



What Is the HighScope Daily Routine?



Think About It

Your early morning weekday routine is to get up at 6:00 a.m., take a 45-minute walk, shower at 7:00 a.m. and get dressed, eat breakfast at 7:20 a.m., pack lunch at 7:50 a.m., and leave for work at 8:00 a.m. when you can catch your favorite news show on the car radio.

A houseguest arrives on Sunday evening to spend the week. Monday morning when you return from your walk, your guest is in the shower. You discover the yogurt you were planning to have for breakfast has been eaten, as has the fruit you were going to pack for lunch. When you finally leave the house half an hour behind schedule, you discover your guest's car is blocking yours in the driveway. Although you are looking forward to a planned change in routine tonight — the appreciative guest is taking you out to dinner — right now you feel totally discombobulated.

Routines allow us to be organized and efficient and give us a sense of control. When we follow a routine, we are less likely to forget things or make careless errors. Routines are also comforting. We know what to expect and worry less about unwanted “surprises.” Children need routines for the same reasons adults do, especially since so many daily events are beyond their control. When children can predict the order and content of their day, they feel both reassured and empowered.

Of course children, like adults, can also be overscheduled. Their days may be crammed with too many events so there isn't enough time to

extend enjoyable or complex activities, while tedious ones cannot be skipped or shortened. Thus, schedules and routines require careful planning and must take into account the full range of our physical, intellectual, personal, and interpersonal needs.

Daily routines in HighScope programs are designed to provide consistency and predictability with enough flexibility so that children feel neither rushed nor slowed down in carrying out their activities. Most important, children make choices — within reasonable limits — during each part of the day. Because activities build on their interests and abilities, and because they know they have a say in the learning experience, children in HighScope programs feel that the daily routine belongs to them. They enjoy learning it and following it. In fact, when visitors or new children come to the classroom, children who are “old hands” and eager to show them the ropes often begin by leading them through each part of the day's schedule.

Overview of the HighScope Daily Routine

The HighScope **daily routine** is the order of the day's events, each with a specified amount of time. This schedule is the same every day, which is what makes it *routine*, although time periods are occasionally altered to accommodate children's interests and there are exceptions for field trips, celebrations, or other special activities.

Chapter Learning Objectives

By the end of this chapter, you will be able to

- ❖ Explain the importance of routine in the lives of children as well as adults.
- ❖ Identify the basic components of the HighScope daily routine.
- ❖ Support young children as they plan, carry out, and review their activities (use the plan-do-review cycle).
- ❖ Act as a partner in different types of children's play.
- ❖ Define and plan for different types of small- and large-group experiences in the classroom, based on children's interests.
- ❖ Implement strategies that can make outside time an effective learning experience for young children.
- ❖ Turn transitions into positive learning experiences for children.

Just as the HighScope learning environment organizes space, the daily routine organizes time. In addition to giving children a sense of control and allowing them to act independently, the regular organization of the day's events helps them develop important concepts about sequence (the order of events) and duration (how long something lasts). These concepts play a central role in early mathematics and scientific thinking. See "HighScope Preschool Daily Routine Components" on page 51.

The largest part of the HighScope day, generally over an hour in total, is devoted to a sequence of **planning time**, **work time**, and **recall time**, called **plan-do-review**. Meeting in a small group, each child decides what to do during work time — what area to play in, what materials to use, and who else will be involved — and shares this plan with an adult and possibly other children in his or her group. Work time is when children carry out their plans, alone and/or with others, and then clean up. At recall time, they meet with the same



The daily routine provides consistency and predictability with enough flexibility so that children feel neither rushed nor slowed down in carrying out their activities.

adult and small group of children with whom they planned to share and discuss what they did and learned during work time.

A HighScope program day also includes **large-group times** — those times when the entire class does something together. These occur not only during large-group time itself but also during other daily routine segments such as greeting time (including message board), outdoor time, and transitions. **Small-group times** (in addition to planning and recall) that take place outside of small-group time include meals or snacks and read-aloud times. Small-group activities involve the whole class but are carried out in smaller groups. Children meet

Terms Used in This Chapter

- daily routine • plan-do-review (planning time, work time, recall time) • large-group times • small-group times
- read-alouds • exploratory play • constructive play • pretend play • games • transitions

HighScope Preschool Daily Routine* Components

- Greeting time/message board (5–10 minutes)
- Planning time (10–15 minutes)
- Work time (45–60 minutes)
- Cleanup time (10 minutes)
- Recall time (10–15 minutes)
- Large-group time (10–15 minutes)
- Small-group time (15–20 minutes)
- Outside time (30–40 minutes)
- Read-Aloud time (10–15 minutes)
- Transition times, including arrival and departure (variable)
- Eating and resting times (variable)

*The order of components may vary, depending on the hours and structure of the program. However, planning time, work time, cleanup time, and recall time always occur in that order. In half-day programs, each component typically happens once. In full-day programs, one or more components may be repeated.

with the same adult and set of classmates for all small-group activities. This arrangement provides continuity and security for children and also allows the adult to develop a thorough knowledge of each child in his or her group over time.

In part-day programs, each segment of the daily routine typically happens once, except for **transitions**, which happen between segments. Full-day programs may repeat one or more segments and include additional meals and naptime. (See p. 52 for sample daily routines for part- and full-day programs.) The remainder of this chapter describes each of these program components and how to support children's initiative and learning during them.

The Importance of the Daily Routine

A predictable sequence of events, with room to make choices within that routine, offers the following benefits to children and adults in HighScope programs:

Creates a sense of security and control. A consistent routine means children know what to

expect each day. Since child care or preschool is generally a young child's first separation from family and home, predictability provides comfort during this physical and emotional transition. Children are confident they won't face unwelcome surprises or arbitrary demands. If there are occasional changes in the routine, children know they will be told ahead of time what they are and why they are taking place, so they can prepare for these exceptions to the rule.

Consistency is especially important for children whose home lives may not be stable or organized. A Seattle teacher put it this way: "The child who comes from a chaotic home environment may have very little understanding of routine. The low self-esteem that comes from this kind of powerlessness is exactly the reason why elements of HighScope, such as giving choices and planning one's own activities, are so important for our children. Gradually the child will discover in himself the ability to make a plan and will begin to get satisfaction from the things he can accomplish through his own planning and exploration."

Supports initiative. Although a routine defines the type of activity in each segment of the day, it does not dictate or limit what children can do during that time. Within this set framework, children know they will have choices. These options are most obvious during plan-do-review, when children carry out their intentions. However, even during adult-planned group times, children have choices and follow their individual interests at their own developmental level.

Provides a social community. When people do the same thing at the same time, it creates a bond between them. Even though children pursue the same activity in individual ways, they are still sharing a common experience. As an example, think of eating at a restaurant with family and friends. People often order different dishes from the menu, but they may sample one another's choices and discover something new they like. Conversations sometimes involve the whole group, and at other times, pairs and small groups. While each person's dining experience is somewhat different, everyone shares the sense of adventure and togetherness.

