



# Building Empathy, Strengthening Relationships

## The Benefits of Multiage Classrooms for Young Children and Their Caregivers

---

**Linda S. Anderson**

---

In a multiage classroom, the infants and toddlers are busy, as usual. Children play next to each other while the teachers observe and occasionally participate. It's close to 7-month-old Beth's mealtime, and she has just begun to cry. Tyrone, 18 months, toddles over to one of the teachers and points at the crying infant, saying, "Teacher, her needs his rattle."

In the first months and years of life, children grow and develop best in relationships with familiar caregivers and peers (McGaha et al. 2011). Through frequent “serve-and-return” interactions—that is, back-and-forth exchanges of “talk” between caregiver and baby—children’s brains develop the underlying structure that leads to the strong executive function and communication skills required for learning and life. Serve and return also fosters close relationships that lead to children feeling loved, valued, confident, and ready to explore the world (Shonkoff 2009; Center on the Developing Child 2011).

Knowing that long-lasting, trusting relationships are essential, many leaders in early childhood education have suggested that infants and toddlers may be particularly well served and taught in family-like, multiage settings (Katz, Evangelou, & Hartman 1990; McMullen 2017). However, multiage grouping of infants and 1- and 2-year-olds is being practiced in very few settings across the country (McMullen 2017), and there is relatively little in the research literature about how to do it well. This dearth of research might be inhibiting the spread of multiage programs. Clearly, before educators decide to try multiage grouping of very young children, they need to know something about the potential benefits and challenges of such a practice.

The little research we have indicates that high-quality multiage settings are of value for infants and toddlers. For example, a comparison of 2- to 5-year-olds in multiage groups and single-age groups found that multiage groups produce greater cognitive and social growth, improved academic achievement, and enhanced self-concepts, with less time spent in parallel play and with more verbal communication (Logue 2006). These benefits may be due to older children modeling more advanced behavior and language and creating a more stimulating environment for younger children (Bailey, Burchinal, & McWilliam 1993). By providing a greater variety of activities in multiage classrooms, teachers expose children to challenging experiences, and younger children have opportunities (but not requirements) to engage in or simply observe more advanced activities, if they wish (Bailey, Burchinal, & McWilliam 1993).

After serving for five years as the director of a multiage, NAEYC-accredited program for 6-week-olds to 36-month-olds, I wanted to dive deeper into questions about teachers’ perspectives on multiage care and education, and how to ensure multiage settings are

of the highest quality. I resigned from my position as director and took up the role of researcher, spending a year at that same center conducting a case study (Anderson 2012). This article is based on what I saw as a researcher, but it is also informed by my experiences as a director. At the start of the study, I believed the main positive factors would be the consistency of caregiving and younger children learning language and behavior from older children. My concern was that some teachers may not feel equally well prepared to support infants, 1-year-olds, and 2-year-olds.

## Benefits of multiage classrooms for infants and toddlers

The developmental benefits for infants and toddlers in multiage settings are many, but four benefits in particular are prominent: forming a sense of empathy, nurturing attachment and continuity, building stronger family relationships, and providing opportunities for peer teaching. The following sections delve more deeply into the elements of these developmental benefits.

### Developing empathy

An important task in the first three years of life is the development of empathy. One teacher commented,

I think multiage grouping helps promote social growth. Toddlers learn that infants are not being mean when they knock their toys over and that they can ask a teacher to help them. It also teaches the older children that they have to be gentle with each other, especially infants. If an infant is crying, we ask a toddler, “What can you do to make them feel better?” We also ask them, “Why do you think they are crying?”

Infants are born with a predisposition to feel what those around them are feeling. In the nursery, this is sometimes called *empathic contagion*, when one crying infant quickly becomes a chorus (Brownell et al. 2013). For their inborn predisposition to become true empathy, very young children need to receive and give comfort, share joy, and participate in a caring community. Opportunities for these kinds of exchanges abound in multiage classrooms, where toddlers help care for infants and learn to entertain and comfort them when they’re in distress.

