

# Using a Daily Message Board in the Preschool Classroom

*What and How*

# Week 1 Learning Unit

*What is Message Board and how is it different from typical morning circle times?*



Children's cultures are foundational to their identity. Each families' culture should be respected and integrated into the everyday experiences children have in programs. It is important to use a REDI lens as you interact and plan for daily messages that include all children.

# Week 1 Learning Unit Topics

- What is a HighScope daily message board?
- Purpose of a daily message board
- Characteristics of message board time
- Importance of child-relevant messages
- Identifying child-relevant messages
- Calendar time vs preschoolers' concept of time
- What is message board and what is not?



# What is Message Board?

## A daily message board is:

- An interactive way to share information with preschool children about the upcoming day while introducing them to the functions of pictures, symbols, words, and numbers.
- A social time for adults and children to gather as a community and discover what is going to happen in their classroom during their shared time together.
- A whiteboard, chalkboard, or chart paper containing information to share and read at the beginning of the day with all children.



# Purpose of Using a Daily Message Board

- Builds a sense of community in the classroom.
- Supports children's understanding of the daily routine.
- Helps children prepare for any changes to the daily routine or classroom environment.
- Gives children a sense of control.
- Supports children's language, literacy, and math learning.
- Models purposeful writing.
- Gives children an opportunity to practice reading drawings, symbols, and words with a teacher's guidance.
- Acts as a springboard for classroom discussions or problem solving.

# Characteristics of Message Board Time

- Occurs every morning when most of the children have arrived
- About 5–10 minutes long
- At the beginning of the year, 1–2 messages per day
- Up to three messages per day, four at the most
- All adults and children gather in one place together
- Messages are relevant to children's day
- Messages use simple drawings, common symbols, pictures, words, numbers, and real objects
- Adults and children read the messages together
- Adults engage children in uncovering messages, interpreting, reading, writing, and correcting messages

# Importance of Child-Relevant Messages

- Message board time gives children information that is immediately relevant to them: the who, what, where, and when of their time at school.
- Messages include concerns relevant to children, such as who may be absent (which will affect their play), new materials, or teachers that will be present.
- Relevant messages help children socially and emotionally prepare for and act on new information.



# Typical Morning Circle Times

- Review calendar time
  - A child is chosen to point to the calendar
  - Teachers ask what month, day and year
  - Children rote count the number of days
  - Group may sing days of the week
  - Children are asked what day it is
- Discuss the weather
  - Child chosen to go to the window to look outside
  - Group discusses what the weather looks like
  - Teacher makes the final decision
- Sing greeting song
  - Every child's name is called
- Children's jobs are chosen for the day
- Group sings a couple of songs

# Preschoolers' Concept of Time

## Message Board Time Helps Preschoolers:

- Develop a sense of time relative to themselves and their immediate circumstances.
- Learn through concrete observable events (e.g., daily routine, birthdays, two no school days).
- Begin to use the terms *yesterday* and *tomorrow* correctly (Child Observation Record [COR Advantage], 2014).
- Learn through exploring concrete and tangible materials (e.g., sand timers, egg timer, digital timer, sign up sheets).



# Preschoolers' Concept of Time vs. Calendar Time

## Calendar Time:

- Calendars keep track of time
- Incorporates abstract concepts (days of the week, month, year)
- Rote reciting and memorization
- Closed-ended questions (only one correct answer)
- Drill and practice
- Daily repetition
- Only meaningful to adults when there is a personal connection
- Asks preschoolers to think about time beyond developmental parameters
- Does not support children in preparing and planning for the day ahead

# Message Board Supports Preschoolers' Understanding of the Concept of Time

- Message board shares concepts about time in developmentally appropriate ways that young children can understand.
- Message board creates shared experiences between children and adults about meaningful information that affects the day.



# Supporting Preschoolers' Understanding of the Concept of Time at Message Board

Makayla, the classroom teacher, talks with the children for a few minutes about Reggie, the other classroom teacher, who is away. Some children share how they miss him and hope he is having fun on his trip. Makayla chooses a child to cut off one of the links that represent each day Reggie will be absent on the paper chain. Then, they count the remaining number of links as a group to see how many more days until Reggie will be back at school.



# What is Message Board/What it is not?

## What is Message Board Time?

- Time to read child-relevant messages about the day represented through simple drawings, common symbols, pictures, words, numbers, and real objects
- Shared time to build a sense of community with children
- An interactive discussion with children
- A time for adults to engage children in uncovering messages, interpreting, reading, writing, and correcting messages

## What is Message Board Time *not*?

- A daily routine of memorization (e.g., reciting the calendar, weather, singing days of the week)
- Rote drill and practice
- Closed-ended questions
- Teacher-directed
- A time to teach children academic concepts (e.g., counting, letter of the day)

# A Peek Ahead

## Next week you will explore:

- Creating child-relevant messages
- Types of common messages
- Creating common classroom language
- Reading messages with children
- Conversing with children about messages

