Supporting the Interests of Boys*

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It was February in Virginia, and very cold. Inside the classroom, we were experiencing the “winter doldrums” with the children. Have you ever felt like you were in a slump and out of ideas about this time of the year? We were.

In an effort to unslump ourselves, we decided to take the sand out of the sand and water table because we had noticed several of the children playing with the water when they washed their hands. We added some warm water, along with some empty cups, eye droppers, and spoons.

One of the children in the class, Adam, had an affinity for water. When Gerin went over to the water table during work time to check in on Adam’s plan, he began to tell her all about his dad’s boat — taking it to Smith Mountain Lake, how it floated, and how sometimes water came in and he got to fill up a bucket and, with his dad, throw the water over the side of the boat. He told Gerin that some things stayed on top of the water, like branches that they had to avoid with their boat, and some things didn’t, like the rocks his dad let him throw while they waited to get the boat in or out of the water.

*Adapted from Make Room for Boys! By Gerin Martin and Sandy Slack, published by HighScope Press, 2015
Adam’s excitement about boats brought other children over to the water table, and soon, they too were sharing stories of their experiences with boats. “My sister likes to water ski! She falls a lot, but she floats because she has a life jacket,” said Derek. “One time I went canoeing with my Grandpa Don!” piped in James. Gerin could see that boats were a topic that Adam and the others liked to talk about. Surely they could introduce other materials and activities that would support this interest.

Unfortunately, Gerin didn’t know much about canoes or boats of any kind, or fishing, or water skiing, or Smith Mountain Lake. She would have to do some investigating. This would be as much a voyage of discovery for her as for any of the children in the class.

Like the vast majority of early childhood educators, we’re women. Many of the interests of boys are, to put it truthfully, less interesting to us. How can we support the interests of boys, we thought, when we don’t share or know much about those interests, or worse, when those interests push our buttons? This was another challenge in terms of goodness of fit — that is, meeting each individual child’s needs. In this article, we’ll look at strategies for achieving goodness of fit by identifying and supporting children’s interests. In particular, we’ll look at incorporating boys’ interests into large-group planning.

**Seeking “Goodness of Fit”**

When we resolved to achieve goodness of fit in our classroom, we tuned in to the children — both girls and boys — and became good listeners and observers. All of our planning started with asking ourselves some basic observation-based questions: What did we see children working with? What were children talking about? When we heard them talking about and pretending to be dogs, for instance, we were so pleased that the next day we brought in leashes, dog food dishes, and even dog food that came in a variety of shapes the children could sort during small-group time. As usual, we followed the introduction of these kinds of materials with a week of intentional teacher-initiated activities and a related field trip. Then off we went, searching for the “next thing” children were doing or talking about — as long as it was something we were comfortable with.

Ice hockey, loud dinosaurs, fast crashing cars, and gun play definitely didn’t fall into that category. We thought about how often boys are left to pursue their interests with little support, and how maybe it’s because we, as women, aren’t as comfortable with those interests. But our commitment to goodness of fit lifted us to a new level of
awareness. There had to be a way to use all of the strategies we were learning about and trying out — and finding success with — to support even these not-so-comfortable boy interests.

And here’s the exceptional experience we had: Our boys elevated our teaching of concepts, social skills, and all of the curriculum content areas to higher levels. We began to ask the important questions: How can we incorporate the functional use of curriculum content while supporting these typical boy interests? How can we remember to problem-solve with the boys when we hit our “wall of resistance” — that conditioned response we have to activities that are outside our comfort zone? Our goodness-of-fit challenge included making a commitment to each other to ban all banning of boy interests.

As you put all of the “boy” pieces together, begin to think of child interests first in terms of the strengths of boys: visual abilities, big body movements, spatial-mechanical skills; and then the needs of boys: fine-motor skills, language, problem-solving skills, and self-regulation. The support strategy question becomes, how can this interest and the strengths of boys become the window of opportunity to functionally incorporate the needs of boys? How can we use our children’s interest in, say, dinosaurs, to support the development of social skills, problem-solving skills, writing, bookmaking, and counting?

Start with observing the children in your class. Pay attention to their changing interests. Assess available resources. Make a list of your program’s materials, parents who might be potential resources, and your personal resources related to the topic. Once you have an inventory of the strengths, needs, and interests of children in your classroom, you’re ready to begin using the following support strategies.

### What Is Goodness of Fit?

This concept, which was proposed by child psychiatrists Alexander Thomas and Stella Chess in their book *Temperament and Development* (1977), posited a goodness of fit between a child’s temperament and parents’ expectations. In terms of the classroom experience, this means that “healthy social and personality development occurs in young children when there is compatibility between the child and the demands and expectations of the teacher and center environment. A teacher’s understanding and respect for children’s temperaments are vital if her students are to thrive and develop” (Culpepper, 2008, “Conclusion,” para. 1). It is the way we structure our environment and adjust our interactions to create a goodness of fit — meeting each individual child’s needs — that will define success or failure.