With children of different ages in a classroom, teachers can use everyday events to encourage empathy. Older children have opportunities to increase social understanding and begin to take others' perspectives, while infants experience the warmth of a caring community in which members learn to give and receive comfort, as demonstrated in the following example.

Ms. Ann holds 9-month-old Ivy, who is crying. She bounces her leg, but Ivy continues to cry. Aida, 26 months, pats Ivy's back. Ms. Sue comes into the room and takes Ivy from Ms. Ann. She has a bottle, and she sits with Ivy in a rocking

chair, beginning to feed her. Aida climbs into Ms. Ann's lap with a book. Before reading, Ms. Ann thanks Aida for helping to comfort Ivy. She smiles and says, "You're a helper who takes care of our friends. You patted Ivy's back and she likes that."

The teachers in this example were relaxed as they shared the responsibilities of caring for an infant, while an older child demonstrated patience and empathy. Both children had their needs met by warm, caring teachers. In a multiage classroom, different groups of children may have very different needs, but if children's needs are consistently met within reasonable time frames,



In a multiage classroom, trust is built over time as caregivers and family members become comfortable sharing daily routines.



children learn to trust adults and have opportunities to form positive relationships with them. In this example, the infant was soothed and distracted from hunger for a few minutes, and the 2-year-old gained an enhanced self-concept as a helper. Both children benefitted from being in a multiage setting.

Infants and toddlers in multiage classrooms are able to develop greater empathy and social understanding through their peer relationships with the caring guidance of trusted adults. Because they can stay in the same setting with the same teachers for up to three years, children also have the opportunity to form secure attachments.

### **Fostering attachment and continuity**

Another advantage of multiage classrooms for infants and toddlers is that children spend up to three years in the same setting with the same caregivers and many of the same classmates. This enables stronger attachment between children and adults, which is important for healthy social and emotional development. Early relationships become the *working models* for relationships throughout a person's life. In a multiage classroom, it's possible for those relationships to be models of stability and dependability, as well as of affection and empathy.

Stability and continuity are also reflected in the early friendships children form with same-age peers and with children slightly younger and older in the family-like atmosphere of a multiage classroom.

Attachment is defined as a deep emotional tie with a specific person that persists over time. Infants become attached to important people in their lives, and these first relationships create the foundation for future relationships (Bowlby 1969). Securely attached infants and toddlers show more positive emotions and less anxiety in early childhood. They also tend to have an easier time establishing relationships with teachers and peers at school and throughout life. It takes time to develop strong attachments between children and caregivers, yet in single-age classrooms, children and teachers are usually separated after one year of care (though there are programs that use a looping model, in which teachers and children move up to the next classroom together). Multiage classroom arrangements allow for children to remain with the same teacher throughout the first three years of their lives.

Caregiving that is responsive, reliable, warm, and predictable sets the stage for secure relationships in which children draw strength from caregivers and use them as secure bases from which to explore the environment. For example, when 25-month-old Joseph wakes up from his nap, the teacher talks softly and rocks him while he holds onto his blanket and stuffed bear until he is ready to play. This comforting time becomes shorter as Joseph grows more independent.

In maintaining developmentally appropriate practices in early childhood classrooms, the goal is that, "in its staffing patterns, the program ensures continuity of care. Child and caregiver are able to maintain their relationship, and each child's ongoing relationship with the other children in the group is supported" (Copple and Bredekamp 2009, 90). The implication for caregivers of young children is the importance of commitment to consistency in all settings, which increases healthy, secure attachment for children. (See "The Many

Benefits of Continuity of Care for Infants, Toddlers, Families, and Caregiving Staff.”)

### **Building stronger family relationships**

In addition to the longer time available for children and their caregivers to form strong attachments, the multiage classroom offers time for caregivers to get to know families better. This is especially true when a caregiver is able to have siblings in a class. Families can build trust in the caregiver, and the caregiver is better

able to understand each family’s childrearing beliefs and practices.

