

### Supporting Mixed Age Groups

#### Mixed Age Groups Activities

**Physical Exercise:** Children of all ages benefit from time outside. Ensure that there is plenty of this scheduled in your day. Allow for this to be as open-ended as possible.

**Sensory Exploration:** Provide lots of different tactile opportunities for children to explore each week.

**Be by Myself Space:** Create a space where children can calm down and be by themselves for a little bit. Include books, sensory items, and ways to get angry feelings out, like a destruction area.

When caring for children of multiple age groups, planning and preparing your environment is key.

**Active Supervision:** Rely heavily upon the adults being engaged and attentive to the children. When adults/caregivers are distracted or focusing attention on something other than children, challenging situations can go unnoticed and can escalate quickly. There are children exploring different stages of play and materials that are appropriate only for certain ages. Active supervision is key in making sure children are staying safe and materials are used appropriately.

**Knowledgeable about Child Development:** Knowing and understanding child development is helpful in understanding the appropriate expectations and what behaviors in children are normal. It is difficult in a mixed age group to differentiate between typical and atypical behaviors. Having knowledge about child development allows for the care givers to respond and provide appropriate supports for children.

**Create Routines:** Create routines and opportunities for small group activities throughout the day. Schedules and routines can be different for each age group. For example, lunch may happen at the same time for everyone, however, younger children may need some rest time, while older children can have time outside or on technology.

**Set up the Environment:** Ensure that there are plenty of materials to engage multiple ages of children. Set up the environment so that those materials are only accessible to the appropriate age group. So younger children's materials can be low to the ground and on shelves, while older children's materials should be higher and out of reach of younger children.

**Utilize Open-Ended Materials:** Open-ended materials will allow children of many different age groups to play and participate safely. Open-ended materials can include blocks, art materials, recyclable materials, musical instruments, outdoor materials (balls, bubbles, etc), and sensory items.

#### Project ACT Recommended Resources

**Project ACT:**  
[www.anprojectact.org](http://www.anprojectact.org)

**Trainings:**  
<http://www.marylandfamilynetwork.org/childcaretraining>

**Sesame Street in the Communities:**  
<https://sesamestreetincommunities.org/training/caring-mixed-age-groups/>  
<https://sesamestreetincommunities.org/activities/age-by-age-adaptations/>

**Child Care Information Exchange**  
[http://www.ccie.com/library\\_bw/8212400.pdf](http://www.ccie.com/library_bw/8212400.pdf)



#### Who Do We Trust?

Knowing where to find trusted and accurate information is as important as ever. We at Project ACT recommend these sources for your information:

- Maryland Pyramid Model:  
[www.mdpyramidmodelselfel.org](http://www.mdpyramidmodelselfel.org)
- Virtual Lab School:  
[www.virtuallabschool.org](http://www.virtuallabschool.org)
- Conscious Discipline:  
[consciousdiscipline.com](http://consciousdiscipline.com)