

All About HighScope

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Plan-Do-Review

Practical summaries of HighScope's history, educational approach, and curriculum

What is plan-do-review?

The HighScope plan-do-review process is at the center of HighScope's approach to educating children. As children organize their intentions (make plans), carry them out, and reflect on what they have done, they learn how to become involved in the world around them, either through their own actions or through cooperation with adults and other children. They also realize they are able thinkers who can make decisions, solve problems, and get things done. As children gain experience with this process, their language becomes increasingly detailed and complex, their vocabularies grow as they convey what they are learning, and they become confident communicators. These are language and literacy skills they will need when entering the early elementary school grades.

The plan-do-review process helps children become self-confident and develop a sense of purpose. When children plan and follow through with their plans, they learn to rely on their abilities to make choices and to set the direction for their learning. They also develop the ability to express their choices and decisions to others. In addition, we have found that children tend to concentrate for longer periods of time when they are involved in activities they have chosen for themselves. The plan-do-review process also encourages children to form a mental picture of their experiences and put what they have experienced into words. Reflecting on and sharing these experiences with others helps to lock them in memory. Recalling the lessons they learned in the past helps children associate cause and effect and become more responsible for their actions.

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What happens at planning time?

During planning time children indicate their plans in many ways, depending on their age and personal preferences. Younger children may simply point to an interest area or walk over to the materials they want

to use. Others describe in

detailed language where they will play, what they will make, what roles they will act out, and who they will do all these things with. Still other children prefer to represent their plans by drawing or writing them down. As children develop, their plans become increasingly more detailed and complex. They set for themselves more complicated challenges and solve more intricate problems.

In HighScope settings, adults use many strategies to support children's planning. We make sure planning takes place in quiet settings where children can see all the areas and materials in the room as they plan, without being distracted by the many other things going on around them. We use a variety of planning games and materials to help children stay interested while waiting their turn to share their plans. As we talk with individual children about what they intend to do, we express genuine interest and ask helpful questions so that

we can provide them with the tools and support they need to follow through with their plans. Finally, we realize that plans may change during work time and children may need help and encouragement as they make other plans.

What happens at work time?

During work time (the "do" part of the plan-do-review process) children begin, carry out, modify, and complete their plans, as well as solve work-related problems. Throughout work time, they are actively involved in developing their abilities in important content areas such as early reading, math, and social development. They also learn to work independently and cooperate with other children and adults. It is through these interactions and activities that children construct their knowledge of the world.

When following through on their planned course of action, children naturally become involved in many types of play. They explore materials, build things, play pretend roles, and make up games. Some children work in one or just a few areas, while others move about the entire room. Children may play alone, with one other child, or in small groups of children. They may focus completely on what they are doing or make an effort to join the activities of other children. Work time is full of spontaneous conversations among children and between adults and children.

In HighScope programs, adults are as busy as children during work time. We pay attention to

what they are actually doing so we can modify or add to the available materials. We constantly scan the room during work time to see if children need follow-up support with their plans. We stay alert to safety hazards and remain ready to help children resolve conflicts. We converse with children and offer comfort and encouragement. Most important, we act as partners in children's play. By joining in during work time, we gain insights into how children think. We can then develop plans and act to extend and expand their learning.

What happens at review time?

At review time (often called recall time) as well as throughout each day, we encourage children to draw on their memories, reflect on their actions, recall problems they resolved, and associate their plans with results. During review time children use language to organize their ideas, reflect on their experiences, and share their discoveries with others. They may use simple gestures or objects to reenact their experiences, converse in detail, draw pictures, display creations, or write things down. What children eventually decide to tell others is an indication of what they find most meaningful in their experiences.

As with planning, review time takes place in a quiet, relaxed, and unhurried atmosphere with familiar groups of children and an adult. We help children make mental connections between the plans they made during planning time and the actions they carried out during work time. We show our interest in what chil-

dren are saying by sitting down at their level and providing them with materials that will help them remember. Children's memories and thought processes are further jogged when they review their experiences with others and share their discoveries and observations.

How can families use the plan-do-review process at home?

Once children are into the habit of plan-do-review, they often want to bring the process home! Parents can support them by designating a "your choice" time each day. They can encourage their children to plan what they would like to do at these times and provide them with enough time and materials to carry out their plans. Afterwards, as they clean up or share a meal, we suggest that parents ask their children to tell them what they did and encourage them to share their experiences with other family members. We recommend that parents use the morning travel time to ask their children about their plans for the day. At the end of the day, parents can remind them about their conversation and ask them to tell them about what

During work time children explore materials, build things, play pretend roles, and make up games — alone, with another child, or in small groups.

happened. We advise parents to avoid general questions such as “What did you do today?” and suggest trying specific questions, that pick up on their children’s plan, such as “This morning you told

me you wanted to play in the block area with Ashanti. Can you tell me what the two of you did there?” With help from families, the plan-do-review process will become a lifelong way for their children to think and act.

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Published by HighScope® Press,
 a division of the HighScope® Educational
 Research Foundation

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All About HighScope 7: Plan-Do-Review

ISBN: 978-1-57379-371-1

Publisher: HighScope Press

Rightsholder: HighScope Press

Author/Editor: Epstein, A. S.

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