In a multiage classroom, trust is built over time as caregivers and family members become comfortable sharing daily routines. In the following scenario, a mother who has become familiar with classroom routines confidently joins a classroom group time.

During afternoon playtime, Ms. Le arrives to pick up her two daughters, Amy (2 years) and

## **The Many Benefits of Continuity of Care for Infants, Toddlers, Families, and Caregiving Staff | By Mary Benson McMullen**

The environments infants and toddlers encounter, the relationships they form, and the activities they engage in before age 3—both inside the home and out—are key to healthy and positive growth, development, and learning outcomes that can last a lifetime (Shonkoff & Phillips 2000). The demand for child care for infants and toddlers has focused the energy of early childhood educators, scholars, and policy makers on the challenge of how to enhance and enrich the care and education provided in out-of-home, group-care settings.

Continuity of care (COC) has emerged as a strongly recommended practice for infant and toddler care and education, endorsed by NAEYC, Zero to Three, the Program for Infant/Toddler Care, National Head Start Association, and the Ounce of Prevention Fund, among other organizations (McMullen 2017). In COC, children and their caregiving team are kept together in a consistent group of familiar caregivers and peers over a long period of time—up to two or three years. COC is based largely on attachment research that recognizes that infants and toddlers thrive in secure relationships with a small number of key adults, that secure relationships take time to develop, and that these important relationships are best if long lasting (Bernhardt 2000; Sroufe 2005; Lally & Mangione 2009; Raikes & Edwards 2009; Elfer, Goldschmied, & Selleck 2012).

Two models have emerged as popular for achieving COC: looping and multiage

grouping. In the looping model, caregivers begin with a group of very young infants and remain with them as they become 1-year-olds, 2-year-olds, and then reach age 3. The caregiving team then “loops” back to begin with a new group of infants, starting a new three-year cycle. In multiage (or mixed-age) models of COC, infants, 1-year-olds, and 2-year-olds remain together with the same caregiving staff; children transition to preschool sometime after turning 3, and they are replaced with new infants who join the group.

### **Benefits of continuity of care**

In a recent study, my research colleagues and I found multiple benefits for children, families, and caregiving staff when COC is successfully implemented (McMullen et al. 2015). As reported in McMullen (2017), continuity of care does the following:

- **Deepens teacher knowledge of individual children.** Caregivers benefit from the extended time they have to develop understanding of each individual child and family, facilitating individualized care.
  - **Increases teacher understanding of child development.** Working with children throughout their infancy and toddlerhood is a benefit for caregivers, who develop a more thorough understanding of child growth, development, and learning during the first three years.
  - **Decreases stress.** Families, caregivers (McMullen et al. 2015), and children
- (Cryer et al. 2005) benefit from decreased stress because they do not have to experience the multiple transitions and frequent breaking and reforming of relationships that occur over the first three years in noncontinuous care.
  - **Makes children’s developmental progress smoother.** Children benefit by making smoother, steadier, more even developmental progress and fewer developmental or behavioral regressions, which are reported to be more common in noncontinuous care.
  - **Facilitates secure attachments for children.** A benefit found for infants and toddlers is the development of stronger, more secure attachments to their caregivers, as long as they are together with them for at least 12 months (Raikes 1993).
  - **Strengthens family-caregiver partnerships.** All participants benefit as strong, lasting relationships among families and caregiving staff are facilitated.
  - **Creates a family-like atmosphere.** Families and caregiving staff report a closeness that builds over their time together, mirroring feelings they have for close friends and family members.
  - **Empowers families.** Parents with children in COC settings are found to become strong advocates for their children and gain empowerment that carries through to formal schooling.
  - **Encourages sensitivity in caregivers’ responsiveness.** Caregiving staff

Vanessa (9 months). Ms. Le walks into the busy classroom and is greeted by Amy and three of her same-age peers, who run up to her smiling. She picks up Vanessa and then kneels to the children's level to say hello to Amy and her friends. The teacher greets Ms. Le, sharing that Amy was a great helper today when Vanessa woke up a little upset from her nap. She helped to comfort her sister and make her laugh.