Provides a framework for adults to observe and plan. A consistent routine helps adults understand and meet children's needs. Teachers can observe and think about children's needs and

Sample Daily Routine

Arrival & Departure Pattern

Children arrive and depart at the same time



Children arrive and/or depart at different times



Variations



Half-Day Program

- ◆ Greeting time, message board
- ◆ Planning, work, cleanup, recall
- ◆ Snack
- ◆ Large-group time
- ◆ Small-group time
- ◆ Outside time
- ◆ Read-aloud time
- ◆ Departure

- ◆ Small-group time for early arrivers
- ◆ Greeting time, message board
- ◆ Planning, work, cleanup, recall
- ◆ Snack
- ◆ Outside time
- ◆ Read-aloud time
- ◆ Large-group time
- ◆ Small-group time for late departers

- ◆ Small-group time for early arrivers
- ◆ Greeting time, message board
- ◆ Ballet/outside time
- ◆ Snack and planning
- ◆ Planning, work, cleanup, recall
- ◆ Large-group time
- ◆ Read-aloud time
- ◆ Small-group time for late departures

Full-Day Program

- ◆ Greeting time, breakfast, message board
- ◆ Large-group time
- ◆ Planning, work, cleanup, recall
- ◆ Small-group time
- ◆ Outside time
- ◆ Read-aloud time
- ◆ Lunch
- ◆ Books and rest
- ◆ Snack
- ◆ Outside time and departure

- ◆ Breakfast/free play/outside time at arrival
- ◆ Greeting time, message board
- ◆ Planning, work, cleanup, recall
- ◆ Outside time and snack
- ◆ Small-group time
- ◆ Large-group time
- ◆ Lunch
- ◆ Read-aloud time
- ◆ Outside time and snack
- ◆ Planning, work, cleanup, recall with parents

- ◆ Breakfast/free play/outside time at arrival
- ◆ Greeting time, message board
- ◆ Read-aloud time
- ◆ Planning, work, cleanup, recall
- ◆ Outside time and snack
- ◆ Visiting artists
- ◆ Large-group time
- ◆ Lunch
- ◆ Singing and rest
- ◆ Outside time and snack
- ◆ Planning, work, cleanup, recall with parents

“The plan-do-review routine creates more interdependent relationships between adults and children in our setting, compared to last year. Plan-do-review sets up a required child-adult interaction that establishes patterns of reflection, critical to long-term successful learning and living. Merely selecting and playing without recall lacks a vital element for growth and development.”

— Teacher, Dayton, Ohio

interests during each part of the day, every day. Since each segment is unique — with its own content, tempo, and social patterns — adults can plan for many types of learning to occur.

Plan-Do-Review

The plan-do-review process is both a critical and unique part of the HighScope Preschool Curriculum. It involves all the elements of active participatory learning.

The abilities children develop as they take initiative, solve problems independently, work with others, and build knowledge and skills carry over into their subsequent schooling and even their lifetime patterns of thought and action.

▲ Planning time

Planning time, which takes about 10–15 minutes, begins the plan-do-review sequence. When young children plan, they begin with an intention or purpose. Depending on their age and ability to communicate, they express their plan in actions (e.g., picking up a paintbrush), gestures (e.g., pointing to the art area), or words (e.g., “I’m going to make a painting of my house”).

In order to plan, children must be able to hold in their minds a picture of something that is not actually present or that has not yet happened. Planning is different from simply making a choice, because it involves children in developing specific ideas about what they want to do and how they will do it. In other words, planning involves more purpose and intentionality than choosing. Infants and young toddlers *make choices*, while older toddlers and preschools begin to *plan*.

Young children can quickly change their plans, and often do as they carry out their ideas or get interested in what someone else is doing. This

is similar to adults who alter their plans depending on how a sequence of events unfolds. Therefore, children are not required to stick to their initial plans or criticized for not completing them. Instead, adults follow up with children at work time and help them express a new plan. Children may also complete their initial plan and then, with adult encouragement, come up with a next plan to continue their work-time activity.

HighScope was the first comprehensive curriculum model to include planning by children as a major component. Today, planning is recognized as an important activity in the Head Start Program Performance Standards and the best practices advocated by the National Association for the Education of Young Children and other professional organizations. Planning provides the following developmental benefits to young children:

Encourages children to communicate their ideas, choices, and decisions. Because adults value their plans, children are eager and motivated to share them.



At planning time, children express their intentions about the materials, actions, people, and ideas they want to include in their work-time activities.

The HighScope Daily Routine

Greeting Time



Plan ⇒ Do ⇒ Review

Planning Time



Work Time



Cleanup Time



Recall Time



Large-Group Time



Small-Group Time



Outside Time



Read-Aloud Time



Snacks and Meals



Transitions



Supporting Children at Planning Time

Consider This...

Think about your own ideas about child planning.

Many adults are enthusiastic about child planning because they know children learn best by carrying out their own ideas. Others are skeptical, fearing they will lose control of the classroom or children will repeat the same simple activities without learning school-readiness basics. Research shows these fears are not justified (Sylva, Smith, & Moore, 1986). Children who plan become more purposeful in their play and responsible for the consequences of their actions. Further, hearing others plan exposes children to a wider range of experiences than more controlled settings.

You can use these strategies to help support planning:

Plan with children in an intimate setting.

Planning can occur at a table, on the floor, on the couch — wherever children feel comfortable sharing their ideas with an adult. It helps children focus if planning occurs in the same place every day, although an occasional variation (e.g., planning outside) keeps the activity fresh. The smaller the number of children in the group (typically one adult with 5–10 children, although 6–8 children is ideal), the more detailed children's plans tend to be. To make the process relaxed, be patient and plan where people and materials are easily visible.

Provide materials and experiences to maintain children's interest in planning time. Use props, partners, playfulness, and novelty so planning does not become mechanical and boring. Let children introduce their own games or variations. Children can also begin to plan with each other (and may make more detailed plans with another child than they do with an adult).

Converse with individual children about their plans. Give each child an opportunity to express a plan. Put equal time and effort into eliciting each child's ideas, whether these are communicated verbally or nonverbally. First, ask "what" questions that are simple and open ended (e.g., "What would you like to do today?"). If children are reluctant to express plans, gently figure out why (e.g., a child may want to play with another but is afraid of not being accepted). By not pushing, an adult can often get the child to open

up so together they can problem-solve ways to overcome any barriers to planning. Second, listen attentively as the child's plan emerges. Although some children respond directly to questions or games, others plan indirectly. For example, at planning time, Janice told her teacher about her new brother. By listening to Janice talk about the hospital, the baby, and her daddy making breakfast, the teacher helped Janice make a plan to bathe dolls in the house area, cook sand pancakes, and put the dolls to bed. Finally, offer alternatives when children do not respond, based on their interests. For example, to a child who often worked in the art area, you might say, "Yesterday, you made a painting." If the child nods, you might ask, "Would you like to work in the art area again today or in a different area?" The child might nod again or point to a different area. You would then comment, "So your plan is to work in the art area" or "Today you're going to the book area."

Special Planning Games and Experiences

Ideas for planning time might include

- Taking a tour around the room or making a "train" that goes from one interest area to another, allowing children to make plans when they arrive at an area where they want to play.
- Rolling a ball from child to child as each one plans.
- Making up rhymes with children's names to indicate who plans next.
- Using props such as phones or puppets to initiate planning.
- Taking dictation from children.
- Having children draw pictures, or write down letters and words involved with their plans.

Whatever the idea, be sure all children can understand and perform it in a way consistent with their development. Never use these planning experiences as a "test" of children's knowledge.

Promotes children’s self-confidence and sense of control. Children come to rely on their own capacity to make decisions, solve problems, and turn their ideas into reality.

