



Somerville Rise Primary School

What is a multi-age classroom?

Multi-age philosophy is based on the belief that multi-aging is an effective classroom organisational structure for teachers to meet the individual needs of children. Multi-age classrooms differ from composite or combination classes where students in each grade level study a separate curriculum. The use of developmentally appropriate practices is essential to the success of multi-age classroom. Developmentally appropriate practice ensures that every child is learning at his or her own rate. It involves focusing on children as individuals who are growing and developing on a continuum of learning. The multi-age classroom is an environment where the teacher provides a developmentally appropriate curriculum based on each child's needs. It recognises that students not only learn differently but at varying rates. We promote a diverse environment where children do not feel the need to compete, only to do their best. They develop a positive self-concept and enjoy being both the nurtured as a Prep, and the nurturer as a Year Two.

Multi-age classroom teachers become adept at developing lessons with differentiated assignments that appeal to the various developmental levels in the class. Students are the beneficiaries. Younger and older students are catered for by the depth of questioning and the actual task assigned to the individual student. During their three years together, student and teacher relationships grow and a strong bond develops between student and teacher.

What are the advantages of multi-aging?

- Multi-age groupings reflect the values and beliefs which are important to our society, including cooperation, tolerance and support.
- Multi-age groupings model family life where children have opportunities to learn from others of different ages.
- Children learn by modelling others.
- Children are less competitive in a multi-age classroom, the atmosphere is cooperative and collaborative.
- Multi-age classrooms create an environment which enables children to be respected for their individuality.
- In Multi-age classrooms children are encouraged to learn at their own pace.
- Multi-age settings encourage teachers to focus on the individual, and meet each child's individual needs.
- Multi-age classrooms provide opportunities for extension of children beyond the traditional year expectations.



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Developmentally appropriate practice

The developmental approach acknowledges that children learn at different rates and have preferred learning styles, which is to say they learn in different ways. A developmental program provides children with learning experiences that are active (hands-on) and meaningful. It reflects individual perspectives as it enables children to approach learning with a greater amount of flexibility. A developmental environment allows children to inquire and explore, interact with others and participate in shared problem solving and group decision making. Learning centres, integrated curriculum and varied instructional strategies are important features of the multi-aged classroom.

Research has indicated that there are no significant differences in student achievement and classroom structure although there is evidence to show gains in social aspects of development for students in multi-age grades.

Early Learning Centre

Next year we will be introducing 'Little Explorer Time' to our Junior School students. During this time students will be provided with active hands-on investigations, opportunities to practise and apply skills that they will be developing in Literacy, Numeracy and other curriculum areas such as Science, Geography, History, the Arts and Environmental Studies.

Many schools across the world are implementing this researched based approach to learning as it is extremely beneficial and provides positive developmental learning experiences for all students. We aim to promote the acquisition of lifelong skills as children are actively engaged in their learning.

We aim to promote:

- High levels of Engagement
- Motivation
- Skill acquisition and decision making
- Improved oral language
- Creativity
- Questioning
- Resilience
- Responsibility