The teacher then begins to sing a cleanup song. Ms. Le appears happy and relaxed while speaking to another teacher, still holding Vanessa. Amy goes to help her classmates put away toys before going home with her mother and sister. As group time begins, Ms. Le joins the teachers in singing, "What shall we do with all the sleeping children?" The children quickly lie down on the rug and pretend to be asleep. Then the adults wake them up, and the children laugh, saying,

have been found to be more likely to respond sensitively—a clear benefit to the infants and toddlers in their care (Ruprecht, Elicker, & Choi 2015).

- **Improves children's behaviors.** The caregiving staff in infant-toddler COC environments are found to identify fewer behavioral concerns in the children than those in non-COC rooms—a benefit for all participants (Ruprecht, Elicker, & Choi 2015).
- **Eases transition to preschool.** Children, families, and preschool teachers benefit as children "hit the ground running," already understanding how to engage in a new environment and socialize with friends.

## Final words

In an earlier article, I concluded, "COC is the icing on the cake for an already strong, quality setting" (McMullen 2017, 49). I believe that for continuity of care to be successful, it is important for other quality elements to be in place: appropriate ratios and group sizes, a commitment to providing a healthy and safe environment, the presence of a stable professional staff, a program philosophy followed by all, and strong and supportive leadership (Ackerman 2008; Norris 2010; Garrity, Longstreth, & Alwashmi 2016).

## References

Ackerman, D.J. 2008. "Continuity of Care, Professional Community, and the Policy Context: Potential Benefits for Infant and Toddler Teachers' Professional Development." *Early Education and Development* 19 (5): 753–72.

Bernhardt, J.L. 2000. "A Primary Caregiving System for Infants and Toddlers: Best for Everyone Involved." *Young Children* 55 (2): 74–80.

Cryer, D., L. Wagner-Moore, M. Burchinal, N. Yazejian, S. Hurwitz, & M. Wolery. 2005. "Effects of Transitions to New Child Care Classes on Infant/Toddler Distress and Behavior." *Early Childhood Research Quarterly* 20 (1): 37–56.

Elfer, P., E. Goldschmied, & D.Y. Selleck. 2012. *Key Persons in the Early Years: Building Relationships for Quality Provision in Early Years Settings and Primary Schools*. 2nd ed. New York: Routledge.

Garrity, S., S. Longstreth, & M. Alwashmi. 2016. "A Qualitative Examination of the Implementation of Continuity of Care: An Organizational Learning Perspective." *Early Childhood Research Quarterly* 36: 64–78.

Lally, J.R., & P.L. Mangione. 2009. "The Program for Infant Toddler Care." Chap. 2 in *Approaches to Early Childhood Education*, 5th ed., eds. J. Roopnarine & J.E. Johnson, 25–47. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill/Pearson.

McMullen, M.B. 2017. "Continuity of Care with Infants and Toddlers: Identifying Benefits and Addressing Common Concerns." *Child Care Exchange* 39 (11): 46–50. [www.researchgate.net/publication/311965888\\_Continuity\\_of\\_care\\_with\\_infants\\_toddlers\\_Identifying\\_benefits\\_and\\_addressing\\_common\\_concerns](http://www.researchgate.net/publication/311965888_Continuity_of_care_with_infants_toddlers_Identifying_benefits_and_addressing_common_concerns).

McMullen, M.B., N.R. Yun, A. Mihai, & H. Kim. 2015. "Experiences of Parents and Professionals in Well-Established Continuity of Care Infant Toddler Programs." *Early Education and Development* 27 (2): 190–220.