Leads to involvement in and concentration on play. People are more committed to things they choose to do than things imposed on them by others. Researchers Carla Berry and Kathy Sylva (1987), studying HighScope programs in Great Britain, found that children who planned played more purposefully and concentrated for longer periods of time than those who did not plan.

Supports the development of increasingly complex play. Planned play is unlike ordinary play, which tends to be repetitive, random, and aimless. When children carry out their plans, they play with “more imagination, concentration, and intellectual complexity” than when they engage in ordinary, unplanned play (Berry & Sylva, 1987, p. 34). Children are also more likely to set goals and learn new knowledge and skills when they plan and engage in complex play.

It’s important to remember that children’s planning will change over time. Although each child handles the planning process differently, it is useful to keep in mind these basic principles:

Children’s plans become more complex and detailed as children develop. Younger children and new planners may simply point to an area or express a plan in one or two words. Older children and experienced planners can create very elaborate plans.

Planning is an adult-child partnership. The child supplies ideas and intentions, and the adult encourages the child to think about how he or she will carry them out. Through give-and-take communication, the adult helps the child express plans in gestures and words, depending on the child’s capabilities. Thus, planning is a shared process that involves cooperation.

Planning is just the beginning. A child’s plan is a starting point. Once he or she expresses a set of intentions, the next step is to carry them out during work time with adult support and encouragement. See “Supporting Children at Planning Time” on page 56 for more ideas.

▲ Work time

Work time — the *do* of plan-do-review — is when children carry out their plans. This part of

the daily routine generally lasts 45–60 minutes. The expression “play is a child’s work” is consistent with the HighScope Curriculum, and calling this segment *work time* captures this philosophy. Many early childhood programs have a similar period they call free-choice time. However, work time is often more purposeful because children have thought about and described their intentions beforehand. They encounter interesting challenges and solve problems in the course of their play. Based on their developmental level and interests, preschoolers typically engage in four types of play: **exploratory play**, **constructive play**, **pretend play**, and **games**. Exploratory play usually develops first, followed by constructive and pretend play, and finally games (Bergen, 1988a, 1988b). However, any child at any point may be involved in one or more types of play.

Work time provides the following benefits to young children:

Allows children to carry out intentions and play with purpose. Work time is when children put their ideas into action. They see themselves as *doers*, capable of following through on a plan and achieving their goals.

Enables children to participate in a social setting. As they work, children naturally come together in pairs and groups of different sizes. Even children who choose to work alone are aware of the presence and activities of those around them.

Provides many opportunities to solve problems. Because children are engaged in ac-



At work time, children carry out their plans with interest and a sense of purpose. They learn through hands-on experience and by solving problems with people and materials that arise during their play.

tivities they have defined for themselves, they are likely to meet up with unexpected problems — for example, a piece of paper may be too big to fit in the envelope or two children may want the same truck. As children develop solutions, either alone or with assistance from adults and playmates, they come to see themselves as competent problem solvers.

Enables children to construct their own knowledge and build new skills. As children carry out their plans and solve problems, they develop a new understanding of the world of things and people; they expand their knowledge and skills in literacy, math, science, art, music, and so on (see the HighScope key developmental indicators listed on p. 12 and discussed in chapters 10–17).

Allows adults to observe, learn from, and support children's play. By observing, supporting, and entering children's play, adults gain insight into each child's development.

See “Supporting Children at Work Time” on pages 59–60 for additional strategies.

▲ Recall time

HighScope programs have a designated *recall time*, which lasts 10–15 minutes, and immediately follows the work- and cleanup-time sequence. During recall time, adults encourage children to reflect on their actions and what they have learned throughout the day. For preschoolers, it is easiest to remember when recall happens close to the actual event. Younger preschoolers often recall the last thing they did, since it is freshest in their minds. As children become able to hold images and ideas in their minds for longer periods and in greater detail, they are more apt to recall the sequence of what they did at work time and may even recall their original plans.

We noted previously that planning time differs from ordinary free choice because planning involves purpose and intention. Similarly, recall is different from simple remembering because children take time to think not only about what they did but also about what they learned. Further, they share these observations with the teacher and group of children with whom they planned, which supports the development of thinking and language. If children draw or write down what they did, they are also representing their activities

in ways that help develop literacy skills. Finally, as the last step in the plan-do-review process, recall makes it more likely that the lessons children learn will last and be applied to future actions and interactions. To summarize, recall time provides the following benefits:

Exercises children's capacities to form and talk about mental images. Recall encourages children to mentally picture and express their ideas about past events.

Consolidates children's understanding of experiences and events. Recall helps children examine their choices and actions and the effects these had on objects and people (themselves and others).

Extends children's consciousness beyond the present. Preschoolers live in the present. By helping them think about past events and how they were affected by them, we enable them to build on what they've already learned and apply it to new experiences and subject matter.

Makes children's experiences public. Recall is a form of social interaction. During recall, children are narrators, telling a “story” about what happened to them at work time (which means they are also the stars). As preschoolers mature, they become more open to other children adding details to their recollections and enhance the “stories” told by others as well. In these ways, recall becomes a shared undertaking that helps children develop a sense of trust.

For more suggestions, see “Supporting Children at Recall Time” on page 61.

Group Times

Although plan-do-review is a major part of the HighScope daily routine, children also benefit from a variety of other regular group experiences. These scheduled parts of the day include *small-group time*, *large-group time*, *outside time*, and *transition times*.

Small- and large-group times for preschoolers each generally last about 15 minutes. During these times, adults introduce children to new materials, ideas, and activities, which the children can then continue to explore at work time. Group experiences also offer many opportunities for social interaction. At outside time, which runs at least 30 minutes, children work with equipment and enjoy a range of physical activity not possible indoors.

Supporting Children at Work Time

Consider This...

Think about your own ideas about how children learn.

In HighScope programs, the learning that happens during work time depends on participants' being active; that is, teachers neither direct the learning with children passively taking in the information *nor* do teachers withdraw and let children take all the responsibility for their own education. Instead, children pursue self-initiated interests and plans while adults become involved in their play and scaffold their learning using adult-child interaction strategies.

To ensure work time is a satisfying educational experience, use the following support strategies:

Provide work places and materials based on children's interests. Because work time generally occurs in the program's interest areas, make sure these areas are easily accessible and contain a wide range of age-appropriate materials.

Offer children comfort and contact as needed. Sometimes children need adult reassurance about their feelings or ideas. Be alert to children's signs indicating that they need immediate attention before they can proceed with their plans. A child may express anxiety through gestures (e.g., shaking the head "no"), actions (e.g., withdrawing to a corner), or words (e.g., "No one wants to play with me"). In these instances, you might offer reassuring physical contact by sitting next to the child, rocking or stroking, and so on.

Acknowledge children's actions and accomplishments. Sometimes children need adults to simply take notice of what they did. You might offer a simple acknowledgment by looking at something a child has done, imitating a child's actions (e.g., moving in the same way to a song), or repeating a child's comment (e.g., "Yes, I see you made a tall tower with those blocks").

Participate in children's play. Joining in children's play lets them know that you think their interests and intentions are important. However, adults need to participate without taking over. When participating as a partner in children's play:

- *Look for natural play openings.* Explore materials alongside the child, take on a role assigned by a child in pretend play, or take a turn in a child-directed or -invented game.

