

The HighScope Approach

Active participation is the key tenet of the HighScope curriculum. Children should be involved in direct, hands-on experiences with people, objects, and ideas. Teachers plan specific activities and experiences for the children to strengthen their emerging intellectual, physical, social, and emotional abilities. Active learning takes place when young children are able to construct knowledge that will help them make sense of their world. Children serving as active participants in the classroom become engaged in play and problem solving because they themselves choose to do so. According to High/Scope, motivation theorists suggest that children choose to become engaged in activities and interactions that are enjoyable, related to their current interests and that allow them to experience feelings of control, success, and competence. As part of the HighScope curriculum, students should be provided the opportunity to make choices, take initiative, and lead activities.

- **Problem Solving**– Young children experience conflicts amongst each other throughout the day. Often in a classroom it is not clear exactly what happened, who is responsible, or how the problem can be resolved. Teachers can turn the emotions and reactions that come from disputes and conflicts into positive experiences through the usage of problem prevention strategies and engaging the child in a conflict resolution process. By settling disputes with their classmates, children gain an understanding of how to respect the needs of others while meeting their own needs.
- **The Daily Routine** speaks to the need for a daily classroom schedule to be posted in every classroom which is consistently adhered to. All teachers should be using their HighScope classroom daily routine cards which use simple pictures and words to represent their day in the appropriate sequence. The routine enables young children to anticipate what happens next and gives them a great deal of control over what they do during each part of their day. Following a standardized daily routine provides students with a psychologically safe and purposeful environment.
- **Adult Child Interaction** is another point of emphasis within the HighScope curriculum. Adult Child interaction refers to the verbal and nonverbal communication between teachers and students. In the HighScope curriculum, both children and adults should contribute to this dialogue, and there is a balance between adult and child contributions. Adults should take the time to observe and interact with children at their level to discover how students think and reason. Adults should be interacting with children to support their initiatives, interests, and developing abilities. By balancing child and adult-initiated activities, teachers and children share control of classroom learning.

The Five Elements of Active Learning, as defined below by HighScope, should be reflected in every lesson:

- **Materials**-A child's home, culture, and language are reflected in a variety of age-appropriate, open-ended materials for them to explore.
- **Manipulation:** Children make discoveries when they are encouraged to handle, examine, combine, and transform materials and ideas.
- **Choice:** Children choose materials and play partners, change and build on their play ideas, and plan activities according to their interests and needs.
- **Child Language & Thought:** Children communicate verbally and nonverbally — thinking about their actions, expressing their thoughts about what they understand, and modifying their thinking as they learn and explore.
- **Adult Scaffolding:** Children gain knowledge and develop creative problem-solving skills with the help of well-prepared adults who support a child's current level of thinking and challenge them to advance to the next stage, also known as "scaffolding."

For a plethora of HighScope resources, [please consult our shared HighScope Google Drive folder](#)