

## High Scope Approach for Involving Young Children in Planning

For young children to be involved in developing their personal plans, they may need some practice in the business of planning. The [High Scope Approach](#), which has been tried and tested around the world for over 40 years, is one way of enabling even very young children to make real choices.



The High Scope Approach is an active learning approach which uses the adult-child interaction, the learning experience, daily routine and assessment as tools. One of the fundamental structures in the daily routine of High Scope is the Plan-Do-Review cycle. This encourages children to consider what they would like to do, then plan how to do it, carry out their plans and then review afterwards what they had learned.

So for example, a child wanting to paint a picture would make a plan working out that they needed to put on an apron, choose their paper, brushes and paints. They would then get these things and carry out their plan. Afterwards they would be responsible for putting away the painting and paint, washing the brushes and their hands, hanging up their apron. The review part would happen when an adult uses open questions to ask the child to tell them about what they did.

The child may also have to learn about making plans within boundaries or limitations. So for example a child may plan to play in the water tray, but four children are already there and only four are allowed at once. The child needs to learn that their plans need to be adapted sometimes to fit with the world around them. They might need to make another plan first, but plan to go to the water tray when someone leaves.

Children who get used to this way of working become good at thinking about what they might want, working out what is needed to carry it out, knowing what help they might need and when, and realising that action follows planning and that there are consequences (e.g. tidying up). They will also learn that plans need to work in with the rules/limits of their environment. They also learn to learn, to think about how well things worked out and how they might plan to do things differently another time.



If children are given the opportunity to make plans, carry them out and review them in the day to day routines of life, they will be much more

able to become involved in bigger decisions that affect them. This obviously takes time, but the effort will be worthwhile if the child becomes engaged in the process of planning to meet their needs.



For children who are not used to making choices or thinking through actions, it could be helpful to begin with making small plans which can be carried out immediately and the results experienced right away. So it might be a trip to the play park and asking the child which equipment they plan to play on and encouraging the child to work out when and if they would need help. This might involve the adult only helping in the way the child asks, so the child has to work out that he/she needs a lift in to the swing and then a push. There may be a limit in terms of time available, or a queue for the swing which the child has to work their plans around. With open questions the adult can ask about what the child

did and encourage him/her to think what they would like to try next or could do differently.

If this is repeated for lots of small choices at home, at nursery, at the childminder, then the child gets used to thinking about choices, understanding limitations, carrying out actions, knowing when to ask for help and thinking about things afterwards to help plan things to come.

Fairly early in the process, children can be involved in 'writing' their plans. They can make their marks on the paper and dictate their plans to the adult. They can be prompted to think about the things they will need which can be listed. They can then go back to the paper and dictate and mark make about their feelings of how their plan worked out.



When a child is used to planning and reviewing in this way, then they will be more able to contribute to the assessment, planning and reviewing of a Child's Plan. The adult can involve the child in the planning method they are most familiar with, which might be a chat, or mark making, or through visual prompts (such as symbols or signs). The level of detail would need to be appropriate to the child's level of understanding, but providing a child with a small amount of autonomy and ownership of even a small part of their plan will go a long way in engaging their cooperation with it.