

Shared Control and Self-Control

HighScope teachers understand the ‘dance’ of shared control: they see young children as capable problem solvers who need support to grow and develop. When teachers use strategies of shared control, they nurture each child’s capacity for self-control. When teachers trust their curriculum, their children and themselves, they value opportunities to support children’s self-control, control from the ‘inside out.’

Strategies to help young children develop self-regulation

- ❖ Acknowledge feelings.
- ❖ Remind children that others have feelings, needs, and goals too. “Esteban is building with those blocks. You may knock down these blocks.”
- ❖ Tell and show positively. Say ‘gentle hands’ or ‘gentle touches’ as you model gentleness.
- ❖ Be consistent in your responses and behavior; provide predictability.
- ❖ Redirect the child to another activity when possible. “You may *throw* balls; trucks are for *pushing*.”
- ❖ Allow children time and space to solve their own problems when possible. Watch and remain available, but resist the urge to ‘help’ too soon.
- ❖ Share the child’s pleasure in new skills and offer many opportunities for self-help skills to develop.
- ❖ Be proactive in calming and soothing children who are very sensitive to changes in stimulation or sensory experiences.
- ❖ Allow for as much freedom of movement as possible.
- ❖ Establish a consistent daily routine. Use signals and transition warnings, keeping waits to a minimum throughout the day.
- ❖ Encourage focus and attention throughout all routines and activities.
- ❖ Work to match children’s pace whenever possible.
- ❖ Tell children what you will do *before* you do it; offer appropriate ‘warnings’ before picking up or moving a child. Approach children from the front so they can see you come and learn to anticipate what’s next.