

# How to Support Active Learning at Work Time

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

# Week 3 Learning Unit

## *What Adults Do at Work Time*



# The Adults' Role at Work Time

Work time is the part of the HighScope daily routine when **teachers**

- Play alongside children as partners.
- Interact with children, sharing give-and-take conversation about the play.
- Scaffold children's learning.
- Take anecdotes about what children say and do.

Adults keep their focus on the children, rather than on classroom chores or paperwork.

The strategies adults use to support children during work time depend upon

- Children's developmental levels.
- Observation of children's particular needs and interests.
- The types of play taking place in the classroom.



## The Adults' Role at Work Time (continued)

### Adults Discover What Children Are Doing

Adults stay aware of the status of children's plans:

- Is the child involved in their plan?
- Has a child abandoned their first plan to do something else?
- Do some children need help getting started with their plans?



## The Adults' Role at Work Time (continued)

### Adults Observe Children's Play

Observe **all** the children and look for those who

- Watch other children play.
- Need comfort and contact.
  - Offer gentle touches.
  - Acknowledge their feelings.



## The Adults' Role at Work Time (continued)

### Classroom Observations

A classroom observation is **not** a lengthy process. It may take a couple of seconds or, at the most, a minute.

It is merely a moment taken by the adult to register (mentally or on paper) what a child is doing.

The adult then returns to the play.



Once adults understand what children are doing, they can join in their play!

## The Adults' Role at Work Time (continued)

### Are You Ready to Play?

- Adults join children at play when there is a “natural” opening in their play.
- Adults enter children’s play without disrupting the flow of the action.

### Joining Children’s Play

- Join the play at the children’s level.
- Ensure that the children retain control over the direction the play is going.
- Offer new ideas **within** the context of the play that is already occurring.
- Address the child as the **role** she has assumed, rather than as the child.

- Play in parallel — or do what the child is doing.
- If a child stacks blocks, you should stack blocks, too, imitating what the child does.
- Play as a partner.
- When children are involved in pretend play, join them as an equal or as a follower.
  - Assume the role assigned to you.
  - Follow the rules that the children established.
  - Take direction from the children
  - When a child asks for support during pretend play, refer him to another child rather than step in as “the boss.”

## The Adults' Role at Work Time (continued)



## The Adults' Role at Work Time (continued)

### Conversing With Children at Work Time

When adults talk with children during work time, they use many of the same guidelines described earlier for joining their play:

- Look for a “natural opportunity” for conversation.
- Be at the child’s level.
- Speak with the child as a partner, using conversation give-and-take.



## The Adults' Role at Work Time (continued)

**Beware of becoming either "The Interrogator" or "The Fly on the Wall."**

### The Fly on the Wall

- Believes children learn best when they are left alone
- Does not participate in children's play (e.g., "It's too boring"; "I have to get the newsletter ready to send home.")
- Does not have give-and-take conversations with children (e.g., "I'll just distract them"; "They're playing so nicely. I don't want to interrupt!")

**Could one  
of these be  
YOU?**

### The Interrogator

- Believes children learn best by listening and following directions
- Asks direct questions, for which there is one correct answer
- "Grills" children by constantly relating what they are doing to a content area that may not be relevant to their play (e.g., "What color is this?"; "How many blocks did you use to build your barn?")
- Gives "orders" (e.g., "Put that back!"; "Give the cow to Emily!")

## The Adults' Role at Work Time (continued)

Or is this more like YOU?

### The Fly on the Wall

### The Partner

- Believes children learn best when they are actively engaged with materials, ideas, other children, and with adults
- Looks for opportunities to interact with children — playing with them, following their leads, supporting and scaffolding their play and learning

### The Interrogator

## The Adults' Role at Work Time (continued)

### Be a Supportive Partner

- Keep questions to a minimum.
- When you do ask a question try and relate it to:
  - Whatever the child is doing
  - His or her thought process (e.g., “Why do you think that happened?”; “I wonder what it will do if ... ?”)

### Adult Scaffolding

In the Week 1 Learning Unit, we reviewed the 5 ingredients of active learning; the 5<sup>th</sup>, **adult scaffolding**, plays a significant role during work time.

“**Scaffolding**” means adults **support** children’s current level of thinking and **challenge** them to advance to the next stage. In this way, adults help children gain knowledge and develop creative problem-solving skills.

## The Adults' Role at Work Time (continued)

### Problem Solving

When children freely explore an interesting environment, they will run into problems — both with materials and with each other.

Encourage children to participate in the problem-solving process, regardless of the source of the problem.



## The Adults' Role at Work Time (continued)

### Take Anecdotal Notes

Documenting children's activities and conversations is important for maintaining an ongoing record of individual accomplishments and significant events.

Anecdotes allow you to share information with your teaching partner and with parents, and to plan based on children's interests.



## The Adults' Role at Work Time (continued)

### Ending Work Time

Give children a 5-minute warning before work time ends.

Make cleanup time fun and enjoyable.

You should help too — being a partner doesn't stop at cleanup time!



# A Peek Ahead

## This week we will

- Describe the role of adults during work time.
- Identify strategies that adults use to support children during work time.

