

Intentional Lesson Planning for Infants and Toddlers

The Path to Intentional Teaching

Week 2 Learning Unit

Partnering With Parents & Scaffolding Children's Learning



Partnering With Parents

Partnering with parents to create meaningful and intentional daily plans has many benefits for children, while also helping caregivers connect with each individual child and their family.

Children

Children benefit from consistent routines, similar responses, and exposure to interesting and meaningful experiences.

Parents

Parents benefit from getting new ideas to try at home, feeling connected to their children's classroom, and being the expert on their child's needs and development.

Teachers

Teachers benefit from having the parent's perspectives on each child's needs, preferences, routines, and communication styles.

Partnering With Parents (continued)

Things parents can share with you:

- Child's eating and sleeping schedule at home
- Child's ways of communicating
- Things child likes to play with at home
- How baby likes to be held
- Child's favorite songs and books
- How child likes to be comforted
- Skills they are trying to help their child acquire
- Concerns they have about their child's development, growth, or behavior

Things you can share with parents:

- Child's eating and sleeping schedule at school
- Child's ways of communicating
- Things child likes to play with at school
- Child's favorite songs and books
- Children their child plays with
- Skills they are helping the child acquire
- Ideas for extending learning at home
- Resources for understanding child development and common challenges faced in the infant and toddler years

How Can I Use Information From Parents?

Schedule and Routines

- Establish individual routines for infants that are consistent with home routines.
- Establish group routines for toddlers that are similar to home routines.
- Plan daily routine components around biological need components.

Environment

- Select and arrange furniture to support children's development and ensure safety.
- Choose materials that are interesting and developmentally appropriate.
- Add materials to the classroom that are similar to what children use at home.

Interactions

- Respond attentively to how infants and toddlers are used to communicating.
- Anticipate and plan for children's individual preferences.
- Use words and gestures that children recognize and understand.

When Do I Exchange Information With Parents?

Upon Enrollment

Initial schedules and plans for infants and toddlers should be made based on information from parents.

As Children Grow

Infants and toddlers change rapidly as they grow. Parents and teachers should exchange information as new abilities and interests emerge.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

In addition to informal conversations, meet two or three times a year to discuss observations and goals.

Using Parent Input Example

Parent says

“Our 1-year-old son, Eli, really loves playing in the water in the bathtub, but it’s hard for us to find the time to let him spend a lot of time playing — and water gets everywhere!”

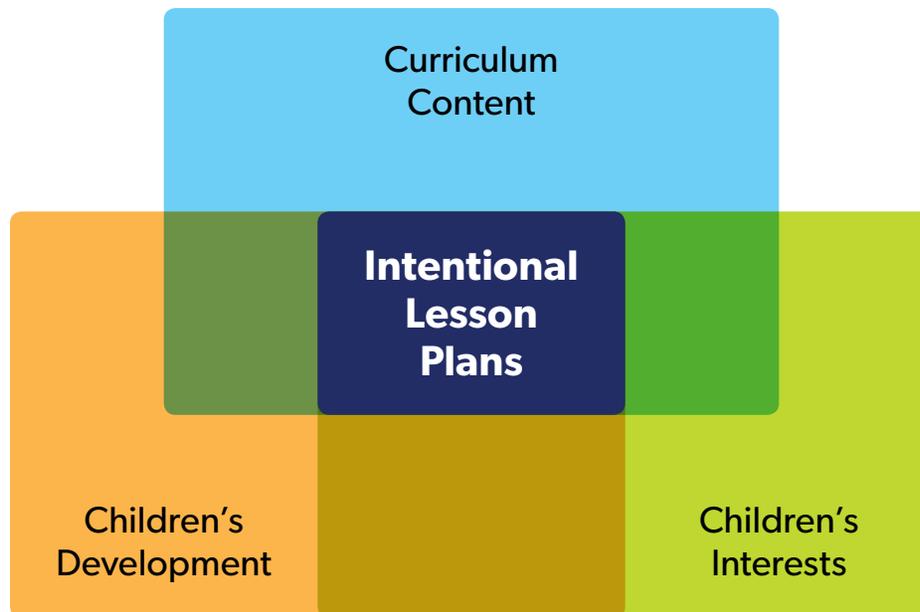
Teaching team discusses

“We’ve had sand in the table for a long time. I bet Eli wouldn’t be the only one that would love to explore water! We could put rugs down so it’s not so slippery. What other materials would children like to use with water?”

Classroom outcome

The teachers filled the table with water and put rugs on the floor around the table. They also added buckets, scoops, funnels, and measuring cups. The following day several toddlers, including Eli, chose to play in the water.

Quick Review: Intentional Lesson Planning



Last week, you learned about the components of HighScope lesson plans.

Parent input contributes to understanding children's interests and development, and therefore is involved in creating intentional lesson plans..

Remember, intentional lesson planning comes when you overlap or use several of the components in one planning idea.

Next, let's think about how we scaffold children's learning.

What is Scaffolding?

- Scaffolding refers to the interaction strategies adults use to support children's current level of development and gently extend their learning.
- Scaffold children's learning on the spot, during the activity or in the moment. Adults can take advantage of spontaneous interactions and play situations to support and extend their learning.
- Throughout HighScope resources, you will find scaffolding charts to give you ideas for what you might do or say as you work with children.



What Does Scaffolding Entail?

Earlier

Children may...

(This describes what the earliest developers might say or do in this experience.)

Adults can...

(Ideas for supporting the earliest developers and offering gentle extensions to scaffold them to the next level.)

