

Week 1 Reading Assignment

Ways to Make Group Times More Flexible and Responsive to Children



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Updated from *Tender Care and Early Learning*, (2nd Ed.), p. 374, May 2022.

- Keep group size small. Typical group size for group times with materials is up to four children with one caregiver. Each primary caregiver plans a group time with materials around their four primary caregiving children based on their interests, strengths and the key developmental indicators (KDIs). and considers how they align with the key developmental indicators (KDIs).
- Stop or change the activity if no one is participating. When you notice that children have lost interest, add a backup material to re-engage the children or stop the activity, clean up, and move to the next part of the routine.
- Attend to children's cues, leads, and communications (e.g., use the same materials they are interested in; follow their lead; imitate their actions and sounds; comment on their choices, gestures, and expressions; repeat their words and babbles).
- Interpret children's communications with one another. As children work with materials, they have many opportunities to interact with one another. Sometimes they may understand each other during these interactions, while other times they may not. Caregivers may need to help translate children's communications so that they are understood.

Ways to Make Group Times More Flexible and Responsive to Children *(continued)*

- Include choices for children. When children are able to make choices about what materials to use, how to explore and use them, and how to do things for themselves, you will encounter fewer power struggles.
- Schedule group times when children may be most inclined to do something. While establishing a consistent yet flexible routine, choose the best time in the routine for a group time with materials when children are going to be most engaged and not distracted by bodily care needs.
- Anticipate that children will come and go. Group times with materials are times when young toddlers can move back and forth from each primary group time, engaging with the sets of materials and with their peers and caregivers in each group. As toddlers get older, they tend to stay with an activity longer and will be able to engage with the group time activity for a longer period of time with less wandering.