PENNSYLVANIA FACT SHEET

INTERGENERATIONAL SHARED SITES

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Because we're stronger together®

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:*

Child/Youth Component

Childcare Center
Before/After School Programs
Head Start Program
Early Childhood Program
Elementary or Middle/Jr. High School
High School
College/University
Youth Recreation Program
Camps

Shared Site Models

Adult day care and child care program housed in the same facility
Senior center located in a public school
After school programs held at a senior center
Child care in a long term care facility
Head Start program in a nursing home
Community or multigenerational center with programs for both generations
Multi-use park or outdoor space

Old Adult Component

Adult Day Services Center
Assisted Living/Residential Care
Continuing Care Retirement Community
Nursing Home
Senior Center
Senior Housing Facility
Community Recreation Program
Geriatric Care Unit

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DISTINGUISHED PENNSYLVANIA SHARED SITE

CHILDREN'S FAMILY CENTER AND MESSIAH VILLAGE RETIREMENT COMMUNITY

MECHANICSBURG, PA

- **2009 MetLife Foundation/Generations United Intergenerational Shared Site Excellence Award Winner.**
- Childcare and educational facility for children six weeks through six years of age that is located on the campus of a continuing care retirement community.
- The program builds on-going, intimate, mutually beneficial relationships between the young and old.
- The children and teachers participate in between 60 to 100 activities a month with residents and a group of the residents volunteer in regularly scheduled activities with the children in the classroom, go on field trips, and help with swimming and crafts.
- For additional information, visit *www.messiahvillage.com*

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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