Family child care lesson plans: planning on a phone

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Plan a mixed-age family child care week on your phone: one theme for babies to fours, the Mixed ages setting, day notes kept on the device, and a link to send.

In a family child care home, plan one theme for the whole room and let each age do its own part: babies hear the song and hold the real thing, twos do the craft with help, fours trace the letter and lead the game outside. On Peabody's theme planner, pick "Mixed ages" and every part says who does what. It works on a phone, at the kitchen counter, during nap. No account and no app to install, and Peabody is free through the end of 2026.

Most planning tools assume a classroom: one age, a desk, a printer down the hall. A home program is a baby on your hip, a four-year-old asking what's for snack, and ten minutes of quiet at one o'clock. This post is about planning in that ten minutes.

Plan during nap, on the phone you already have

The planner is a web page. Open it in your phone's browser and it fits the screen.

1. Pick the week. Tap the date. Any day you pick snaps to that week's Monday.
2. Pick a theme. Scroll the list of 52, or type in the "Find a theme" box: "bugs," "snow," "farm."
3. Pick the room. Tap Mixed ages.
4. Give the room a name if you like, for the top of the sheets. It's kept on your phone.

That's a week. Circle time, books, a craft, a song with its words, a snack, a letter pack and an outside game are filled in.

What "Mixed ages" changes

The plan is the same theme for everyone. With Mixed ages picked, three parts get a line about who does what:

- Song: "Mixed ages: everyone sings; the babies hear it."
- Craft: "Mixed ages: the twos do the craft with help; the fours help the twos."
- Letter pack: "Mixed ages: the fours do the trace page; everyone gets the picture page."

That's the pattern for the whole day. The oldest get a job: turning the pages, passing out the glue sticks, showing the move outside. The mixed-age room guide puts it this way: a four-year-old handing a two-year-old the glue stick is learning as much as the two-year-old.

The books help here too. Each one shows its level. Levels 0 to 3 are ones the children follow along with; anything above 3 is marked read-aloud. Nap time, when the babies are down, is a

good time for the longer one with the oldest. All the books are in Peabody's free library, so you can read them on the same phone or a tablet.

A mixed-age week, worked through

Here is the bug week with Mixed ages picked.

- Circle time asks, "How many legs does an ant have?" Keep it short for the little ones; the fours can answer.
- Books: Ants Are Strong (level 3), I See a Boy (level 3), Go, Snail, Go! (level 3), and Who Lives Under the Log?, a read-aloud.
- Craft: an egg-carton caterpillar. A grown-up cuts the carton strip. The twos paint; the fours help push in the pipe-cleaner feelers.
- Song: "Itsy Bitsy Spider," every day. The babies hear it; the twos do the hands.
- Snack: Ants on a Log on Thursday. The recipe page has its allergens and swaps, and lines for little ones.
- Letter: B is for bug. The fours trace it; everyone colors the picture page.
- Outside: a bug hunt. Look under a log or a stone with a grown-up, count, and put it back.

Day notes: what's different on Tuesday

Under the plan there's a box for each day, Monday to Friday. Type what's different: "early pick-up at 2," "library story time," "rain plan: bug hunt in the hallway." Each note can be up to 200 characters.

The notes print in that day's box on the wall sheet, and they stay on your phone. They are never put into a link.

Send it to your other phone

Lots of providers plan on one phone and run the day on another, or have a partner or assistant who wants to see the week. The Send to my other phone button makes a link. On most phones it opens the share sheet, so you can text it to yourself; otherwise it copies the link.

The link holds only two things: the theme and the week. Open it on the other phone and you get the same week's plan. Your day notes and your room's name don't travel. If you want the notes on the other phone, type them there, or print the wall sheet and stick it on the fridge.

Where the plans live

The planner keeps the last twelve weeks in your phone's browser, under "Your weeks." Tap one to open it again. If you clear the browser's data, those go too. Print what you want to keep.

The rest of the day's paper

The same site has the other sheets a home program uses, and none need a sign-in:

- The sign-in sheet, daily or weekly. Pasted first names stay on your phone. The sheet carries one line saying your state sets what a sign-in record must hold and how long to keep it, with a link to your state's licensing page.
- The daily report slip in infant, toddler and preschool versions, four to a page, so a mixed room can print one of each. There is no medicine field; each slip says "Medication: see our log." The daily report sheets post has more.
- The newsletter maker, one page for the families.

Try this at nap time

1. Open the planner on your phone and pick next Monday.
2. Pick a theme you can bring something real for: an apple, a leaf, a shell.
3. Tap Mixed ages and read the song, craft and letter lines.
4. Add a note for any day that's different.
5. Tap Send to my other phone if someone else needs the week.
6. Print the family note for the door when you're next at a printer. It has the song's words, so families can sing it at home.

Three things providers ask

Can I plan without a computer or a printer?

Yes. The planner works in a phone's browser, and the plan reads fine on screen. Print when you're near a printer; the sheets come out the same.

Does my assistant need an account to see the plan?

No. Send them the link. It opens the same theme and week, with no sign-in. Your notes stay on your phone.

What if I have a baby and a five-year-old?

Run one theme. The baby gets the song, a book read on your lap and the real thing to hold. The oldest get the trace page, the theme question and a helper job.

Free at peabody.kids/blog/family-child-care-planning-on-a-phone