

TOP 10 TIPS FOR OFFERING CIRCLE TIME AS A CHOICE



1. START WITH CLEAR EXPECTATIONS

Begin the year by letting children know that Circle Time is a choice. Explain that they are welcome to join and explore activities that interest them, but they can choose to do other activities if they prefer. This sets the tone for a classroom environment that values autonomy and personal interest.

2. CREATE A WELCOMING ENVIRONMENT

Design the space to be inviting and comfortable. Use soft seating, bright colors, and engaging visuals to make Circle Time appealing. Children are more likely to choose to participate if the environment feels welcoming and exciting.

3. INCORPORATE ENGAGING ACTIVITIES

Offer activities that spark curiosity and excitement, such as a mystery box or interactive songs. Tailor the content to the children's interests and allow them to suggest songs or stories. This involvement increases their desire to join Circle Time.

4. FLEXIBLE DURATION

Keep Circle Time short and flexible, ideally under 10 minutes, to maintain children's attention and interest. If you notice the children are losing interest, it's okay to end the session early and transition to other activities.

5. COMMUNICATE WITH COLLEAGUES

Coordinate with co-teachers and assistants to manage the flow of children joining and leaving Circle Time. Ensure that staff know their roles, whether it's leading Circle Time or supervising other centers, to maintain a smooth and supportive environment.

6. PROVIDE ALTERNATE ACTIVITIES

Keep quieter centers open during Circle Time, such as the library or art area, for children who choose not to participate. This allows children to engage in activities that match their interests and energy levels while still being part of the classroom community.

7. DOCUMENT AND SHARE HIGHLIGHTS

Capture moments from Circle Time through photos or videos, and share these with children who did not attend. Highlighting their peers' experiences can intrigue them and encourage participation in future sessions.

8. INVOLVE CHILDREN IN PLANNING

Allow children to contribute to the planning of Circle Time activities. Encourage them to suggest themes, songs, or stories, which fosters a sense of ownership and increases their likelihood of participating.

9. RESPECT INDIVIDUAL NEEDS

Recognize that not all children are ready for group activities. Provide support for those who need it and respect their choice to engage in other activities. This approach supports their development and comfort.

10. REFLECT AND ADJUST

Regularly evaluate the effectiveness of Circle Time as a choice. Gather feedback from children and staff, and be willing to make adjustments to improve engagement and satisfaction.