Norris, D.J. 2010. "Raising the Educational Requirements for Teachers in Infant Toddler Classrooms: Implications for Institutions of Higher Education." *Journal of Early Childhood Teacher Education* 31 (2): 146–58.

Raikes, H. 1993. "Relationship Duration in Infant Care: Time with a High-Ability Teacher and Infant-Teacher Attachment." *Early Childhood Research Quarterly* 8 (3): 309–25.

Raikes, H.H., & C.P. Edwards. 2009. *Extending the Dance in Infant & Toddler Caregiving: Enhancing Attachment and Relationships*. Baltimore, MD: Brookes.

Ruprecht, K., J. Elicker, & J.Y. Choi. 2015. "Continuity of Care, Caregiver-Child Interactions, and Toddler Social Competence and Problem Behaviors." *Early Education and Development* 27 (2): 221–39.

Shonkoff, J.P., & D.A. Phillips, eds. 2000. *From Neurons to Neighborhoods: The Science of Early Childhood Development*. A Report by the National Research Council and the Institute of Medicine. Washington, DC: National Academy of Sciences. [www.nap.edu/read/9824/chapter/1](http://www.nap.edu/read/9824/chapter/1).

Sroufe, L.A. 2005. "Attachment and Development: A Prospective, Longitudinal Study from Birth to Adulthood." *Attachment and Human Development* 7 (4): 349–67.

## About the author

**Mary Benson McMullen**, PhD, is professor of early childhood education at Indiana University Bloomington. Her work focuses on quality and well-being in birth-to-3 environments and, most recently, on the early care and education of 1-year-olds in four cultures: the United States, England, New Zealand, and Hong Kong.

Copyright © 2018 by the National Association for the Education of Young Children. See Permissions and Reprints online at [www.naeyc.org/resources/permissions](http://www.naeyc.org/resources/permissions).



“Again, again!” After another song and story, all the adults help the children into their coats and boots. Amy, Vanessa, and their mother wave goodbye and leave with smiles on their faces.

As trust builds over time between caregivers and family members, common communication opportunities such as greetings and daily updates become more meaningful. Caregivers already understand a great deal about family circumstances and know background information that makes a daily update more significant.

During an interview, one teacher stated, “It is important to understand the child within the context of their family, including language, customs, and educational beliefs. Most parents understand that children’s healthy growth and development includes an essential collaboration between school and home.” All quality programs foster positive relationships with families and make use of the opportunities they have for building trust and communication. Multiage classrooms for infants and toddlers offer the additional benefit of developing depth over a longer period of time.

### **Creating opportunities for peer teaching**

In multiage classrooms, more capable peers are available as mentors and models, just as younger siblings have so often benefitted from mentors in their own families or in family child care settings. Some of these mentoring and modeling opportunities occur in

the course of the everyday schedule. For example, I observed children modeling for each other how to put away toys and clear away snack dishes. The children who were more familiar with daily routines often signaled through their behavior the activity that was coming next, offering both assurance and scaffolding for the other children. The following scenario describes a typical daily circle time.

Two times a day, all of the children are invited to participate in large-group activities. Occasionally, the older children wander away to explore other areas of the classroom; the teachers encourage them to play quietly on their own or with a friend. These children often return to the large group by choice to see what is happening and to take on

leadership roles, as they are familiar with the routines, finger plays, and songs. The younger children—especially the 18- to 24-month-olds—get more involved as they watch and listen to the teachers and older children. Infants sit on teachers’ laps and are encouraged to clap, sing, and dance (unless they demonstrate that they are overstimulated, in which case caregivers take them to quiet spaces).

There were also opportunities for more complex learning from peers (Bailey et al. 1993). For example, playing side by side in a dramatic play area with more experienced peers provided younger children with an opportunity to participate as novices in cooperative play, increasing language development.

## **Challenges of multiage settings**

Early childhood educators have many good reasons to consider multiage classrooms for infants and toddlers in their centers. However, before deciding that multiage classrooms are appropriate for your particular situation, there are a few possible challenges that need to be addressed.

