grouped together and taught with teacher preplanned activities. Trying to formally teach concepts such as numbers, colors and shapes to one year olds is inappropriate. One year olds need to be learning new vocabulary words and concept learning should be in the area of teaching relationships between objects, opposites, cause and effect, helping them notice things that are the same and things that are different.

Children at this age should be individually taught by expanding upon the activity that the child is currently interested in. Teachers should wander among the children, naming objects around the child, describing the characteristics of objects; expanding their vocabularies. Teachers should be constantly looking for unplanned opportunities to teach concepts that are important to the child at the time.

I would set up a classroom that is safe and fun, with different areas to investigate. Then I would have the teacher rotate between the areas, looking for opportunities to teach children basic concepts, through the use of toys, or other safe materials.

The only group activities I would do, would be music and movement, story time and snack time.

I hope this helps, Jean Warren, Preschool Express