



PREPARING FOR INTENTIONALLY GROUPING CHILDREN

Activity overview: Participants match the activities done in the classroom to the purpose for that type of grouping selection (see table below). Then they will review their schedule and how they currently arrange groups by activity. Finally they will select the most appropriate grouping based on the purpose of the activity.

Directions for the first table: Think about the purpose or educational goals of various classroom activities done this past month. Do not focus on the manner in which you grouped children, but on why you were doing the activity. In the first table, use some of the activities you've done and place them in the column that matches with the grouping purpose bullets. Do not place them where you actually grouped children for the activity unless it corresponds with both the bullets *and* the group size. Step back and think about how to best use groupings so children will engage with the material.

For example: A teacher used puppets to teach a simple calming down technique and then had each child practice the technique. While in reality he used a large group (circle time) to teach the technique and have children practice it, ideally he would teach this technique in small groups as this is the ideal group size in which to guide instruction and have peers model skills. Instead of placing the activity in the Large Group column, he places it in the Small Group column. Another example: A teacher introduced a new song about ways to be nice to each other. She did this during large group circle time and she places it in the Large Group column. This is accurate considering that the purpose of the activity was to introduce a concept. If/when she has children *practice* being nice to each other, then the activity would belong in the Small Group column.

Grouping Purposes		
Large group	Small group	One-on-one
• Introduce concepts • Build community • Conduct routine activities	• Maximize back and forth interactions • Peer modeling of skills • Guide instruction	• Complex skill • Child needs specific direction and assistance

Directions for the second table: In this table, write out your class schedule in the first column. In the second column, record the type of group you have selected for each activity within the schedule. In the last column, brainstorm ideas for how you might group children differently based on the learning goals for that activity.

Class activity schedule	Current grouping selection	Alternative grouping, if relevant