- *Play as a partner with children.* Being a partner means acting as a follower and equal, not as a director. Therefore, adjust your speech and actions to the ideas and pace of the play, take directions from children, and follow the rules set by the group of players.
- *Join play on the children's level.* By seeing things from children's perspective, adults are less likely to take over the play situation. If, for example, you are playing with children who are mixing Legos in a bowl to make "soup," you might begin by getting another spoon and stirring the pot, rather than adding new ingredients to the mixture.
- *Play in parallel.* Playing in parallel means playing near a child and using the same materials in the same or a similar manner (e.g., rolling out play dough or filling and emptying containers with sand).
- *Suggest ideas within the play situation.* While being careful not to raise the level of complexity of children's play, you may offer suggestions to extend it. To avoid crossing that fine line between extending and directing play, try offering suggestions within the theme of the play rather than introduce a new theme (Smilansky, 1971). For example, an adult could join the other "mothers" bringing babies to the doctor for a checkup rather than pretend there is a medical emergency.

Converse with children. Conversations help children express their ideas, build vocabulary, and develop other language skills that are important in early literacy development. The strategies for talking naturally with children are similar to those for entering into their play. Adults need to take their cues from children and be sensitive to times when conversation is welcome (e.g., when a child eagerly talks about a painting he or she is making). At other times, talking may interfere with a child's activities (e.g., if the child is concentrating on adding specific details to the picture).

To help children develop their thinking and language skills without inhibiting their actions, look for natural opportunities for conversation, talk at the children's physical level, give children a chance to begin conversations, converse in a give-and-take manner, and limit questions.

Supporting Children at Work Time (cont.)

Encourage children's problem solving.

Sometimes adults mistakenly believe that children should exist in a problem-free environment. Solving problems, however, is one of the most important experiences children can have during work time. In fact, children enjoy posing and solving problems. You can help children encounter these developmentally important experiences by waiting patiently for children to do things for themselves, referring children to one another for help, and seeing yourself as a partner rather than as a manager.

Observe and record what children do.

Adults in HighScope programs make plans to support and extend learning based on what children do and say. With so much going on at work time, it is often difficult to remember everything that went on for each child. Therefore, as you work and play with children, jot down notes to help you recall details later during team planning.

Bring work time to an end with cleanup time. Teachers sometimes dread cleanup time. If they see it as an unpleasant chore, however, chil-

dren are likely to pick up a negative and resistant attitude. But if you approach cleanup time as an opportunity to solve problems ("I wonder where we can hang this to dry?"), learn something (such as how materials are organized and arranged), and even have fun (inventing put-away games, using mops and sponges, reciting rhymes and chants), then children learn that this last part of work time is a natural step in carrying out one's plans.

Adults can also make cleanup time easier on everyone if their expectations for children are realistic. Children can do things to the best of their ability, but that is not the same as meeting adult standards for health and equipment maintenance. Teachers, janitorial staff, and/or other staff will need to finish the process between program sessions. Rather than emphasizing perfection, help children complete cleanup quickly so they can immediately proceed to reviewing and evaluating their work-time activities.

Transitions are the times in between the other activities. In HighScope programs, transitions are not seen as incidental but as planned opportunities for children to make choices, move in different ways, and learn important concepts.

During all these other parts of the day, the principles of active participatory learning continue to apply. So, even though adults plan large- and small-group times around specific content, they base them on children's wide-ranging interests, encourage children to make choices about how they use the materials, and talk with children about what they are doing and learning. Group times also offer all children the chance to interact with others. This can be especially important for those who choose to work alone during the plan-do-review sequence. HighScope group times are unpressured, so even shy or solitary children can participate in ways that feel comfortable to them.

HighScope teachers put thought and effort into planning group times. Their daily observations help them see what children are interested in and how to further exploration in these areas. Group times are also the parts of the day when learning that needs to be systematic and sequenced — such as skills and concepts in lit-

eracy or mathematics — can be guaranteed for all children. To make sure group times provide the maximum intellectual, social, and physical benefit to children, teachers complete a Group-Time Planning Sheet with the information shown on page 62.

▲ Small-group time

During small-group time, the same group of children — typically 5 to 10 individuals, ideally 6 to 8 — meets each day for 15–20 minutes with the same adult. This is also the same grouping that meets for planning and recall time. These stable groups help teachers get to know each child and help the children feel comfortable with one another. (*Note:* In many programs, children also eat with the members of their small group. Snack- or mealtime is discussed briefly at the end of this chapter.)

After the teacher briefly introduces the activity, children are generally given their own set of materials to work with. Teachers also have a set of materials for themselves. Sometimes there are additional materials or tools in large enough quantity for everyone to share. For example, each person

Supporting Children at Recall Time

Consider This...

Think about your own ideas about children recalling.

Recall is successful when children tell their own stories in their own words, gestures, and drawings. The experience can be fun and social and can take many creative forms. If, however, teachers see recall as another time of day to be “gotten through,” it can become rote and mechanical. Or, if they mistakenly think recall is a time when children should be held accountable for their plans, it can take on a punitive tone.

The adult’s role at recall time is similar to his or her role at planning time. It grows out of observations of, and interactions with, children, based on the children’s interests and the principles of active participatory learning. During recall time, use the following strategies to help young children think about and learn from their work-time activities.

Recall with children in a calm, cozy setting.

As with child planning, recalling with the same familiar group of people in a consistent place creates a comfortable and trusting situation. The fewer distractions around, the more that children will be able to focus on recalling.

Provide materials and experiences to maintain children’s interest in recall. As with planning, props and games keep recall interesting and help children wait their turn. For example, you might “tour” the room to the areas where children played, ask each child to bring an item he or she played with to the recall table, or use digital photos taken at work time to spark conversations about what children did. The materials or activity should be kept simple. Otherwise, children may become so interested in the prop or game (e.g., spinning the hula hoop or calling the next child on the old cell phone), that the purpose of recall is lost.

Converse with children about their work-time experiences. Again, the process of talking to children during recall is similar to that used in planning. Be patient, pay careful attention, and let the ideas unfold naturally from each child. A simple opening question may help, but avoid making the child dependent on adult prompting. Instead, you can make comments and observations to keep the conversation going. For example:

Child: I played in the house area.

Teacher: I saw you with the dolls.

Child: They were taking a bath. I filled the tub with water.

Teacher: You brought water from the sink to the house area.

Child: I took a bucket and filled it up and then I carried it to the bathtub.

Teacher: It looked like you carried lots of water.

Child: About ten-hundred-eight buckets of water. And I didn’t spill any!

Teacher: You didn’t spill any water. How did you keep from doing that?

Child: I only filled it up to here (*gestures*) so it wouldn’t go over the top.

With development and experience, children become more skillful at recall. As you implement various strategies to support children at recall time, remember to stay flexible and observant. As you will also notice at planning time, children will gradually include more detail during recall, tell longer stories, listen to and contribute to the recall of others, and make plans for subsequent days based on what happened that day. The recall process helps them bring closure to their experiences.

may get a pegboard and a basket of pegs, with a large tub of additional pegs in the center of the table for everyone in the group to use as needed. If the activity is something like reading a book or introducing a new piece of computer software, the teacher places or uses the one shared copy where all the children can see, hear, touch, talk about their discoveries, and so on.

