

## Combined kindergarten groups

Combined groups that bring together children aged 3 to 5 years offer unique opportunities for learning and development. There is also a vast range of developmental and individual needs in single age groups and Early Childhood Teachers and Educators are trained and experienced in providing for each child's individual needs.

Combined groups offer children: -

- opportunities to observe and learn a wider variety of skills
- to develop sophisticated social skills as they have opportunities to be supported by their peers and also lead learning for other children.
- who find it harder to socially interact with peers of the same age to gain confidence to grow and navigate social skills
- who are from a single child family an exposure to a wider age group
- who are older to develop leadership skills as they have opportunities to look out for, or care for younger children
- who are older to model behaviour, play skills, communication etc for younger children.

Children can be best supported in a combined group when: -

- there is a shared positive approach
- the kindergarten program responds to children's needs and interests so that every child has the opportunity to grow and learn
- kindergarten staff and families share what they know about the child
- the learning spaces are flexible and provide opportunities for children to access resources, materials and experiences that match their interests and skills as well as those that challenge them to extend their capabilities
- the daily routine is flexible and children are encouraged to focus on what they can do rather than what they can't do.
- differentiated learning experiences are planned for to allow children to learn at their own pace with individual support.
- a culture of nurturing and care is established between the children so the everyone feels supported