

# Q & A about Multiage Grouping

**Source: Multiage Q & A – 101 Practical Answers to Your Most Pressing Questions-**  
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**A.** Multiyear placement simply means that the students stay with the same teacher for more than one year. The multiage and the looping classrooms are the best examples of a multiple-year classroom.

In the looping configuration, a single-grade class stays together like a family and is promoted with the teacher for two and sometimes three years. In the multiage configuration, there are multiple blended grades and the students stay with the same teacher(s) for two or three years.

Many of the benefits of being in a multiage classroom also accrue to students that are placed in a single-grade, consistent setting with a significant adult for more than one year. Benefits realized in a multiple-year setting include:

- Fewer student/teacher transitions.
- A cohesive family atmosphere.
- A higher level of discipline.
- Improved student attendance.
- An increased sense of stability for students as a result of classroom routine and consistency.
- One group of students for the teacher to get to know every other year.
- One group of new parents for the teacher to get to know every other year.
- An increase in mental health benefits for the students.
- A tendency for a decrease in special needs referrals.
- More time-efficient instruction.
- Fewer grade-level retentions.
- Postponement of teachers' high stakes decisions about retention and special education referrals.
- An increased cooperative spirit between students and teacher.
- An increase in parental involvement.
- Semi-seamless curriculum.
- Increased student observation time for the teacher.

## Q.

What is meant by multiyear placement?

## Q.

What are the benefits to students in a multiage classroom?

**A.** There are a wealth of benefits to a student lucky enough to attend an effective multiage classroom.

One major benefit is the continuity it provides the student, who has the opportunity to stay with the same teacher and experience the same routines over a two- or three-year period. And since teachers are already familiar with many of their students from the previous year, they don't have to sacrifice instructional time getting to know a whole new class of students each year.

Academically, students get to see a wider spectrum of learning as they work with other students ahead of them and behind them in the learning process. The subject matter itself can be more integrated in a multigrade setting, resulting in less fragmentation.

Socially, students develop a sense of caring and nurturing as they help each other learn. Where everyone is learning at different rates, there is usually less competition; a multiage setting eliminates "faster, better, smarter." And in a setting where students are by nature supporting and assisting each other, real leadership qualities have a chance to emerge.

The multiage classroom actually provides more realistic social interactions for its students; in real-life, adult situations, no one is grouped by age or ability.

A multiage continuous progress program can accommodate a whole range of learning styles and abilities; students with physical, emotional and cognitive disabilities are more readily integrated into a multiage, whole learning setting than into a traditionally structured single-grade classroom.