

Large Group Tips

During large group activities, children are given opportunities to practice various skills, such as listening to and collaborating with others, talking in a group, and responding appropriately to questions and comments (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009). Teachers can use this time to introduce concepts and skills. When planning for and implementing large group instruction, teachers should remember that young children benefit most when activities are no more than 20 minutes in duration (Hemmeter, Fox, & Snyder, 2014). **(EI 5.2 Follow Directions; 5.3 Vocabulary; 6.1 Conversational Ability; 18.1 Self Control; 27.1 Focus)**

Teacher-Guided Learning	Large Group Activities
<p>Large group activities can stretch children's learning.</p> <p>Some practices to use include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allowing children to practice new skills, like blending syllables and matching rhyming words • Offering choices to promote independence and responsibility • Asking open-ended questions with more than one right answer • Giving hints to help children solve a problem • Providing information and directions • Adding appropriate challenges, such as reading aloud books with more complex vocabulary • Commenting on children's efforts rather than the product of their efforts • Allowing children time to brainstorm solutions prior to offering help if they seem stuck • Encouraging a child to judge her own efforts and to keep trying 	<p>Taking a vote</p> <p>Meeting at the beginning or ending of the day</p> <p>Singing together</p> <p>Listening to a story</p> <p>Naming a class pet</p> <p>Dancing and moving</p> <p>Welcoming a new classmate</p> 

Large group meetings serve many purposes. During these activities, some of the discussions with children can focus on lower-level questions, such as recalling, describing, or explaining information. Furthermore, children can learn to problem solve and work together. Alternatively, using high-level questions, such as analyzing, evaluating, and creating "is a great way to promote a sense of community, support social and emotional growth, and enhance learning and literacy" (Strasser & Bresson, 2014, p. 52).

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PROGRESSION OF LARGE GROUP ACTIVITIES

To help children settle into large group:

Begin with a Breathing Out activity

Large motor activities, such as dancing, movement songs, yoga (Epstein, 2014).



Slowly progress to Breathing In activities

Fine motor activities, such as finger plays (Epstein, 2014).



EXAMPLE:

On my head, my hand I place
On my shoulders, on my face
On my hips and by my side
Then behind me they will hide. Hold them up above so high.
Make my fingers swiftly fly
Hold them out in front of me
Quickly clap, 1-2-3!

EXAMPLE:

Open, shut them, open, shut them
Give a little clap, clap, clap.
Open, shut them, open, shut them
Put them in your lap, lap, lap.
Creep them, crawl them, creep them, crawl them
Right up to your chin, chin, chin.
Open wide your little mouth, but do not let them in, in, in!

Expand Children's Thinking and Learning By Asking Questions

Class meetings help create a safe environment for everyone.
[They] can transform a group of individual children into a real community of learners (Vance, 2014).

References:

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- Strasser, J., & Bresson, L. (2017). *Big questions for young minds: Extending children's thinking*. Washington, D.C.: National Association for the Education of Young Children.
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