HighScope Curriculum Overview

Adults and Children — Partners in Learning

In HighScope’s vision of preschool education, children are doers and problem solvers, and adults are partners who share in children’s discoveries and gently guide their learning.

ACTIVE LEARNING

We call this approach active participatory learning. In it, young children build or “construct” their knowledge of the world — finding out how the world works through their own direct experience with people, objects, events, and ideas.

CURRICULUM CONTENT

The HighScope Preschool Curriculum is built around 58 developmental milestones called key developmental indicators (KDs) in 8 curriculum content areas that are closely aligned with state and professional standards. The KDs define what we teach; the hows are provided by our teaching practices for the classroom learning environment, daily routine, and adult-child interaction.

THE CLASSROOM AND DAILY ROUTINE

Teachers set the stage for learning through a carefully planned physical environment and consistent daily routine. Within this structure, children are secure and self-reliant learners.

The centerpiece of the day is HighScope’s unique plan-do-review process, in which each child has a daily opportunity to make and carry out a plan and then reflect on what happened. This process strengthens the child’s executive function — their ability to regulate and organize themselves so they can stay focused on what they have chosen to do and solve problems that arise.

RELATIONSHIPS: CENTRAL TO LEARNING

Adult-child interaction is emphasized in the HighScope approach. HighScope resources and trainings give teachers a toolbox of strategies for building a learning partnership with each child. These how-tos range from scaffolding learning in each content area to helping children work out conflicts with peers.

MONITORING AND MAINTAINING QUALITY

Teachers and supervisors monitor the effectiveness of their program through ongoing evaluation with HighScope’s child and program assessment tools. Because these tools collect information on what is happening daily in the classroom, assessment contributes directly to teachers’ lesson planning rather than being a burdensome, unrelated chore. A range of staff development options are available to help teachers and administrators make improvements based on identified needs.

OUTCOMES

HighScope programs get results. Research that validates the curriculum includes the internationally known HighScope Perry Preschool Project, whose results show that the HighScope model prepares preschool children for long-term success both in school and in life. These research findings are confirmed by the experiences of thousands of teachers in the US, Canada, and in many other countries who have watched their preschoolers grow as engaged and successful learners in HighScope programs.

www.highscope.org