

## MIXED AGES

### HOME CHILD CARE CURRICULUM PLANNING

Stacy writes:

First off, I must tell you I love your website! It has given me so many ideas and inspiration.

I have recently opened an in-home childcare for children ages infant to 5. Currently, I have two toddlers but I am licensed for up to 5 children. I am assuming that I will have mixed ages.

I have decided to create my own curriculum. I am excited but on the other hand, the task is overwhelming. My main question to you, is how do I go about structuring the curriculum?

I know that whatever I do needs to be flexible, as children (especially toddlers) tend to have short attention spans, and in-home care doesn't always go the same way every day.

I do not want the whole day to be centered around the curriculum. I believe that children need ample time to play on their own to process what they've learned and to explore new things. Can you help me with the basic structure of the day?

Dear Stacy,

If I were you, I would have a daily or weekly theme. Then I would add things to the environment, to support this theme.

Example: Bubble Day

7-8: Free play with special toys

8-9: Snack time – Perhaps have a drink the children could blow into with a straw and create bubbles.

9-10: Circle time – Today you could sing songs about blowing bubbles; have your children create giant bubbles with their hands, act out bubbles dancing around. During circle time, I would present, music, stories.

10-11: Large muscle play – this can be indoors or outdoors. Include such things as running, jumping, rolling a ball, riding wheeled toys, pushing wagons, and free play.

11-12: Lunch time – I would teach beginning concepts during lunch time. You can talk about the color of foods, the beginning letters of foods, and you can count the number of items on each lunch plate.

12 – 1: Nap time – older children could have one-on-one concept time with you.

1-2: Project time. Two days a week do Discovery Projects; three days a week do art projects. For bubble day, you could do giant bubbles outside, or make bubble prints for the art project. Never do art projects for toddlers where you have to do most of the work. Always make sure that the majority of the project can actually be done by the child.

2-3: Quiet time – Have children listen to tapes, look through books or appropriate T.V. show, free play.

3-4: Construction/Game time – Building with blocks, or skill games such as, fishing for certain colors of fish or sorting objects.

5-6: Afternoon nap or whatever, if children stay late.

I hope this helps, Jean Warren, Preschool Express