

MULTI-AGE

The multi-age classroom is not a combination class where a teacher instructs two or three grade levels in their designated curricula. Ages and grades do not divide this community of learners within the classroom. Rather, in the multi-age classroom, every child can become a successful learner on his or her own continuum of growth. The multi-age classrooms supports this individual growth through a process approach to learning that is child-centered. The multi-age environment requires teachers to facilitate the learning of each child rather than to instruct the class as a whole based on predetermined grade-level skills and content. As a result, the multi-age classroom can turn the process of education into a wonderful and successful adventure in learning for both teacher and children.

- ♦ *What happens if my child goes from a multi-age classroom to a traditional graded classroom as a transfer?*

Sometimes children must relocate to another school that does not provide multi-age classrooms. Experience has shown that children who are in multi-age classrooms are more confident learners and adapt quickly to same-age classrooms. One positive aspect is that they have had time to enjoy seeing themselves as competent learners.



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**BOXFORD
MASSACHUSETTS**

Multi-Age



**Cole School
FAQs**

**FREQUENTLY
ASKED
QUESTIONS
SERIES**



Simply defined, a Multi-Age classroom is a mixed-age group of children that stays with the same teacher for two

years. Placement into a multi-age classroom, as in all classroom assignments, is determined by a collaborative effort, which takes into account a child's developmental level, learning style, makeup of a classroom, and parental input. This grouping, deliberately made for the benefit of children, not for reasons of economics, curriculum, or convenience, comprises much more than school classmates, evolving instead into a true family of learners.

ANSWERING THE MOST FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- ◆ *Will my child benefit from a multi-age classroom experience?*

Research strongly suggests that children benefit in many ways from multi-age classrooms. Multi-age classrooms clearly do not negatively affect academic achievement. After reviewing twenty-one quantitative studies comparing the effects of multi-age classrooms with single-grade classrooms, a study notes, "In terms of academic achievement, the data clearly support the multi-grade classroom as a viable and equally effective organizational alternative to single-grade instruction."

Multi-age children have a strong sense of belonging and develop social relationships. In a study done from 1977 to 1990, it was found that multi-age children consistently liked school and that multi-age children have positive attitudes toward school. Overall, multi-age classrooms support children and their learning in positive ways.

- ◆ *Is the multi-age classroom better for some children, but not for others?*

This question assumes the traditional classrooms are the best way to educate children. A multi-age classroom offers the same opportunities as a traditional classroom, but in a slightly different format. Placement process includes consideration of ages, gender, and abilities, and seeks to strike a balance within the existing classroom members.

- ◆ *Do the older children benefit from the multi-age classroom?*

Sometimes parents worry that the older children may not benefit as much from a multi-age classroom as the younger children. Obviously, the younger children are learning from the older children. With the older children mentoring the younger children, do the older children not learn as much? In the multi-age classroom every child, even the older child, is on his or her own continuum of learning. The curriculum is opened up for all the children.

Of course, the benefit for older children socially and emotionally is apparent. Older children have the opportunity to mentor younger children. This allows all the older children to gain confidence and increase their self-esteem.

- ◆ *How does one manage to teach a multi-age classroom when all the children are at different levels of learning?*

One must keep in mind that even in same-age classrooms, the children are at different levels of learning. However, in a multi-age classroom these differences are accepted and respected. Each child is able to participate in reading, writing, and problem-solving at his or her own level of development.

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