

Remember, not all children will want to or be able to do every activity. Become comfortable with the fact that not every child has to “do” every activity. Infants and toddlers enjoy watching older children and learn from observing. Many providers worry about what to do with an infant or young toddler when they are helping preschoolers with a project.

Infants and toddlers learn by observing, touching, smelling, hearing, and tasting. You might try to do an activity with preschoolers when younger children are taking a morning nap or you might place a low barrier around the area where older children are working, so that the younger children can watch, but not disrupt the activity. You might allow younger children to do part of an activity, by placing the child in a highchair and giving them some safe materials to touch, taste, or play with.

Focus on experience, rather than product related activities. Avoid craft activities that children complete by following a set of steps, however simple they may be. Young children cannot cut straight or glue pictures in the right spot. Eventually, you end up finishing the product for everyone, and the children experience a sense of failure because they could not finish the project successfully.

Focus instead on doing something that allows children to use their own thoughts and ideas. For instance, try providing a paper sack to decorate with an assortment of crayons, stickers, markers, fabric scraps, and magazine pictures instead of making Halloween puppets.