

# For the LOVE of Circle

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# Why such a love for circle?

- Parents are impressed by circle time but not play time
- “peaceful, quiet and orderly”
- Higher student-teacher ratio
- FREE
- Takes less time than to plan small group activities
- All the children are in one place where I can see them
- I’m in charge!

# Circle time:

- Attention span: Neurons can only focus on one activity for that long before “burning” out.
- Interest survey – No one has ever picked circle
- Bev Bos had a goal that no one would come to gathering time because they were busy playing!
- Are we paying attention to learning styles?
- Are there other choices if circle doesn't interest you?

# Attention Span

- 3 year olds:
- 4 year olds:
- 5 year olds:
- Adults:

# Movement: Music and movement may not be what the kids want who need movement....

Moving and learning is connected in the brain! The more you move, the more you learn.

- Spinning
- Dancing
- Yoga
- Rhythm sticks
- Instruments
- Hopping/jumping
- Upside-down
- Pig pile
- Marching/running/speed walking/skipping
- Rocking on your bottom
- Child burrito
- Animal movements
- Arm movements
- Cartwheels

# Variation of Seating

- Fidgets
- Crisscross applesauce
- Rug squares and “pick a letter” or assigned seats
- I talk to everyone
- Don't forget the teaching piece

# Calendar Time

- “Is the precious time we spend everyday on these kinds of rote drills truly the most meaningful and valuable use of our time?”
- “Does calendar time lead to meaningful conversations”
- “Does calendar time assist in building a strong community”
- “Are the children loving the process?”
- What other questions do you ask yourself about genuine learning?
- Research: preschoolers develop a sense of time in terms of dates, months, years well after the preschool years.
- Math/patterning is learned best when handling concrete materials

# Story time: A little something to ask yourself before reading a story (by Bev Bos)

- Is it meaningful to children, something children can make sense of?
- Does it encourage conversations connected to their lives or imagination?
- Is it humorous?
- Are the illustrations visually pleasing and not overwhelming?
- Does the book encourage children to interact positively? If it doesn't create conversations by the first page, put it away and get another book.
- Does the story help children toward self-identification or reinforce their self-concept positively?
- Are there opportunities to create/expand the story?
- Is it “preachy”, “teachy”, or “cutesy”? If so, you are better off without it!

# Schedule

- When you feel you “have to” hurry or rush through everything for the sake of getting through your own litany list of information you want to TELL them, you are missing out on the opportunity of discussing information and learning about things that you all can SHARE together.
- Teach WITH children not TO children

# Are we ready?

- Be prepared
- Are you having personal discussions with co-workers or parents when your children are at Circle ready to go. You will lose them! Your time is going to run out!
- Use threats or rewards to get their attention or focus. Some examples are:
  - “If you don’t all quiet down, we won’t finish this story.”
  - “Sit quietly and listen and then we can have center time”.
  - “I like the way Sally is sitting right now.....”
  - “When you are sitting quietly I will call you to go wash your hands.”

# Choices

- “I hate circle time!” “I am not even interested in this \_\_\_\_\_!”
- Where do children go when they can no longer pay attention or want to pay attention?
- What is this business of having a chair?
- Can children leave circle and find something else to do?

# What if circle time looked at the 6 C's?

1. Collaboration: How does working together look at circle?
2. Communication: Who is talking? Who can talk? Why do I have to be quiet all the time?
3. Content: Is it all relevant and developmentally appropriate to the children attending?
4. Critical Thinking: Are children thinking critically about the material or are they just taking up space on their carpet squares?
5. Creative Innovation: How can we extend circle to meet this C? How can we look beyond the traditional?
6. Confidence: How is confidence gained through circle? Can confidence be doused? When we send children away, what happens to their confidence?

The 6 C's have been adapted from a book called Becoming Brilliant: What Science Tells us About Raising Successful Children by Hirsh-Pasek and Golinkoff