As they work with the materials, children make choices about how to use them. They talk with one another and the adult about what they are doing and seeing. The adult works alongside them, observes and comments on the children’s actions and thoughts, refers them to one another for ideas and help, acknowledges and encourages each child’s efforts, promotes independent

Supporting Children at Small-Group Time

Consider This...

Think about your own ideas about how children learn at small-group time.

Some non-HighScope programs use small-group time to drill children in skills and concepts such as writing letters of the alphabet or learning color names. Adult-directed activities, worksheets, or children copying a craft project from an adult-made example are not part of the HighScope approach. While HighScope adults take the lead planning the small-group activity and providing materials, they realize that each child will respond to the experience differently.

The role of the adult is to support and extend each child's learning, based on the child's developmental level and individual interests. Unlike many other programs, HighScope small-group times do NOT mean that all children do the same thing with the same set of materials. In fact, to verify that a small-group experience is appropriate for every child, HighScope teachers make sure that all the ingredients of active participatory learning are present.

As with other parts of the daily routine, it is important to use a variety of support strategies to make sure children enjoy and learn from small-group experiences. Here are some you can try:

Plan small-group experiences ahead of time.

Successful small-group times appeal to children's interests, allow them to engage with materials and ideas at their own developmental level, and promote learning. The following sources will give you a wealth of small-group-time ideas.

- *Children's interests.* Many inspirations come from observing children at work time. For example, if children working in the art area become fascinated with mixing paints, you might plan a small-group time in which each child is given two cups of paint (one primary color — red, yellow, or blue — and white), paper, and a brush. Additional cups could be set out so children could pump a second primary color or more white from big plastic jars. You could also set out extra paper and other painting tools (e.g., sticks, sponges, kitchen utensils) to explore.
- *Curriculum content.* Perhaps the members of your teaching team look back through their anecdotal notes and realize children are rarely engaging in certain curriculum content areas. Or you and your coteachers may decide to ensure that every child receives planned and equal opportunities for learning in each area. In either case, you can use small-group time to engage children with materials and activities related to that content area. For example, to focus attention on patterns (an important area of early mathematics), you could provide each child with a cardboard grid and set out piles of small squares in different colors. After demonstrating a pattern on your board, you might say, "I wonder what patterns you can make with these pieces."
- *New, unexplored, underused, or favorite materials.* Small-group time lets you introduce new materials (such as interactive media) or call children's attention to existing materials that are being overlooked (e.g., puzzles in the toy area). It is also a chance to encourage children to approach familiar or favorite materials in new ways (e.g., using toy truck tires to make impressions in play dough).
- *Local traditions and community events.* Children often bring ideas and experiences from outside the classroom into the program. These may originate in their families or the wider community and are a rich source of small-group-time ideas. For example, if several children were to talk about going to the farmer's market with their parents, you might plan a small-group activity to explore the color, shape, smell, texture, taste, and other properties of locally grown fruits and vegetables.
- *Teacher idea books and other curriculum materials.* To get started with small-group activities, some teachers turn to plans that have been designed and tested by experienced HighScope teachers. See, for example, the teacher idea books and related curriculum resources at www.highscope.org.

Supporting Children at Small-Group Time (cont.)

Prepare for small-group time before children arrive. With a plan clearly in mind, HighScope teachers get ready for small-group activities ahead of time, often in the morning before children arrive. This way, children do not have to wait to get started and can make good use of every minute. Getting ready means (1) gathering the necessary materials, often one set for each child and for the teacher, and (2) storing materials in a place where the adult can get them easily and quickly as soon as small-group time begins. This is particularly important since groups generally meet in an area that is also used for other activities.

What to do during each part of small-group time. Use the following steps to guide children through small-group time.

- *Beginning.* Engage children as soon as they arrive at the gathering place. Make a brief introductory statement or offer a simple challenge. For example, you might say, “Today we have boxes in different sizes and some small, medium, and large bears. I wonder what we can do with them” or “Let’s see what we can find out about this book by looking at the picture on the cover.”
- *Middle.* Once children have begun to work with the materials, the teacher’s role is to pay attention to their actions and ideas, scaffold (support and gently extend) further learning, and encourage them to interact with and learn from one another. You can do this by closely attending to each child, physically getting down on his or her level, watching and listening to the child, imitating and building on his or her actions, conversing with the child while following his or her leads, asking questions sparingly, and encouraging the child to solve problems both individually and with assistance from other children.

Teachers also support children’s highly individual use of materials and their observations about what they are doing and learning. In fact, one indication of an effective small-group time is the sheer variety of ideas the children come up with. For example, in the small-group time one teacher planned with dinosaurs and carpet squares, children used the materials in the following ways: sorting dinosaurs and squares by size and/or color; making “dinosaur houses”

with the carpet squares; grouping the dinosaurs into families; piling the carpet squares into towers; finding carpet squares big enough to hide different-sized dinosaurs under; making patterns with the carpet squares; and lining up dinosaurs — and then themselves — by size.

- *End.* Letting children know when small-group time is about to end (a two- or three-minute warning) gives them control over how to bring the session to closure. Some may be ready to stop, and others may want to store their projects and materials to continue at work time the following day. Also, although small-group time has a set length, children will nevertheless finish at different times. On any given day, some will finish with the materials and activity quickly, while others will want to linger. Teachers, therefore, schedule the day so children can move to the next segment as they are ready (e.g., getting ready for snack or outside time).





During small-group time, the same group of children meets each day with the same adult. After the adult introduces the activity, children work with their own set of materials in ways they determine themselves.

problem-solving, and assists children as needed in carrying out their intentions. Children often work with the materials or extend their ideas during work time on subsequent days.

Small groups gather at a consistent, designated place each day. By establishing a consistent place, children then know where to go on their own when this part of the daily routine begins. Small-group gathering places might be a table (perhaps the same one used for planning, recall, or snack), the floor in one area of the room, or the couch and chairs in the reading area. If the activity is happening elsewhere that day (e.g., outdoors), the adult and children then move as a group to that location. See “Supporting Children at Small-Group Time” for additional strategies on pages 62–63.

▲ Large-group time

Large-group time is when all children and adults participate in an activity together. There are several whole-class activities throughout the day. In this section, we specifically discuss the segment called *large-group time*. Greeting time, including using the message board, is also conducted with the entire class and is covered briefly at the end of the chapter.

Large-group time, which lasts 10–15 minutes, contributes to the sense of community in the classroom. It is a time when everyone comes together to participate in music and movement activities, storytelling, or other shared physical activities. Like every other part of the HighScope day, the five ingredients of active participatory learning are present at large-group time. There are *materials* for children to *manipulate* (such as props for storytelling, scarves for dancing, their bodies for jumping, or their voices for singing); *children make choices* about how to use the materials or move their bodies; *children talk and think* about their ideas and actions; and *adults scaffold learning* by building on children’s interests and knowledge as illustrated in this large-group time:

Ursula, a teacher, begins to tell a story about a raft journey and then pauses to invite children to board this imaginary raft with her. Some children decide to gather materials they want to bring with them — cooking utensils from

Group-Time Planning Sheet

(Use this sheet for small- or large-group time.)

Originating idea: _____

(Note the concept, local event, particular material, and/or what you observed children say or do that led to the idea.)

Materials: _____

(List the materials you will need, including what and how many.)

Curriculum content: _____

(List the main key developmental indicators [KDIs] the activity focuses on and any others that might occur.)

Beginning: _____

(Describe how you will introduce the activity to the children, including your opening statement and/or action.)

