



# Moving forward with Encouraging Children's Initiatives

## Overview


Adults in a High Scope classroom encourage children's initiatives both indoors and outdoors. Within all parts of the daily routines as well as how decisions are made regarding the learning environment, teachers in a High Scope classroom plan around how every child can make choices, use materials, navigate the inside and outside learning space to be able to follow through on ideas, choices and plans. This helps children see themselves as capable members of the classroom community as well as to increase their autonomy and independence to take healthy risks and gain skills through hands-on, active learning with a supportive adult.

Strategies that encourage children's ideas, thoughts, suggestions and efforts include:

1. Listening to children
2. Encouraging children to talk about what they are doing
3. Trying out and imitating children's ideas
4. Using children's words
5. Commenting specifically on children's work

Adults in a High Scope classroom encourage and support children's strengths and interests throughout the day.

Adults use the strategies during every daily routine and observe children through engagement and interactions about what they are doing, saying and using. Adults observe how children respond to various routines and activities to learn individual children's



strengths (for example, playing outside for some children may increase their attention to tasks as well as promote leadership and other social skills) and interests. Teachers then use this information and knowledge to plan activities, consider what materials to add or rotate, choose relevant stories to read and plan special visitors to invite to the classroom. Teachers also are then able to write anecdotal notes that are individualized and strength based.

## Goals for moving forward

1. While planning teacher structured activities, consider what is known about each child's interests and strengths to determine how and with what will the children be challenged.
2. Make a plan as a teaching team to regularly review and discuss children's newly discovered or existing and expanding interests in any content area. Note individual and group growth and developments and make this information part of the team's lesson planning process.
3. Examine your own beliefs and attitudes about children's exploration and play choices and the directions they may take. Reflect on your responses to children's initiatives to determine if you unintentionally quell children's ideas.

## Implementation plan

1. Explore helpful resources: note several of the strategies used in this [HighScope Clip](#), see [Moving Forward in Partner in Play](#) and the [Moving Forward with Child Language and Communication](#) sheets
2. Examine each time you or a teaching team member tells a child "no", "don't" or "stop" when safety is not the concern.
3. Look at your daily routines to make sure there is ample opportunity in Work Time and Outside Time for children to follow through on their initiatives.
4. Practice utilizing the strategies while in play, running an activity or in conversations with children.
5. Be a partner in children's play to practice the strategies. Notice the length of time children participate as well as the directions the play takes as you encourage through partnering.
6. Share conversational control with children to practice the strategies. Take note of how many conversational turns children take as you use the strategies to encourage their continued participation.



7. Practice to intentionally use the strategies to encourage children's initiatives instead of using praise comments.