

VIRGINIA 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 VIRGINIA SHARED SITES

**NEIGHBORS GROWING
TOGETHER**
BLACKSGURG, VA

- 2008 MetLife Foundation/Generations United Intergenerational Shared Site Excellence Award Winner.
- An intergenerational facility of Virginia Tech University, this organization focuses not only on providing a shared site for interaction between older adults and children but also on research and outreach involving intergenerational issues.
- Provides services to older adults and children through daily activities meant to encourage positive social development and intergenerational relations.
- For additional information, visit <http://www.intergenerational.clahs.vt.edu/neighbors/index.html>

JABA
JEFFERSON AREA BOARD FOR AGING
CHARLOTTESVILLE, VA

- 2009 MetLife Foundation/Generations United Intergenerational Shared Site Excellence Award Finalist.
- The Jefferson Area Board for Aging has created a number of living and social options for older adults that include Adult Care and Community Centers. These Centers have partnerships with local schools, partnerships that give older adults and children the opportunity to engage one another, providing companionship and guidance.
- With the success of these partnerships, JABA is moving forward to build the Southern Albemarle Intergenerational Center, a community based on the idea that older adults and children have much to learn and take away from each other.
- For additional information, visit <http://www.jabacares.org/>

**GILES HEALTH AND FAMILY
CENTER**
PEARISBURG, VA

- 2010 MetLife Foundation/Generations United Intergenerational Shared Site Excellence Award Winner.
- A nonprofit organization that provides subsidized care for many children and adults in the rural community of Giles County, VA. The Center provides adult day care services in the same facility as Kids & Co. Child Development Center.
- Children and adults enjoy interaction throughout much of the day beginning with a structured intergenerational activity time in the morning. Through these interactions, special bonds between the adults and children have developed. Children have developed special bonds with particular adults and have supported the elderly during illness and death in a very touching way.
- For additional information, contact Kaye S. Johnson, Executive Director at 540-921-3024.



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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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