Middle: _____

(Describe what children might do during the activity and how you will support them.)

End: _____

(Describe how you will bring the activity to a close.)

Follow-up: _____

(Describe the materials and activities you can provide on subsequent days to build on the children’s experience with this activity.)

the house area to prepare meals, boards from the block area to build a rain shelter, books to read at bedtime, and stationery and markers to write letters home to their parents.

When everyone is “on board,” Ursula opens her bag of spyglasses (empty paper towel tubes). As they “drift out to sea,” the rafters call out the sights they “spy.” Some are literal (“I see an easel”), while others are imaginative (“There’s a whale!”). Ursula acknowledges and supports each child’s observations. After escaping some “hungry sharks” and weathering a “bad storm,” Ursula says, “I see land. We’re almost home.” They “dock” the raft and return the items they brought aboard to their appropriate areas. Ursula then says, “That was a long trip; I’m hungry,” and children move in different ways to their snack tables.

Large-group meetings require a space that can handle vigorous activity without children hurting themselves or bumping into one another. Programs with enough space may have a permanent gathering area, such as a rug in the middle of the room. In smaller facilities, they may have to move equipment aside to create this space. In warm climates or seasons, the class may gather outside under a tree or on a patio.

The formation of the group depends on the experience planned for that day. In fact, one way teachers can provide enough variety in the large-group experiences they plan is to make sure that they don’t all start from the same position. For example, certain games take place in a circle; a movement activity may involve children going from one carpet square to another in different ways; and the use of various props, such as hula hoops, may require that children be spread out widely so they don’t bump into one another.

As with small-group activities, large-group time is planned and initiated by adults, but children have many choices. For example, children decide how to move their bodies as they listen to music of different moods and tempos. They can make various motions for others to imitate or suggest a favorite song or rhyme for everyone to sing or recite. Large-group time provides many opportunities for children who want to take turns being the leader. For example, if the group is singing “The Hokey Pokey,” a child can choose which

body part everyone will put in and take out. Children are never forced to be leaders, but most are eager to have everyone’s attention. In fact, children who are otherwise shy or withdrawn may welcome a situation where others naturally listen to them because it is their turn to lead. See “Supporting Children at Large-Group Time” on pages 66–67.

▲ Outside time

During outside time, which lasts 30–40 minutes, children can enjoy physical, noisy, and vigorous play. Rather than standing to the side and just observing, HighScope teachers join children in their outdoor exertions. Being outside also lets children and adults alike connect to the school campus and/or neighborhood community and use all their senses to appreciate nature.

The outdoors is a place where young children can run, jump, throw, kick, swing, climb, dig, and ride. Their pretend play ranges over a wider area than is possible indoors and can incorporate props not found inside (e.g., a tree, the flower bed, a climber, a slide). Outdoor surfaces also provide larger areas for artwork; for example, children can make chalk drawings or water paintings on the pavement and weave yarn and twigs through the lattice of a fence. Additionally, outdoor equipment promotes social play. For example, children face one another through the openings in the climber, and they dig beside one another in the sandbox. Discoveries are also eagerly shared (“Look at the shiny green bug I found!”).

In most cases, outside time takes place in a play area on the grounds of the building where the program is located. This space is specifically designed for use by young children, with size and safety taken into account. When programs do not have their own playgrounds, they may use a neighborhood park. If possible, the teachers and children bring loose or free-standing equipment (balls, scarves, bikes, or wagons) to add to the fixtures that are there. Occasionally, especially in inner cities, there may not be a nearby park or one that can be reached safely. In such cases, a rooftop or similar area made safe for young children may suffice. If no outdoor area is available, or the weather is extreme, a gym or other large indoor space can substitute. See “Supporting Children at Outside Time” on page 68 for more ideas.

Supporting Children at Large-Group Time

Consider This...

Think about your own ideas about how children learn at large-group time.

In HighScope programs, large-group time is a segment of the day when adults and children share an experience as partners. It is not a time for the teacher to lecture children, for example, about the weather, the calendar, or the “letter of the week.” Preschoolers will generally not sit still for such instruction, and such abstract methods are not appropriate for them. Some teachers may see large-group time as a chance to be the “star,” leading the children in a song or entertaining them with a story. However, HighScope’s active learning approach recognizes that children need to move and sing and talk, not listen passively to someone else perform these activities. Children and adults both play important and equal roles in large-group time.

The adult’s role at large-group time is similar to his or her role at small-group time. Adults provide ideas and/or materials to get things started and then support children’s explorations and encourage their ideas. Use the following strategies to help children learn from their activities:

Plan large-group experiences ahead of time.

The following sources of ideas will help you plan:

- *Children’s interests.* Children will be enthusiastic about large-group time if they are already interested in its focus. Use your observations of what children do at other times of the day to come up with ideas for large-group activities. For example, when the Olympic Games are being broadcast, perhaps you notice at outside time that several children are using the railroad ties in the yard as balance beams. You and your coteacher might then plan a large-group time in which several objects — a long block, a rubber mat, a strip of masking tape on the floor, and a row of carpet squares — can serve as balance beams for the children to walk across.
- *Curriculum content in Physical Development and Health and Creative Arts content areas.* The KDIs in Physical Development and Health and Creative Arts, especially movement, music, and pretend play, are fruitful sources of ideas.

For example, you might plan a movement activity in which children move their bodies in different ways using scarves, batons, sheets of newspaper, or other portable items. A music-inspired activity could involve children playing various percussion instruments while listening to different types of music. Using props to act out the story in a favorite book is an example of pretend play.

- *Cooperative play and projects.* Whole-group storytelling, dancing, and singing are all good ways to get the classroom community involved. To keep all the children focused, however, make sure that each child has an active role to play. You can encourage this level of involvement by giving everyone an object to manipulate, an individual space in which to move, words to sing, and so on. For example, in making up a group story about a dog and a cat, one teacher gave children two different color socks to put over their hands. Whenever they wanted the dog in the story to say or do something, they would move their red sock, while the cat was represented by the blue sock. Children moved their sock-covered hands in all kinds of ways, inventing roles for the two characters in the story.
- *Events currently meaningful to the children.* Large-group activities built around holidays or other topical events will only work if the children find them meaningful. If they are based on what adults find current (e.g., Groundhog Day or summer vacation), children may not relate to them. Therefore, it is important to first observe what engages children before planning large-group time.

For example, in one classroom, children were not caught up in Christmas gifts or decorations. However, twins who spent time with their grandmother were interested in her seasonal baking and got other children involved in role playing in the house area. On a field trip, the class visited a bakery where children saw these activities on a large scale and tried them out with their own pieces of dough. Then the teachers planned a large-group time in which children sang a bakery song while they rolled, kneaded, folded, and made other baking-related motions with their bodies.

Supporting Children at Large-Group Time (cont.)

- *Teacher idea books and other curriculum materials.* Teachers sometimes try proven large-group activities and adapt them for use with the children in their own classroom. (For HighScope teacher idea books and related curriculum resources, visit www.highscope.org.) This strategy is useful for new teachers developing confidence in their planning skills, as well as experienced teachers seeking new ideas.

Prepare for large-group time before children arrive. As with small groups, it is important for large-group activities to begin right away. Prepare materials beforehand to avoid having children wait. If you plan to use songs or stories, practice them in advance — both for a smoother performance and also so children aren't distracted by false starts or mistakes that make them lose interest. Check all equipment for proper functioning ahead of time.

