

## The benefits of mixed-age play

Children spend a lot of time with their classmates but the real world is comprised of people of all ages. Mixed age play is a wonderful vehicle for promoting community cohesion and has benefits for all involved.

This is important for playgrounds as decisions about the layout of the playground and the groups who use it at different times can have a massive impact on mixed age play.

Whilst some general zoning of playgrounds can be useful, it's important that children of different ages or abilities don't feel banned from parts of the playground.

In schools, rotating the classes who can use the play equipment is commonplace but there are many benefits of allowing children of different ages to play together.

Younger children are inspired by older children's abilities and are motivated to do more. They also look up to the older children and model their behaviour, thus extending their own development.

Older children develop communication skills and responsibility. They thrive on being the 'leader' and having younger children look up to them. This in turn also helps them to act more considerately and become good role models for the younger children to learn from.

Encouraging older children to 'keep an eye on' younger children will help promote a community feel to the playground and children of all ages benefit from safe, supportive play environments

## Adventure Play Equipment

Setter Play's **'Crackerjack'** climbing unit features activities to suit age groups throughout the infant and junior school years