Middle

Children may...

(This describes what the middle developers might say or do in this experience.)

Adults can...

(Ideas for supporting the middle developers and offering gentle extensions to scaffold them to the next level.)

Later

Children may...

(This describes what the children at a later development might say or do in this experience).

Adults can...

(Ideas for supporting the later developers and offering gentle extensions to scaffold them to the next level.)

Earlier, middle, and later are not necessarily equivalent to age!

It is a range of development that can vary from child to child and from one domain to another. Often, the development children display is connected to opportunity and scaffolding. These charts merely help us identify where children are, support their current development, and gently extend their learning.

Example of a Scaffolding Chart

Developmental Levels

Scaffolding Learning at Each Developmental Level		
Earlier	Middle	Later
<p>What we can anticipate and observe of children</p> <p>→</p>	<p>Children may Play near each other; offer toys to another child and watch how other children are using the materials.</p>	<p>Children may Observe and try out the ideas of others; say 1–2 words to or about another child.</p>
<p>What we can do and say to support and offer gentle extensions</p> <p>→</p>	<p>Adults can Narrate as children observe, react to other children, and attempt to initiate contact; describe other children’s attempts to initiate contact with peers; refer children to one another by name.</p>	<p>Adults can Narrate what they see children doing, comment on children’s actions, and interpret children’s attempts to interact with others.</p>
	<p>Children may Play near other children; say a few words or a phrase to or about a child; begin to seek out children to play near (possibly even the same children from day to day).</p>	<p>Adults can Comment on the similarities and differences between children’s ideas about what materials to use and how to use them (e.g., the adult might say, “You both chose to use the baby dolls. Julia is rocking her baby doll and you are putting a diaper on your baby doll”); interpret children’s attempts to interact with one another.</p>

Why is Scaffolding Important?

- Scaffolding helps teachers and caregivers plan for ways to support current development. Subsequently, offering gentle extensions helps ensure that our interactions are meaningful and intentional.
- It keeps our interaction with and expectations of children developmentally appropriate.
- When we anticipate how children will use materials in connection to their development and interests, we know experiences will be engaging.



Choice Time

What do I know about my children's development?

Should I spend time with a particular child needing support?

What curriculum content have I seen? How can I scaffold children's learning if I see it again?

What do I know about my children's interests?

Are there any materials I might add to build on them?

Remember...

In HighScope, we don't place preset activities in the interest areas for children to do for choice time! Instead, our choice time plans are about what the adults might do to support children during choice time.

Choice Time Example

Darius has been crawling around for a few months. He is starting to climb on things, pull up on furniture, and walk around the edge of tables, shelves, couches, etc.

Darius is working on his gross motor skills (KDI 13. Moving the whole body and COR Advantage item I. Gross-Motor Skills) including strengthening his upper body, working on his balance, and figuring out how to use multiple parts of his body together to coordinate movements.

Teachers added large pillows, large foam blocks, and tunnels to the open space in the classroom.

The teachers planned to crawl and climb around with the children and assist in moving the objects to vary the climbing surfaces to increase the challenge for children.

- It's essential to think through how you will scaffold the developmental levels of the children in your group.
- It's just as important to document this on your lesson plans.

Steps to Creating Activities With Scaffolding

Step 1: Identify the content focus of your group-time activity.

Consider both the interests of your children and the KDI you'd like to support to create an active learning group-time activity.

Step 2: Consider children's developmental levels.

Look at the scaffolding chart that corresponds with your KDI focus activity. Carefully read through what children might do or say at each development level. Anticipate how individual children might respond to this experience, and jot down strategies that you want to remember to use to support and gently extend their development.

Step 3: Provide support at children's current level of development.

Refer to the scaffolding chart or your notes for ideas on how to support each child's current level of development. These might include strategies such as imitating and labeling the child's actions, intentionally using content-related vocabulary to describe what the child is doing, or asking the child to describe what he or she is doing. Remember to always pause to see how the child responds to your overtures, which will help you decide if you should stop here or if the child seems ready for Step 4.

Steps to Creating Activities With Scaffolding *(continued)*

Step 4: Offer gentle extensions.

Again, refer to your scaffolding chart or to your notes for ideas on how to offer gentle extensions. General strategies include drawing attention to another child's actions by making a comment, encouraging the child to explain or demonstrate their thinking, gently introducing a new concept or idea, or posing a challenge.



Group Time Example

For group time, the scaffolding might be a bit more involved. Look at how you might record your scaffolding ideas on your lesson plan from this example:

Group time idea: Cups, dishes, pots, pans

Content focus: KDI 36. Imitating and pretending

Backup materials: Plastic silverware, cooking utensils, and craft sticks

Opening statement: “We’ve noticed several children pretending with dishes. Here are some dishes we haven’t used before. I wonder how you’ll use them.”

Earlier: Children may pretend with materials in a simple way or use items for one purpose (e.g., drink out of cup).

Middle: Children may use materials together to pretend (e.g. dump contents of cup into pan) or may use one word to describe what they are pretending (e.g., “Cook!”).

Later: Children may use two or more words to describe their pretend play or invite others to play (e.g. “Teacher, drink” or “Soup, hot!”).

A Peek Ahead

This week you will

- Discuss how you partner with parents to support your planning.
- Create a group-time plan incorporating the developmental levels: *earlier*, *middle*, and *later*.

Next week you will

- Learn strategies for planning as a team.
- Create a lesson plan for a full day based on your child's interests and developmental levels.

