

## Whole Group Activities... Are they Required?

Whole-group activities are play and learning activities where all children basically do the same thing at the same time. Although whole group activities can foster a sense of belonging and community in the classroom by helping children learn how to interact with peers, share, and build relationships, using whole groups is not as successful in getting children to learn as small groups or individualized activities are. Also, the larger the group, the more difficult it is for children to engage in the activity.

### Are whole groups required?

No... Whole group activities are not required in high-quality early childhood programs.

Anything taught in a large group setting could be better taught in a less formal, more appropriate setting.

**If group times must be used, here are some ways to provide them with high quality:**

#### High Quality Group Times

- Plan activities that are age-appropriate (meaningful and understandable), fun, and engaging.
- Use a space that is comfortable and not crowded for the children.
- Ensure teacher support to encourage participation.
- Allow for alternate activities for the children not participating in the group activity.
- Go beyond reciting rote information or talking about the weather
- Provide experiences that will expose children to new areas of knowledge and encourage the development of vocabulary.
- Read books individually or in small groups rather than in whole groups.
- Limit times when children must wait and listen to or watch other children with nothing engaging to do.
- Limit games, such as gross motor games where children must wait for a turn.
- Consider the age range of the children and avoid a one-size fits all approach; Encourage individualized learning.
- Limit passive group times where children must be still and listen without the opportunity to participate.
- Allow children to make choices about what they want to do.
- Ensure that content being shared is large enough for all to see.