

Whole Group

Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Action

We know that 4 year olds have developmental needs and we want children to have opportunities to learn with peers in appropriate whole group settings. Planning whole group activities to be brief, engaging, and cognitively stimulating is critical for 4-year-old children's development. Keep in mind that while whole group is important, it can not replace other settings that offer more opportunities for individualization. Concepts introduced in whole group should be integrated across the day in small-group, 1-1, and play-based settings.

What it looks like in action:

- Brief groups (<20 minutes)
- Opportunities for child talk, choice, leadership
- Novel, engaging activities with multiple modalities (move, touch, look, listen)
- Questions that get children thinking, talking, learning with peers
- Teaching teams individualize approaches based on children's needs, interests, engagement



Avoid:

- Long groups (>15-20 minutes)
- Restricting movement (all children must sit "criss cross apple sauce")
- Rote activities repeated daily (e.g., calendar counting, letter of the week)
- Long periods of "sit and listen" or "wait" time
- All children told to do the same thing, regardless of needs, interests, or engagement

- Instead of a repeated activity (e.g., calendar), what is a novel activity that would meet the learning objective (e.g., counting, patterns) through use of multiple modalities and questioning?
- In what ways could you give children leadership roles in whole group to support their autonomy and engagement?
- How do you as a teaching team respond when you notice 1 or more children are becoming disengaged in group?



Intentional Teaching

- When planning lessons, ask yourself:
 - "What do I want my children to wrap their minds around today?"
 - "What is it I want my children to learn through this group experience (that is not better suited for a smaller setting)?"
- During/after lessons, reflect on "What do/did I observe about children's learning in response to my teaching?" and "What might I do differently now/next time based on what I saw?"