



Multiage Education Fact Sheet

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www.catholicschoolshartford.org 860.242.5573

Multiage Education....

Multiage education IS...

- Multiage education is based on premise that every child can learn and has the right to do so at their own pace.
- There is no ceiling to learning potential, inhibited by grade level boundaries.
- Learning is a continuum, rather than a series of pre-established steps.
- The intention of the multiage classroom is to allow children of various ages and abilities to progress at their own individual rate rather than according to specified objectives for a particular grade level.
- Students remain with their teacher in a multiage classroom for a period of two years, reinforcing teacher/student relationship/connection.
- Individual strengths and needs are the cornerstone of multiage methodology.
- Multiage classrooms build strong community and familial ties, holding the whole child at its center.
- Multiage celebrates diversity and encourages collaboration and leadership within the learning community to meet social emotional and academic needs.
- The multiage philosophy is consistent with the purpose and vision for Catholic school education, to create a culture of excellence and advance the development of the whole person - mind, body, and soul.
- In a multiage classroom, there is a belief that it is the responsibility of the *teacher* to teach students first, and standards second. Children are not “below” “at” or “above” grade level, rather they are developing on their own continuous path, rather than in series of finite steps.

Multiage education IS NOT...

- Multiage teaching is not a way to group any particular “type” of student in a homogenous way. (For example: students with special needs, students with high leadership potential, “at risk” students, “gifted” students, etc.)
- Multiage grouping is not tracking or ability grouping.
- A multiage class is not the same as a combination/ split class. In a combination class, two or more grade levels are placed together in the same classroom but the teacher teaches a separate curriculum for each grade.
- Multiage education is not more or less academically rigorous.
- Multiage education is not achievement based

Source: Dickinson, Kate; Villasenor, Anthony, SDCCS

Benefits of Multiage Education

- Students remain with a teacher for a period of two years, reducing the number of student-teacher transitions, allowing for continuity of expectations and instruction, and a powerful long-term relationship between, student, child and family. There is an increased sense of stability for students as a result of consistent classroom routines. Multiage classes do not have the necessity to begin anew each year, given that approximately half of the class has already experienced routines, structures, and teacher/student expectations.
- Multiage offers highly efficient instruction due to increased student observation time for teachers, supporting instructional design informed by authentic assessment.
- There is an atmosphere of nurturing rather than one of competition. In multiage classes children accept natural differences of children in age and achievement. There are opportunities for all students to play different roles in the educational process.
- Teaching supports individuals with respect to their own complex set of needs, rather than trying to lead a group of students to complete an age-based step. Grade level distinctions and arbitrary grade level “norms” are blurred by multiage grouping, since multiage teaching and learning emphasizes a developmental approach, removing the boundaries of grade-level distinctions.
- Teaching according to individual developmental progression is more ideal for meaningful academic experience, successful learning experiences, and strong sense of self-efficacy.
- The developmental approach for students results in fewer referrals for special education services each year, and fewer grade level retentions.
- Students of different ages have the opportunity to work together in a number of academic and social capacities throughout the day and the year.
- Opportunities for leadership roles in the classroom promote self-confidence and responsible decision making.

“When you have this system, in my opinion, you diminish issues of retention and staying back a grade by giving more time to children who need it and challenging those ready to move on to the next level.”

Christine Villani, Education Professor at Southern Connecticut State University

Research:

***64 research studies performed on multi-age schools found that:**

- 58% of those students in multiage classes performed better than their peers on measures of academic achievement, 33% performed as well as their peers, and only 9% did worse than their peers.
- Students in multiage settings were more likely to have positive self-concepts, high self-esteem, and good attitudes toward school.
- When older students teach information and skills to their younger classmates, their academic performance, and IQ scores, dramatically improved.
- When students routinely are given opportunities to teach someone else, scores on IQ assessments improved as much as 18 points.
- Educational research indicates that students benefit both academically and emotionally from being placed in multi-age classrooms.
- Benefits come to older students from the quality of leadership and responsibility they develop, and younger children are motivated intellectually by older students.
- Early childhood multi-age results in considerably less student misbehavior (Logue, 2006) and significantly higher language exchange and development due to the multiage grouping.
- Integrated curriculum fosters children's physical, social, emotional, and intellectual growth.
- Students achieve higher cognitive development level at a faster rate than those in classrooms with same age peers (Frosco et al., 2004).

*"When compared to children in single age classes, children in multiage classes are superior in study habits, social interaction, self-motivation, cooperation, and attitudes toward school. Academically, children perform just as well or even better than those in single grade classes."
(Gajadharsingh 1991)*

