

Looping and Mixed Age Classrooms

One of our core beliefs is that strong, positive relationships built through warm, sensitive, responsive interactions – provide the foundation for a child’s long-term social, emotional, and cognitive development. We know that children’s school success starts with relationships between the child and teacher, as well as the family and school. The child does better when these relationships are stronger.

One of the ways we foster relationships is by keeping children with the same teachers. Toddlers will have one teaching team until they move to preschool. Then that child will have the same teaching team until they go to kindergarten. This allows the child and family to get to know the teacher at a deeper level, and the teacher in turn, gets to know the child and family better as well. In the world of education, keeping the same teacher(s) over multiple years is called looping.

This also means that each classroom will have peers who range in age, toddlers will be 16-36 months and preschoolers will be 3-5 years old. There are many benefits to this mixed-age arrangement. Here are just some of the benefits of looping and mixed-age classrooms:

- Parents have deeper relationship with teaching team and stay with the same team
- The children have deeper relationships with the teachers
- Children don’t have to learn new classroom expectations each year
- Families and children only have one transition at SDC
- Mixed ages mirror family life
- Children develop social emotional skills better in mixed ages

Benefits of Mixed Age for Older Children	Benefits of Mixed Age for Younger Children
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunities for leadership and nurturing • Children learn to accept developmental differences • Expanded learning when older children teach younger children • Support for more creativity when playing with younger children • Variety of materials minimizes frustration for children • Older children learn how to say “no” in socially acceptable ways • Learn to “read” their audience, changing actions and statements to match other abilities and ages • Less “bossiness” or competitiveness • Children who encourage others to follow rules then follow rules better themselves • Older children model and remind younger children of routine and expectations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional emotional support and nurturing in the classroom • Children learn to accept developmental differences • More role models for skills and behaviors • Younger children learn skills from older children • Younger children get more experience playing with other children when older children are involved (they get help negotiating with others) • Learn to “read” their audience, changing actions and statements to match other abilities and ages • Less “bossiness” or competitiveness when in mixed age • Children stretch themselves when playing with older kids