

WASHINGTON FACT SHEET

INTERGENERATIONAL SHARED SITES

DEFINITION

Intergenerational shared sites are programs where older adults and young people receive services at the same site and both generations interact during regularly scheduled intergenerational activities, as well as through informal encounters. Generations United uses the term "Intergenerational Shared Site"; others refer to these types of programs as intergenerational day care or inter-/multi-generational centers.

OVERVIEW

The use of space by multiple generations not only makes common sense but can be an important solution in helping communities and organizations stretch scarce resources. By constructing innovative facilities that allow for the sharing of resources, intergenerational shared site programs can meet the needs of and improve outcomes for children, youth, and older adults. The current fiscal constraints faced by communities across the nation are forcing many to make tough decisions on the construction and rehabilitation of facilities and the delivery of critical services. Intergenerational shared sites also act as a mechanism to optimize limited resources while helping to address the social implications of an increasingly age-segregated society where children often spend their days in school and/or childcare centers, while many elders socialize in age-isolated facilities.

BENEFITS OF INTERGENERATIONAL SHARED SITES

- Enhances quality of life for all participants
- Provides needed services to the community
- Increases cost savings & opportunities to share resources
- Enhances employee benefits for programs with on-site care
- Attracts additional funding & positive public relations
- Improves attitudes about different age groups

BENEFITS FOR YOUTH/CHILDREN

Young people gain an enhanced perception of the elderly. They benefit from interpersonal relationships with persons from a different age group, who can provide guidance, wisdom and support and have the opportunity to share their unique skills and talents as well. Preschool children involved in intergenerational programs had higher personal/social developmental scores (by 11 months) than preschool children involved in non-intergenerational programs.

BENEFITS FOR OLDER ADULTS

Studies show that sharing activities with younger people promotes positive health gains for older adults such as burning more calories due to exercise, sustaining fewer falls, and a reduction in reliance on canes. Adults with dementia or other cognitive impairments experience more positive affect during interactions with children than they do during non-intergenerational activities and these changes last even after the activity ends.

INTERGENERATIONAL PROGRAM COMPONENTS

Intergenerational shared sites vary in structure, but are generally composed of two components; one that serves the needs of older adults and a second that serves children/youth. In addition, many facilities have designated "shared spaces" that provide additional opportunities for spontaneous intergenerational interaction. *The following chart lists common program models and components:*



DISTINGUISHED WASHINGTON SHARED SITES

CRISTA SHORELINE, WA

- CRISTA operates a community for nearly 600 residents ranging from independent living to nursing care on the same grounds as the Kings School where over 1,100 students attend pre-school to high school.
- On the 55 acre campus, both informal and formal intergenerational interactions are encouraged from gatherings at the campus deli and park to volunteering for both generations at the senior center and school.
- The high school's "Connections Club" is a program dedicated to building IG relationships and encouraging interactions between students and seniors. Also, the Intergenerational Idea Committee was created by seniors to help keep their community active and growing through intergenerational activities.

INTERGENERATIONAL CENTER OF PROVIDENCE MOUNT SAINT VINCENT SEATTLE, WA

- The Intergenerational Learning Center (ILC) provides child care in an environment driven by daily interactions with older generations. The Center founded by Providence Mount St. Vincent is located in the same facility as the programs and living quarters of the elderly and disabled residents.
- Teachers plan two to three visits a week for their students, ages six months to five years, that last 30-45 minutes and are facilitated by ILC staff and recreation therapists. Residents also visit classrooms for informal visits as well.
- Interactions can include a wide range of activities including singing, dance, reading, art, and cooking. Annual tea parties are also scheduled as well as Christmas cookie baking.

MARTHA AND MARY POULSBO, WA

- The Martha and Mary intergenerational program provides for both generations the chance to come together and to learn and grow from cross-generational relationships.
- The program allows seniors to stay active in mind and body by passing their knowledge and skills to the youngest generations.
- The children are given an opportunity to grow and develop with the help of those with the extensive wisdom and care of their years. These mutually beneficial relationships are bond builders that strengthen the community as a whole with knowledge, appreciation, and respect.



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Generations United is the only national membership organization focused solely on improving the lives of children, youth, and older people through intergenerational strategies, programs, and policies. GU represents more than 100 national, state, and local organizations representing more than 70 million Americans. GU serves as a resource for educating policymakers and the public about the economic, social, and personal imperatives of intergenerational cooperation. GU provides a forum for those working with children, youth, and older adults to explore areas of common ground while celebrating the richness of each generation.

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