

The HighScope Preschool Curriculum

The HighScope Curriculum is a complete system of early childhood education which focuses on the five dimensions of school readiness, identified by the National Education Goals Panel, and widely accepted as the standard in the early childhood community. Those five dimensions include: approaches to learning; language, literacy, and communication; social and emotional development; physical development, health and well-being; and arts and sciences. HighScope further subdivides arts and sciences into the subjects of mathematics, science and technology, social studies and the arts. In addition to addressing traditional academic subjects, the HighScope Curriculum promotes independence, curiosity, decision making, cooperation, persistence, creativity, and problem solving in young children.

In a HighScope setting, learning is not simply a process of adults giving information to children; rather children participate actively in the learning process. They discover things through direct experience with people, objects, events and ideas. Preschoolers also make plans and follow through on their interests and intentions. HighScope teachers thoughtfully provide materials, plan activities, and talk with children in ways that both support and challenge what children are observing and thinking.

The heart of the HighScope daily routine is the plan-do-review sequence, in which children make choices about what they will do, carry out their ideas, and reflect on their activities with adults and peers. We call these parts of the day planning time, work time, and recall time. By participating in the plan-do-review process, children gain confidence as thinkers, problem-solvers, and decision makers. They learn how to act with intention and reflect on the consequences of their actions. These are abilities that will serve them well in school and throughout their lives.

Another important aspect of the HighScope Curriculum is the way we approach adult-child interaction. In a HighScope classroom adults balance the freedom children need to explore with the limits children need to feel secure. The adults provide materials and experiences that both build on children's interests and promote learning. In a HighScope preschool, children initiate many of their own learning experiences.

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