### **Safety and supervision**

Multiage classrooms for infants and toddlers pose some unique safety concerns, especially for infants. For

example, the entire room needs to be free of choking hazards and other objects not appropriate for infants. In order to provide appropriate variety for older children, it may be necessary to offer certain items (scissors, puzzles with smaller pieces) only under controlled conditions. There are also necessary precautions whenever crawlers and walkers are in the same space.

Teacher interviews revealed that supervision could be challenging in multiage classrooms. Teachers felt strongly that this should be addressed for the children's safety and the teachers' comfort. For example, one teacher claimed, "I think supervision has to be increased. . . . You definitely have to be aware of everything that is going on in the classroom with a mixed age group." Another teacher said, "The only time I think multiage is not safe is when we are just at [the caregiver-to-child] ratio, with no extra help. On a walk, if one teacher has to take a child to the washroom and one teacher helps a crying child that won't walk, that leaves one teacher with the other seven children. I think we are not safe when something like this happens."

Having been a program director, I know that increasing staff is difficult due to budget constraints. Adult-to-child ratios are established by the individual state standards and by NAEYC accreditation as guidelines for maintaining safe and manageable classrooms. On the other hand, some teachers believe that the successful management of infants and toddlers can be achieved through careful planning. In the example with the teachers and children on a walk, this would include first letting all of the children know what will happen next and then assigning three children to each of the three teachers—including the teacher who is taking a child to the bathroom. This allows all children to stay with a caregiver while not overwhelming any one of the teachers. It is also essential that teachers are trained to handle emergencies and to follow best practices for safety.

### **Boredom among 2-year-olds**

Interviewing teachers revealed concerns about having older toddlers in a multiage classroom. The teachers believed that 2-year-olds sometimes became bored. For example, one teacher said,

Children almost 3 years old are the more challenging children because they are ready to move on and be with older children who can talk with them and play the same way that they do. I use

them as teacher helpers, but of course they cannot do that all the time. They want to play on their own, but with the younger children, they cannot communicate as well or might not have the fine motor skills. This is the hardest part of having a mixed-age class.

While this helper role is developmentally appropriate, professionals may question whether the older toddlers have been given sufficient opportunities to work to their full potential. This is a major concern, as developmentally appropriate practice requires that "caregivers do everything they can to support toddlers' play so that children stay interested in an object or activity for increasing periods of time" (Copple & Bredekamp 2009, 98).

### **In multiage classrooms, more capable peers are available as mentors and models.**

The question as to whether or not 2-year-olds are being appropriately challenged is the only significant way in which I saw justification for my prestudy concern about teachers' abilities to fully serve ages 6 weeks to 36 months. Although the teachers were sufficiently skilled in early childhood processes to meet children's needs for safety, security, and consistently caring interactions, finding time and space every day to further the 30- to 36-month-olds' growth (especially socially, emotionally, and linguistically) is critical. Teacher training for multiage settings may need to be approached differently to assure each teacher develops the skills and knowledge needed to overcome these challenges.

### **Staff turnover**

Staff turnover is a problem in many child care settings. If there is a great deal of staff turnover, then children will not be able to build strong relationships with their teachers and will not experience the benefits of continuity of care. In order to increase staff retention, all caregivers need to feel respected; they deserve fair compensation, helpful resources, and a positive emotional climate. "Teachers are more likely to stay if they see themselves as part of a team supported by leadership and if they have influence over their work environment" (Bloom & Abel 2015, 13).





## Conclusion

Overall, multiage settings for infants and toddlers offer a number of advantages, especially in the area of social and emotional development. Parents and families may want to consider looking for programs that have multiage groupings of children because they prioritize consistency in the child–caregiver relationship. To maximize the benefits of multiage environments, practitioners need to focus on developing strong relationships with and among children. As caregivers form these relationships, they also become well acquainted with family preferences and values, establishing trust. Most important, children grow and learn in an environment that offers rich opportunities for the development of empathy and social understanding. While safety and regulatory considerations may make it difficult to implement multiage classrooms for infants and toddlers in some facilities and in certain jurisdictions, it is still a practice worth careful consideration.