The goal is not to change who and what children are (an impossible task), or make them conform to a standard model of “good behavior.” Rather, the goal is to accept that children have different temperaments or personalities. We can then look at each child’s individual attributes in a positive light and modify our environments and our interactions to ‘fit’ the children. This is a basic HighScope tenet: Be a responsive teacher, meeting the children at the door ready for them, rather than expecting the children to come to the door ready for us.
“Start with observing the children in your class. Pay attention to their changing interests.”

Strategies for Supporting Boys’ Interests
The following strategies will help you identify and support boys’ interests. The last one, “incorporate boys’ interests in large-group planning,” is one we’ll look at in greater depth in this issue’s Classroom Hints article.

Identify ways KDI s can be intentionally used to serve a child-centered function. HighScope’s key developmental indicators (KDIs) define important learning goals for children. Notice the developmental areas most in need of attention in your classroom. Writing has always been one of those developmental areas in our classroom, so for our boys, we make sure writing serves many different purposes in an activity.

When we visited the airport on a field trip, for example, we provided children with paper and a pencil attached with yarn to a clipboard. They copied letters and signed up for a turn in the cockpit. In addition to writing materials, we included tape measures and rulers and introduced vocabulary related to length, height, and measurement.

Start with books on related topics during small-group time. Books, especially those with pictures of real people and things, offer children information and images to think about, talk about, and represent during their play. This strategy of bringing in a collection of books that support a child’s interest helps the adults determine if that interest is shared by other children. It can help you avoid imposing a topic that is too abstract. You can gauge interest by reading the book aloud in small-group time or greeting time. If very few children appear interested, stop and re-evaluate.
Supporting the Interests of Boys, continued

“Observe children, and start compiling a list of fiction and nonfiction books you can use to introduce new topics to your classroom — and maybe even to yourself!”

Be sure to include fiction and nonfiction books. When we introduced the topic of dinosaurs to our class, we read aloud *Dinosaur Roar*, by Paul and Henrietta Stickland, and encouraged the children to reenact the story. The children used the pictures from the book and some plastic dinosaurs to hypothesize how each dinosaur might have moved. There are lots of other books on dinosaurs that are charmingly illustrated and playful, yet informative. Observe children, and start compiling a list of fiction and nonfiction books you can use to introduce new topics to your classroom — and maybe even to yourself!

*Expect to change the room arrangement for most boy-generated interests.* Many interests typical of preschool boys include big body movement. You’ve certainly observed the superhero play and the karate kicks. In order to make the classroom safe for everyone, you might consider rearranging your room to open up space and support this large-motor need in boys.

Sometimes these boys’ interests create a demand for entirely new areas of the classroom. If you haven’t already, try creating a construction area in your classroom to support the interest of the boys (and girls) in using tools. The children can begin with hammering pieces of soft wood (pine) or Styrofoam. As they become experts, they can graduate to screws and screwdrivers, sand paper, hand crank drills, and small hand saws. You don’t need to reconfigure your whole classroom. In fact, don’t! Just create a space where you can place these items on a secure table.

Consider adding a table close to the art area so children may also access glue, paint, cardboard tubes, or other recyclable materials. Store and label the materials as you would in any other part of the classroom. And remember: safety first!

Of course, changes to the classroom arrangement need not be permanent. After a site visit to the boat dealership, we brought in sleds that served as pretend boats. The house area was the only available space big enough for the three large “boats.” Boat play began to take over both the house area and the block area. We moved the large table out of the house area for a week and the one small group that usually used that table agreed to meet on the floor for a while.

Our *goodness of fit* discovery was that the children were more flexible in accepting a room change than were some of the adults! This additional space meant that big body movement in the big boats, such as rolling and rocking back and forth and side to side, was supported, not banned.

At the same time, we made sure that we didn’t overcompensate by encroaching on the interests of the children who typically played in the house area. We continued
to call the space the house area, and the ordinary house area materials remained — children just had a few additional choices for a while. In this case, the classroom changes lasted for a short period of time; after a couple of weeks, children began asking where to take babies and food for their birthday party, and we observed that interest in boats had waned and been replaced by other forms of pretend play. We simply removed the boats and moved the table back to the house area.

But that didn’t mean the end of boats in the classroom entirely. Based on the children’s interest, we decided to leave the books about boats in the book area for a while, and to leave the boat-making materials in the art area because a few children were still investigating floating and sinking with Styrofoam creations in the water table.

**Incorporate boys’ interests in large-group planning.**

For every topic of interest to boys, there are activities that everyone can enjoy, whether or not they’re particularly interested in dinosaurs or construction or superheroes or whatever it may be. And who knows? These large-group activities may be the first exposure a child has to a topic she might never have known she was interested in! (See this issue’s Classroom Hints article for an expanded discussion of this strategy.)

**Supporting Adam’s Interest in Boats**

Here’s how we used the strategies above to support the interests of Adam and his classmates.

*During our team planning that day, we concluded that the interest in boats was high, and we could capitalize on this by introducing boats and other related materials to our classroom. First, we listed books we had or could get that had to do with boats in particular and transportation in general.*
“For every topic of interest to boys, there are activities that everyone can enjoy, whether or not they’re particularly interested in dinosaurs or construction or superheroes or whatever it may be.”

