

Transcript

Center-Based – Small Groups Video

[Text appears: Small Groups – Center Based. Throughout the video, Amber Morabito provides narration.]

Amber: What does PITC recommend for group size and teacher child ratios?

[Amber appears on screen. She is seated in a home setting with a large green plant in the background.]

Amber: Every major research study on infant and toddler care has shown that small group size and low ratios of adults to children are key components of quality care. PITC recommends primary care ratios of one adult to three or four children and a total group size of six to 12 children, depending on their ages. The guiding principle is the younger the child, the smaller the group.

[Text briefly appears: Benefits of small groups.]

[Cindy Mach – Lead Teacher, Infant Classroom. Cindy is seated in an office setting, with a shelf of children's books behind her.]

Cindy: So as the lead teacher in an infant/toddler classroom, I've seen a lot of benefits of a small group, for example, in the infant classroom where the ratio is one to three, there's a lot of benefits for the child as well as the teacher and for the families. So for the children, they get a lot of individualized one on one time with the teachers, such as when we're doing diapering or hand washing, we can really take the time to scaffold each child as they need it according to their development. So if a child is a little more advanced and they're starting to do a lot of the routine on their own, we can allow for that time in between to let them scrub their hands by themselves and grab their own paper towel. And then as far as like inside the classroom with other peers, we can help facilitate a lot of peer interaction, such as when they're like playing with small group activities and they're interested in other peers toys, and even if they're not fully verbal, we can always say, "oh, I see that they're really interested in what you're doing, can you show them again?", or "they look interested in what you're using, can they use it after you're done?". And then for families, we can help facilitate a lot of their support between families during like drop off and pick up, you can say, "oh, this is another family in our classroom. They also have a child around your age. Maybe you guys can talk about what you guys are doing at home or maybe plan a play date together outside of school hours."

[Jeanette Tashiro - Program Director. Jeanette is sitting in a rocking chair in a child care setting. There is a bulletin board that displays children's artwork on the wall behind her.]

Jeanette: You know, when the teachers are able to oversee a small group of children to start with, I think that individual attention they can give to really understand the child's temperament, what their needs are, how they're going to do typically in that start of the day as they transition from, you know, being with their parent and the parent coming in and visiting and being with the teacher. So I think really keeping to the small groups allows the

teachers to get to know that individual uniqueness that the child has. They connect well with the parents because they've really established and built a strong relationship together.

[Text briefly appears: When groups share large rooms.]

[Maura Mehrian - Child Development Center Coordinator. Maura is seated in a room with a bookshelf behind her.]

Maura: I think the biggest challenge for a large room when we first started our program was there was no wall or separation between the two groups.

[Images appear on screen showing Maura's classroom before and after renovation. At the top are two images of the classroom before the renovation, including a photo of the classroom and a blueprint of it. Below the two "before" images are two corresponding images of the classroom after the renovation (a photo and a blueprint). The "after" blueprint shows how Maura's team created smaller areas with dedicated purposes in the classroom to support small group play.]

When we first started, we started with children as young as 12 months. And so we had children 12 to 18 months on one side of the building and we had children 18 to 24 months on the other side of the building. And creatively, the team, the four-person team of us used furniture to divide the two play spaces and then within those respective play spaces would set up the environment. So the biggest challenge for us was really noise, because you can imagine our building is licensed for 14 children. So when you get 14 infants and toddlers as well as we tried to make small group spaces happen, the noise level was a little loud. So we just kind of we would sit together and tweak and take opportunities when one group would be outside playing and then, you know, kind of capitalize on those quieter spaces and find ways using some blankets and furnishings like large pillows, beanbags that just kind of naturally helped to buffer and absorb the noise a little bit. And then being really intentional as teachers with our voice prosody, our voice intonation and level, you know, being cognizant that our voices will carry. So trying to be really letting the voices of the children permeate the air rather than the voices of the adults.

[Zahra Naseem - Lead/Master Teacher. Zahra is seated in a room with a bookshelf behind her.]

Zahra: So I had a child in my classroom, he would cry like would cry and cry, and the minute we divided the classroom into two small groups and he would become a different child. He will engage. He will be happy. He will be exploring the environment. So that's in this way, so wow, look at that because he would get overwhelmed with a lot of children in the classroom. So what I did in my classroom, usually I implemented a lot of the small group in the classroom throughout the day. Like one group will go outside, one group will be inside, one group goes for a walk, while another group will explore the environment and even at lunchtime, so I will take one group first. They will eat comfortably, and then for me it was best time because the children will sit down and talk about what's their favorite food, what they like, what they don't like. And I will have a lot of mental notes. I will write down mental notes in mind as a "wow, look how this is good". And then when the parents come pick up their children, it was a lot of information to share with them because I've been with this group for a long time. I know what their interest is, I know what they like, what they don't like. It was really helping parents feel so happy that we know their children so well.

[Text appears on screen:

PITC would like to thank the following programs for their thoughtful contributions to this video series:

- *Glendale Community College Child Development Center*
- *Grossmont Child Development Center, San Diego*
- *Kai Ming Head Start, San Francisco*
- *Fairfax-San Anselmo Children's Center (FSACC)*

The PITC logo animates into position.]

Narrator: PITC, the Program for Infant Toddler Care, a collaboration of the California Department of Education and WestEd.

[The California Department of Education (CDE) logo and the WestEd logo appear.]

Narrator: Brought to you by the California Department of Education and WestEd.