Photographs: pp. 34, 36, 40, 42, © Getty Images; p. 37 © Julia Luckenbill

Copyright © 2018 by the National Association for the Education of Young Children. See Permissions and Reprints online at [www.naeyc.org/resources/permissions](http://www.naeyc.org/resources/permissions).

## References

- Anderson, L.S. 2012. “Multiage Grouping of 6-Week-Olds to 3-Year-Olds” PhD dissertation. Northern Illinois University.
- Bailey, D.B., M.R. Burchinal, & R.A. McWilliam. 1993. “Age of Peers and Early Childhood Development.” *Child Development* 64 (3): 848–62.
- Bloom, P.J., & M.B. Abel. 2015. “Expanding the Lens—Leadership as an Organizational Asset.” *Young Children* 70 (2): 10–17.
- Bowlby, J. 1969. *Attachment and Loss: Volume I, Attachment*. New York: Basic Books.
- Brownell, C.A., M. Svetlova, R. Anderson, S.R. Nichols, & J. Drummond. 2013. “Socialization of Early Prosocial Behavior: Parents’ Talk about Emotions Is Associated with Sharing and Helping Toddlers.” *Infancy* 18: 91–119.
- Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University. 2011. *Building the Brain’s “Air Traffic Control” System: How Early Experiences Shape the Development of Executive Function*. Working Paper 11. <http://developingchild.harvard.edu/wp-content/uploads/2011/05/How-Early-Experiences-Shape-the-Development-of-Executive-Function.pdf>.
- Copple, C., & S. Bredekamp, eds. 2009. *Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs Serving Children from Birth through Age 8*. 3rd ed. Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC).
- Katz, L.G., D. Evangelou, & J.A. Hartman. 1990. *The Case for Mixed-Age Grouping in Early Education*. Washington, DC: NAEYC. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED326302.pdf>.
- Logue, M.E. 2006. “Teachers Observe to Learn: Differences in Social Behavior of Toddlers and Preschoolers in Same-Age and Multiage Groupings.” *Young Children* 61 (3): 70–76.
- McGaha, C.G., R. Cummings, B. Lippard, & K. Dallas. 2011. “Relationship Building: Infants, Toddlers, and 2-Year-Olds.” *ECRP: Early Childhood Research & Practice* 13 (1). <http://ecrp.uiuc.edu/v13n1/mcgaha.html>.
- McMullen, M.B. 2017 “Continuity of Care with Infants and Toddlers.” *Exchange* (Jan/Feb): 46–50. [www.researchgate.net/publication/311965888\\_Continuity\\_of\\_care\\_with\\_infants\\_toddlers\\_Identifying\\_benefits\\_and\\_addressing\\_common\\_concerns](http://www.researchgate.net/publication/311965888_Continuity_of_care_with_infants_toddlers_Identifying_benefits_and_addressing_common_concerns).
- Shonkoff, J.P. 2009. “The Road to a New Energy System: Mobilizing Science to Revitalize Early Childhood Policy.” *Issues in Science and Technology* 26 (1): <http://issues.org/26-1/shonkoff/>.

## About the author

**Linda S. Anderson**, EdD, is an adjunct instructor at Waubensee Community College, Rasmussen College, and Aurora University, in Illinois. Linda has been a college instructor for over 20 years, an owner and director of two child care centers, and has worked as a child care consultant. A special thank-you goes to Maylan Dunn-Kenney, who helped in research, writing, and mentoring. [linda4kids@comcast.net](mailto:linda4kids@comcast.net)

Copyright of YC: Young Children is the property of National Association for the Education of Young Children and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.