What to do during each part of large-group time. Use the following steps to guide children through large-group time.

- *Opener.* Draw the group together with a “starter” activity that children can join as soon as they come to the gathering area; for example, singing the “run-around-the-circle
- *song”* and running around the circle or singing a familiar song and doing the hand motions that go with it. Once everyone is assembled, the rest of the planned activity can begin.
- *Activity.* Briefly explain the activity (e.g., “Today let’s see how we can move in and out of the tires”). Give props and materials (in this case, inflatable inner tubes) to children immediately and show interest in what they do with them. Encourage children to come up with ideas, ask children who would like a turn as leader, and repeat and follow up on children’s suggestions. For example, you might say, “Tim says we should curl up inside our tires, then pop out like space ships” (then everyone tries this action).
- *Transition.* Most of the time you will end large-group time with a transition to the next activity. If the session has been quite physically active, something quieter can help children settle down. The transition can also build on the learning that took place during the large-group time. For example, after children have figured out ways to move in and out of hoops, you might ask them move to their tables for planning time with just one part of their body inside the hoop.



Supporting Children at Outside Time

Consider This...

Think about your own ideas about how children learn at outside time.

To guarantee that children learn actively outside as well as inside, HighScope teachers act as partners in the outdoor setting. Children take the initiative, and adults follow their lead with enthusiasm and energy. Adults don't see this part of the day as their time to relax and chat with one another nor do they direct children in sports or rule-bound games that are inappropriate for young children.

Outside time presents many opportunities for learning, not only in the area of physical growth, but in all the other domains of development as well. There are signs in and around the playground to read, leaves and rocks to arrange by color or size, insects and clouds to study, and social conflicts to resolve about who has the next turn on the slide. To support development in each of the areas, use the following strategies at outside time:

Help children get the materials they need.

Playgrounds have permanent structures, and other materials can be stored in an adjacent shed or brought outside from the classroom. With the other members of your teaching team, think of ways to store and easily transport materials (e.g., milk crates, buckets, plastic baskets with handles), to involve children (and sometimes parents) in

gathering materials at the end of the day, and to ensure children can get the things they need independently or with minimal assistance.

Use work-time support strategies. The same interaction strategies adults use to support children's indoor play (see pp. 59–60) apply to their outdoor play. Teachers participate as partners, talk to children, and encourage them to solve problems.

Observe nature with children. The outdoors presents children with a whole new environment to explore. Share their discoveries enthusiastically and call their attention to such natural features as the wind, clouds, changing light, air temperature, mud and dirt, snow and ice, different smells and textures, and the wide diversity of plant and animal life. Keep in mind that walks in the neighborhood, field trips to farms and ranches, and strolls along city streets with houses and businesses also increase children's experiences with the outdoors.

Bring outside time to a close. As with other activities, give children a warning when outside time is almost over so they can bring their play to an end. For example, you might announce, "In three minutes, parents will begin to arrive and we'll have to put away the bikes and other toys." Encourage children to help with cleanup, storing portable equipment in the shed or bringing items such as scarves and chalk back into the classroom. When outside time is at the end of the day, parents may assist with cleanup too. If children are reluctant to end their play, you can help them make a plan to continue it the next day.

▲ Transitions

Although transitions happen between other activities, they are important enough to treat as activities in themselves. Transitions include arrivals and departures (discussed on p. 69), and the intervals between each of the daily routine components described previously. In addition to involving a change in activity, transitions may also include a shift in location (e.g., from the greeting circle to a work-time area), materials (from crackers at snack-time to pipe cleaners at small-group time), clothing (adding or removing outerwear), caregiver (if there is a shift change), or playmates (when groupings change between small-group time and large-group time).

Some children take transitions in stride, while others find them stressful. Transitions are often most difficult when children are first getting used to the routine — a child may cry and cling to a parent when beginning school, or he or she may not want work time to end, not yet realizing the same play materials will be available the next day. Generally, once children experience the sense of comfort and inner control that develops from following a consistent routine, transitions are no longer stressful. However, for any child at any time, a transition may be hard. This could be due to fatigue, an ongoing home situation (divorce, a new sibling), or something that happened in school that day (such as a conflict with a peer). (See "Supporting Children During Transitions" on p. 70.)

▲ Other group times

The HighScope daily routine also includes other group times, discussed here.

Meals and snacktimes. In most part-day programs, children and adults share a snack, while full-day programs have both meal- and snack-times. Eating together is generally done in small groups, preferably with the same children who gather together for planning, recall, and small-group time.

The emphasis during snacks and meals is on social interaction. It is important for adults to eat with children, as a natural opportunity to share relaxed conversation and support children's ideas. Teachers should not have a hidden agenda to teach academic skills during mealtimes, although opportunities for teaching and learning often occur naturally. For example, a list indicating whose turn it is to set out the plates and cups can help children develop literacy skills, and children taking a turn will be involved in one-to-one matching of utensils and people who will be eating, which helps develop mathematics skills. Snack- and mealtime are also occasions when children enjoy practicing self-help skills such as pouring their own juice, cutting things into portions (with plastic child-safety knives), folding napkins, wiping up spills, and so on.

Greeting and departure times. Elements of both individual and group activities characterize greeting and departure times. These periods are also transitions, and you can use the transition strategies described previously to help children make the shift from home to school and back again. For arrivals, it is important that each child be welcomed every day by a teacher. When an adult brings a child to school (as opposed to arrivals by van or bus), that adult should also receive a personal hello from a staff member. The same holds true for saying good-bye on a daily basis.

If arrival and departure times are staggered, the teacher helps each child enter into or finish up whatever part of the routine is underway. For example, you may plan with a child so he or she can begin working, or you may help a child put things away and get dressed shortly before a parent is due to pick up the child. If children arrive at the same time, greeting takes on more of the character of a group event; however, it also may happen in various pairings and small groups. For example,



During message board, children and adults share important information about the day ahead, such as new materials for outside time and the art area.

children, along with parents who can stay a while, may look at books until the rest of the children arrive. When most of the children depart from the program at the same time, departure is still likely to be more individualized since parents rarely come at the same moment. Nevertheless, since a child is leaving the group as well as the current activity, teachers help the child bring his or her day to a close with a sense of completion.

Read-aloud times. Read-aloud time is a distinct component of the HighScope daily routine when teachers gather with their small group at

Supporting Children During Transitions

Consider This...

Think about your own ideas about how children learn during transitions.

Teachers often dread transitions, those times between activities. At best, they are seen as periods to get through quickly so the class can begin the next “real” activity in the daily routine. At worst, transitions become power struggles between children resisting a shift and adults eager to move them along without losing momentum or throwing off the day’s schedule. In HighScope programs, by contrast, transitions are seen as real and meaningful activities in themselves. When viewed as educational opportunities — for example, how to solve the problem of storing a work in progress so a child can continue with it the next day — transitions incorporate all the aspects of active participatory learning. Approached with this positive attitude, transitions not only go more smoothly but also allow children and adults to enter into the next activity calmly and eagerly.

