



What to look for in a HighScope Head Start Classroom

HighScope and Head Start share a commitment to high-quality early education that changes the lives of children and families. We know that education is most effective through intrinsic motivation, when children are interested, engaged, supported, and encouraged. Children in HighScope classrooms construct knowledge and skills in important academic, social, emotional, and physical domains through active involvement with people, materials, events, and ideas. Our active learning approach means that children are not just having hands-on experiences, but minds-on experiences. When you visit a HighScope Head Start classroom, here are some things to look for:

Environment

- The classroom is divided into **interest areas** with names children can understand (i.e., house area, toy area, book area, block area, art area, sand and water area).
- All materials are **accessible to children and labeled** with tracings, pictures, photographs, actual objects, and/or words.
- Most materials are **open-ended, and many “real” items are available** in place of toy replicas (i.e., real pots and pans in the house area, donated blueprints in the block area).
- Children’s **artwork**, photos of block structures, and/or samples of emergent writing are displayed.
- Families’ **cultures, languages, and communities are represented** throughout the classroom (i.e., signs and material labels are in multiple languages, pictures of families are in classroom-made books).



Children

- 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.
- During the **Plan-Do-Review® process**, children learn to plan many of their own activities, carry them out, and talk with others about what they have done and what they have learned.
- During **planning time** in small groups, **each child shares an idea for work time** by pointing, getting materials and showing an action, speaking, drawing, and/or writing and then gets started on their plan right after they have planned.
- During **work time**, children **carry out their own initiatives** by choosing materials and people to work with, changing and building on their play ideas, and freely inventing activities and using materials creatively according to their individual interests and needs.



- During **recall time** in small groups, **children share something about their work time experiences** by showing, re-enacting, describing in words, making drawings, or writing.
- During **small-group time**, individual children explore and use materials in their own ways, based on their interests and development and teachers follow their leads and extend their learning.
- During **large-group time**, individual children contribute their own ideas or try out others' ideas by suggesting new verses to a song, trying out a way of moving, or taking turns leading.

Adults

- Adults **show positive attention** to children by smiling, making eye contact, getting down to children's level, listening attentively, and interacting with children in calm, respectful tones.
- Adults converse with children in a **give-and-take** manner and ask open-ended questions sparingly.
- Adults encourage children by **repeating their ideas and commenting** on what children are doing.
- Adults treat conflict situations as a matter of fact and **use a problem-solving approach that involves children** in finding a solution.
- Adults plan daily, using **Key Developmental Indicators** (content goals), and build on children's learning by planning activities based on what they observe in the classroom and providing materials and opportunities that both support and challenge their children's development and interests.
- Adults take **anecdotal notes** that reflect what children do and say and use the **Child Observation Record** (COR® Advantage) or other child assessment tool to assess children's growth and development.



Structure of the Day

- Each segment occurs daily: greeting time, planning time (10 minutes), work time (45–60 minutes), recall time (10 minutes), small-group time (15–20 minutes), large-group time (10–15 minutes), outside time (30 minutes), meal and nap/rest times.
- A **daily routine chart with pictures and words** is posted so children are aware of the sequence.
- Throughout the daily routine, **adults and children share control** and each part of the day is intentionally planned for, including engaging transition times.
- During work time and outside time, **adults play as partners with children** (i.e., follow children's leads, take on the assigned role given by children).
- **Small- and large-group times** are teacher-initiated parts of the day, where adults plan for a specific content area, but children are supported in how they choose to uniquely use the materials.

Learn More 

[HighScope Website](#)

[Head Start Alignment](#)

[Program Quality Assessment \(POA\)](#)