

Group Times: A Summary

What are Group Times?

Group times are teacher-initiated and planned experiences that include opportunities for active learning.

“Teacher-initiated” means that the teacher has an idea for the activity and plans what will happen based on the interests and developing abilities of young children. The teacher gets the group time started and then encourages the children to use the materials or move their bodies in their own ways.

Two types of Group Times:

- Opportunities to use and explore new or familiar materials, including books, art materials and sensory experiences (‘Small Group’)
- Songs, music, and movement activities (‘Large Group’)

Why are Group Times important?

- A daily opportunity for shared experiences
- An intimate social setting that allows young children to communicate and get to know one another
- An opportunity for the teacher to pay close attention to individual children
- A planned and intentional learning experience

Where do Group Times take place?

- Any place, including outside, according to the nature of the activity

Flexible Group Times

- Children make choices from the available materials and activities and may choose to ‘be done’ as needed. Teachers intentionally plan for their group times based on the interests and abilities of the children in their small group and help children develop routines and expectations that are appropriate.
- Children’s actions and interests determine the length of group times.

What do young children do during Group Times?

- Make choices about how to explore and use materials according to their development, interests and strengths
- Communicate in their own way
- Make choices about singing and moving their bodies in their own way
- Observe, imitate, and learn from each other