

# How to Support Active Learning at Work Time

*The “Do” in HighScope’s Plan-Do-Review*

# Week 2 Learning Unit

## *What Children Do at Work Time*



# What Children Do at Work Time

During work time, children

- Initiate, work on, modify, complete, and change their plans.
- Play in a variety of social contexts.
- Carry on conversations.
- Participate in different types of play.
- Construct knowledge, engaging in the key developmental indicators (KDIs).

As children carry out their plans, they

- Work with **any** of the materials in **any** of the interest areas. Interest areas are **not** closed.
- Decide where they will play, what they will play, and with whom they will play.
- Use materials creatively. Repeating and building upon activities that interest them, **there are no preset activities.**
- Move materials from one area of the classroom to another.

## What Children Do at Work Time (continued)

### Time Spent at an Initial Plan Varies by Child

Children spend varying amounts of time at their initial plan. It can be

- 2 minutes.
- 15 minutes.
- An entire work time.
- Even work time over several consecutive days!

“Observed as a whole, a group of 18 children at work time can exhibit what looks like a lot of random movement. Observed individually, however, each child’s actions generally fit an internal logic that is related to the child’s particular purpose.”

Mary Hohmann, David P. Weikart, and Ann S. Epstein  
*Educating Young Children, Third Edition, 2008.*

## What Children Do at Work Time (continued)



## What Children Do at Work Time (continued)

### Where Children Play During Work Time

Children will play in one or in several interest areas — often bringing materials from one area to another to support their work-time plans.

They play both in intimate, cozy spaces and also in larger open spaces, depending on the requirements of their plans.



## What Children Do at Work Time (continued)



# Children Carry Out Their Plans

## 1. During work time, children initiate, work on, modify, complete, and change their plans.

Children carry out their plans in a variety of different ways. Some children

- Stay in one spot.
- Move around.
- Start in a relatively empty interest area, but move when they feel crowded.

Sometimes children start working on their plans, stop to join another child or group and then later return to their original plans.

Some children begin to carry out their plans and then run into a problem, which may require some modifications. For example:

- Mark and Lucy planned to build a house by putting several large blankets over the table in the art area. When they got there, two other children were already making a collage on the table. Lucy then had the idea of stretching the blanket between two chairs instead. They tried that, added some extra chairs to make the house big enough — and it worked!

## Children Carry Out Their Plans (continued)



## Children Carry Out Their Plans (continued)

### 2. During work time, children play in a variety of social contexts.

Young preschool children often **play alone**. They may observe others, play on their own, or play next to another child (parallel play).

As preschool children grow they are more likely to play in **pairs** and **groups**.

- When older children play alone it is because **they prefer** to, a signal that they have the confidence to do so.

- Playing alone does **not** necessarily mean that a child lacks social skills.

Interestingly, playing in pairs seems to lead children into more **complex** play, while playing in groups may lead to **simpler** play.

## Children Carry Out Their Plans (continued)

### Children Play Alone



## Children Carry Out Their Plans (continued)

Children Play With Others (in pairs)



Children Play With Others (in groups)



## Children Carry Out Their Plans (continued)

### 3. During work time, children carry on conversations.

The atmosphere at work time, created by cozy settings, pretend play, shared goals, common focus, and sympathetic partners, encourages children to converse with each other and with adults.

Pretend play produces a lot of conversation since its progress depends on dialogue among the players.

During work time, you will also see children talking with each other especially when they have made private, enclosed spaces.



## Children Carry Out Their Plans (continued)



## Children Carry Out Their Plans (continued)

### Where Have We Been?

At the beginning of this learning unit, we presented a list of some things children do at work time. We have discussed the first three:

- Initiate, work on, modify, complete, and change their plans
- Play in a variety of social contexts
- Carry on conversations

### Where Are We Going?

Next, we will go over the final two items from the list of things children do at work time:

- Participate in different types of play
- Construct knowledge, engaging in the key developmental indicators (KDIs)

## Children Carry Out Their Plans (continued)



### 4. During work time, children participate in different types of play.

#### Four Types of Play

The quote on slide 4 states that a group of children during work time may display what looks like a lot of “random movement.” In fact, children are actually participating in four types of play:

- **Exploratory**
- **Constructive**
- **Pretend**
- **Games**

In the following slides, we will provide explanations and pictures that will illustrate each type of play.

## Children Carry Out Their Plans (continued)

### Exploratory Play

Children are born curious. During exploratory play, children apply this curiosity to many of the materials in the classroom.

They will splash and wiggle their fingers in the water table; poke, pat, and pinch the play dough; squeeze the glue bottles, and try out painting with their hands, brushes, and anything else that is available.



## Children Carry Out Their Plans (continued)

### Constructive Play

During constructive play, children have a goal or intention in mind.

They might have a goal to build something with blocks like a barn, a plane or a house; to make food, snakes, or balls from play dough; to put together Legos; to paint a piece of wood or to draw a picture; or to staple, glue, or tape together masks, collages, or “creations.”



## Children Carry Out Their Plans (continued)

### Pretend Play

When children participate in pretend play, they use one object to stand for another or they assume the role of someone or something else.

Through pretend play, children are trying to make sense of their world and seek some control over events they have seen or been part of.



## Children Carry Out Their Plans (continued)

### Games

Preschool children are just beginning to be interested in playing games.

These games may be simple or complicated; traditional games that someone has taught them; or games the children have created themselves.

Games give children a chance to cooperate, negotiate, and make up their own rules.



## Children Carry Out Their Plans (continued)

### 5. During work time, children construct knowledge, engaging in the key developmental indicators (KDIs).

When children “construct knowledge,” they engage in the key developmental indicators (KDIs).

As children construct knowledge during work time they may interact, build, pretend, represent, figure out, look at books, write notes, blend colors, use magnets, set the table for a party, mold clay, repair vehicles, weigh shells, beat drums, race cars, feed babies, etc.

### Engaging in the KDIs

In short, work time is overflowing with opportunities for children to engage in all the key developmental indicators!

Look at the following slides for examples.

What KDIs can you see in each photo?

## Children Carry Out Their Plans (continued)



## Children Carry Out Their Plans (continued)



## Children Carry Out Their Plans (continued)



# A Peek Ahead

## This week we will

- Identify the types of play children engage in during work time.

## Next week we will

- Learn how adults support children at work time.

