

Our Approach to Learning



How We Teach

In a HighScope preschool program, teachers ignite children's interest in learning by creating an environment that encourages them to explore learning materials and interact with adults and peers. We focus on supporting early learners as they make decisions, build academic skills, develop socially and emotionally, and become part of a classroom community.

Active learning is at the center of the HighScope Curriculum. It's the foundation of young children gaining knowledge through their natural play and interactions with the environment, events, and other people.

Adult-Child Interaction

Teachers act as partners, working alongside children and communicating with them both verbally and nonverbally to encourage learning. Key strategies for adult-child interactions are sharing control with children, communicating as a partner with children, scaffolding children's play, using encouragement instead of praise, and taking a problem-solving approach to supporting children in resolving conflicts.

Learning Environment

To create a predictable and active learning environment, teachers arrange and equip the classroom with diverse, open-ended materials that reflect children's home, culture, and language. The room is organized and labeled to promote independence and encourage children to carry out their intentions.

Daily Routine

A consistent framework for the day provides a balanced variety of experiences and learning opportunities. Children engage in both individual and social play, participate in small- and large-group activities, assist with cleanup, socialize during meals, develop self-care skills, and exercise their small and large muscles. The most important segment of the daily routine is the plan-do-review sequence, in which children make decisions about what they will do, carry out their ideas, and reflect upon their activities with adults and other children. These higher-level thinking skills are linked to the

development of executive functions, which are needed to be successful in school and life.

Assessment

Ongoing child assessment is also an underlying component of the HighScope Curriculum. Objective anecdotal observations of children collected throughout children's natural play allow teachers to assess child progress and plan meaningful learning experiences.

What We Teach

The HighScope Preschool Curriculum is based on more than 50 years of research on early childhood development and has been validated by direct evaluation of the curriculum. Our framework for understanding and supporting children's learning from ages 3–5 years is based on 58 key developmental indicators (KDIs), which are aligned with national and state early learning standards, Common Core State Standards, and the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework.

In the HighScope Preschool Curriculum, learning is focused on the following eight content areas:

- Approaches to Learning
- Social and Emotional Development
- Physical Development and Health
- Language, Literacy, and Communication
- Mathematics
- Creative Arts
- Science and Technology
- Social Studies

Preschool Curriculum Content

Learning in these eight areas is guided by 58 key developmental indicators (KDIs). Each KDI identifies an important learning goal for young children. We recognize that the normal pace of children's development and learning varies widely across these eight

"HighScope Preschool Curriculum." *HighScope*, 15 Apr. 2020, highscope.org/our-practice/preschool-curriculum/.

categories and the KDIs reflect that continuum of widely held expectations. Our curriculum is designed to help teachers appropriately scaffold learning for every child across all areas.

The HighScope key developmental indicators

- Provide teachers with a child development “filter” for observing and choosing appropriate interactions and activities
- Help teachers interpret what young children say and do along a developmental continuum
- Enable teachers to maintain reasonable expectations for young children
- Reinforce children’s play as the primary mechanism for learning
- Allow teachers to be more knowledgeable and intentional in their daily planning for individual children and the class