To ensure that transitions go as smoothly as possible, and to also make them positive learning experiences, use the following strategies:

Adjust transition times to suit children’s developmental needs. As a general rule, the fewer the number of transitions, the better. Preschoolers can more easily remember a daily routine that has fewer components. They can quickly derive comfort and control from its predictability. It also helps to keep changes in location to a minimum. For example, if children begin the day with breakfast, they might then plan at the same table. Within this consistent framework, use your creativity to make transitions fun (e.g., with varied movements, songs, rhymes, and chants). Children can act as leaders at these times. Finally, keep the amount of waiting between activities to a minimum (e.g., by having materials ready for small- and large-group times). This helps children transition smoothly.

Plan for transitions with individual children in mind. While the previous strategies work well for the group as a whole, there may be individual children who still find any change, or perhaps certain times of the day, difficult. In these cases, giving ample warning, maximizing choices, and

providing extra support can help. For example, if a child has trouble with cleanup, you might say, “Work time is almost over. You played in the house and block areas today. Which area would you like to clean up first?” If transitions are a time when a child might hide or act aggressively toward a classmate, adults can position themselves nearby at that point. For example, Timmy hid under the table whenever the lights were flicked for cleanup time. Rachel, his teacher, joined his activity near the end of work time and was able to engage him in cleaning up.

Plan for cleanup time, the longest transition.

Cleanup time is the longest and often the most stressful transition of the day. Adults know it must be done before moving on to the next activity, but a child’s natural inclination is to continue playing. To help cleanup time go more smoothly, teachers first need to realize that children are not being bad or resistant (negative) when they want to keep playing but, rather, that they are motivated and engaged in purposeful activity (positive). Adults also need to keep their expectations realistic and view cleanup time as another learning opportunity. Children will not clean up as thoroughly as adults, nor should they (program staff can do this at the end of the day).

It can also help to clean up as work time goes along, provided it does not interrupt purposeful play. (Think of cleaning up the kitchen as you cook, instead of leaving all the pots and pans until after dinner.) Finally, use children’s individual and group interests to make cleanup time fun. For example, if children were “writing” grocery lists at work time, they might write down, in order, the areas or materials they will clean up.



the same time every day (just as they do for small-group time) for an interactive reading experience. Teachers carefully plan these experiences, selecting high-quality children's books in a variety of genres and using interactive reading strategies that support children's active engagement. For optimal read-aloud experiences, teachers plan multiple readings of the same book; identify a literacy focus for each reading (e.g., vocabulary, comprehension, concepts about print); use scaffolding strategies to support and extend children's learning; and pay close attention to children's developmental levels (Beck & McKeown, 2001; Dickinson & Smith, 1994; Laminack, 2009; Shedd & Duke, 2008; Wasik & Bond, 2001).

Before reading, teachers decide how they will introduce the book to children (e.g., Is it based on a topic of interest? Has the author written other books familiar to the children? Is the cover illustration intriguing?). Teachers also select vocabulary words they would like to introduce and decide what kind of background knowledge, if any, they may need to provide to aid children's comprehension. As part of the planning process, teachers should also select stopping points within the book — pages where they might pause to engage children (e.g., introducing a vocabulary word, asking children to predict what might happen next, calling attention to rhyming words).

During this interactive read-aloud time, teachers model strategies used by successful readers to help them understand a story, and engage children in conversations about the book. For example, teachers might express their thoughts, questions, and predictions aloud to model how readers think as they read. It is important to remember that reading with children should be an enjoyable activity that not only builds reading skills and literacy knowledge but also promotes children's love for reading and their interest in books. To maximize the benefits of reading with children, teachers should not combine read-aloud time with other activities.

Message board. Gathering at the message board is a whole-group activity that generally takes place once everyone has arrived. This is a time to share announcements and let children know about things happening that day or coming up soon. For example, visitors may be expected (e.g., a local artist, a prospective student), perhaps new equipment introduced at small-group time the

day before can now be found in a specific area of the room, or perhaps a field trip is planned for the next day. You can also use this time to discuss a problem that affects the whole class. For example, if running through the classroom is a safety hazard, children can brainstorm possible solutions and choose one or two to try out. A few days later, during message board time, they may review the situation and decide whether the problem is solved or they need to try a different approach.

Teachers write these messages — on a dry-erase board, easel pad, chalkboard, or similar surface — using pictures and words. Writing messages in various ways allows children of all literacy levels to “read” them, know what to expect, and participate in the discussion. It is also an opportunity for children to recognize letters and words (especially their own and others' names) and for adults to introduce language and literacy games, such as rhyming and alliteration. Finally, the message board creates a sense of community as adults and children begin their day.



Throughout the daily routine, HighScope teachers are continually aware of what children are experiencing and learning. To guide their planning and interactions with children, teachers keep in mind the KDIs that are important in the early years. These essential indicators — in all content domains of learning — are described in the next part of this book.



Try These Ideas Yourself

1. On Friday, make a plan for the weekend. Write down what you will do, the materials or information you will need, who else is involved, how long each activity will take, and so on. On Sunday evening, review your plan. Think about what happened as planned and what got changed. What did you learn about planning similar activities in the future? How does reflecting on this plan-do-review process help you think about the importance of plan-do-review for children?
2. Think about a young child from a chaotic, disorganized household. Think about a child from a rigid, overly scheduled household. How might each react to a consistent daily routine at school?
3. How would you help a child who does not speak English learn the daily routine?

4. Think about the daily routine in your classroom (or observe someone else's). Write down the parts of the day in order and how much time is spent on each. Note whether the day has an appropriate number of segments and transitions, or whether parts need to be added, omitted, or combined. Next to each part of the day, note whether its place in the order makes sense. Is it too short, too long, or just right? Based on your comments, revise the daily routine. How will you introduce children to the new routine? Will you change it all at once or gradually? Why?

5. List five strategies you can use to encourage children to plan. List five different strategies you can use to encourage children to recall. Remember to identify strategies that can be used with children of different ages and ability levels (e.g.,



During pickup time, this teacher shares with the child's father what his son did during work time.

from nontalkers to highly verbal children). Try out your ideas (or ask a teacher you know to try them out while you observe). Write down what happened and reflect on what did (or did not) work. How would you modify your original ideas based on your observations? (*Note:* The same strategies can often be used for both planning and recall, so think of different ones for each to end up with a total of 10 ideas.)

6. Divide a piece of paper into two columns, one headed "Child-Initiated" and the other, "Adult-Initiated." Observe a small-group activity in an early childhood program. Whenever children make a comment, contribute an idea, or use materials in their own way, make a check mark in the child-initiated column. When adults introduce materials, model behavior, or ask questions, make a check mark in the adult-initiated column. At the end, add up the number of check marks in each column. What is the balance of child- and adult-initiated activity? If it is predominantly adult initiated, what would encourage more child initiation? If it is mostly child initiated, did adults miss opportunities to scaffold (support and gently extend) children's learning?

7. Plan a small-group activity for eight preschool children based on something you observed them to be interested in. Include each of the features listed in the group-time planning sheet on page 64.

8. Plan a large-group activity for 16 preschool children based on something you observed them to be interested in. Include each of the features listed in the group-time planning sheet on page 64.

9. Think of a problematic transition in your classroom or one you have observed (e.g., the children take so long to clean up after snack that they only have 10 minutes left to play outside). Make a plan for this transition based on one or more KDIs, incorporating the five ingredients of active learning. Try out the plan. Did the transition go more smoothly? Did you feel it was valuable time instead of wasted time? Why (or why not)? If necessary, what else could you do to make this transition a positive learning experience for the children?