

PLANNING FOR DIFFERENT LEARNING NEEDS

Lori writes:

I have a home childcare and the ages are from 6 months to 5 years and they all need me at different times. How do I make a curriculum to fit all their learning needs? I need HELP please.

From Jean:

First of all, let me say that I have never professionally worked with children of mixed ages. However, I have had lots of experience with my own children and my grandchildren. You can set up a schedule where the subject areas are the same for all children but the actual teaching methods are different.

I would try to think of lots of areas, that your children could all do the same activity but perhaps on different levels. Such as;

Art – as long as you keep the activities open-ended; all ages should be able to do the same activity.

Music – everyone would enjoy singing or helping out with small safe instruments.

Storytime – Read stories to the older children while holding the younger ones. Ask questions of the older children but let the smaller ones get involved with helping to make the sounds in the story.

Movement – Pretend to be animals, ask older children to demonstrate how the animals move and ask the younger children what the animals say.

Snack time – While everyone eats, ask age appropriate questions to each child about the food; its color, its food group, its nutritional value, where it comes from, etc.

During all of the activities above you can have informal learning by all children directed to their age and abilities.

Then, I would find a time when the older children could be on their own, playing in a dress-up area, or outside. (Somewhere safe where you would not be needed for a few minutes.) At this time, I would work with toddlers on expanding their vocabularies, or working on their coordination skills.

When the younger children are taking a nap, I would work with the older children on basic concepts, such as numbers, colors, letters, pre-writing skills, science projects.

I hope this helps, Jean Warren, Preschool Express