Satisfied that we had the first piece of our planning puzzle, we remembered that there was a nearby dealership where the children could experience real boats. Sandy volunteered to pay the dealership a visit to talk to the manager about what children might experience on a field trip. The dealership manager offered lots of boating magazines and big posters of shiny, colorful boats to take back to the classroom. Sandy suggested that the children might want to try on life vests, get into a boat, try out the radio, and hear the sound of the engine. She also told the manager they would be measuring the length and height of the boat. The manager was excited, and offered water skis and other flotation devices for the children to try on. Sandy also noticed a lot of numbers and words on the boats and decided that bringing clipboards with pencils on strings and lots of paper would be a good idea. Tape measures, rulers, and yardsticks would also be helpful. The field trip was set.

The next step was planning how to extend the field trip. We kept the HighScope KDI’s front and center as we planned, to be sure that all of the curriculum content would be supported. We made a list of materials we could bring in to the classroom: life vests, real pictures of boats, plastic boats, boating magazines, and posters from the dealership.

We started thinking about small-group ideas to follow up with after the field trip: making individual boats out of Styrofoam, aluminum foil, and popsicle sticks; reading books related to boats; and, of course, eating a boat made of celery and cream cheese.
Planning and recall were on our minds too. Tracing around a toy, using our rubber vehicle counters on area signs, and graphing who worked with boats and which boats were favorites were some of our initial ideas.

By week two, the children were taking their boat play out to the playground. We found huge boxes that could be painted and fashioned into makeshift boats. What other play could we anticipate? Reenacting Who Sank the Boat, by Pamela Allen, was already a favorite. Perhaps we could take some props outside and give it a try — even if it was cold and snowy!

Three weeks of learning that encompassed all of the KDIs proceeded in February, in central Virginia during a cold winter, because we kept supporting the interests of all of the children, particularly the boys.

This is so often the case: Supporting one interest of the boys in your classroom leads not only to fun, active learning opportunities for all of the children, but generates other ideas for further exploration.

Let the children be your guide in creating your goodness of fit.

References


About the Authors

Sandy Slack (at left) began her long career in early childhood education as a Head Start lead teacher. After earning a master’s degree in early childhood special education from George Washington University, she began a 30-year career with Lynchburg (Virginia) City Schools. In 1991 she became an endorsed HighScope Curriculum Trainer and HighScope Field Consultant. Sandy spearheaded the first inclusion placements for children with disabilities in a local preschool program. HighScope has published several of Sandy’s articles on a variety of early childhood topics.

Gerin Martin (at right) earned her bachelor’s degree from Radford University in human growth and development, with a concentration in day care teaching and administration. She taught pre-kindergarten in a private early childhood program in Lynchburg, Virginia, for seven years. During this time Gerin became an endorsed HighScope teacher and was the first teacher to collaborate with Lynchburg City Schools to establish an inclusive classroom for preschoolers with disabilities. Gerin received a master’s degree from Lynchburg College in early childhood special education and is currently employed by Lynchburg City Schools as a special educator, supporting preschoolers with disabilities in community placements.
Oftentimes, boys’ interests lead to activities that are enjoyable and beneficial to everyone in the classroom. At one large-group time, our entire class enjoyed stomping like dinosaurs, imagining how dinosaurs might move through a swamp and stretch toward tree tops. On the other hand, when our boys began to discover guns, we had a lot of gun play going on in our room, and we were bothered by all the shooting taking place — with fingers, sticks, and every toy in the room that could be bent, connected, or shaped into a gun. Our inclination was to distract them or prevent this interest from spreading to the rest of the classroom. But instead of banning this type of play, we stuck with our strategy of supporting boys’ interests and did the opposite: we invited a police officer to visit during large-group time.

First we found some books about male and female police officers, and some pictures of officers on duty doing a variety of things like directing traffic, responding to car accidents, and walking the “beat.” Then we asked a police resource officer to visit our preschool. A few days before the police officer visited, we asked the children what they wanted to know about being a police officer. Then, we talked to Officer Johnson ourselves, and gave him a list of the children’s questions.

Visiting our room was a very different experience for Officer Johnson! He had never entertained questions from a group of children before. They wanted to know if he had a police car and would he blow the siren for them. (Yes and yes.) They asked about what he ate and at what time. And yes, they asked about his gun.

But his belt was the best part of the show. The children wanted to know what each item on his belt was for. He happily answered all of their questions, and told them that in fifteen years of service he had never once removed his gun from his holster while on duty. Of course, he added, he had to practice regularly to make sure he was prepared if he ever did have to use it. The culminating experience was hearing the siren wail in the preschool parking lot and taking turns sitting in the backseat of the patrol car.

After Officer Johnson’s visit, we brought in old belts from our closets, went to the locksmith to get old keys and key rings, and asked a dad who worked construction to bring us small blocks of wood. During work time over the next week, the children were engrossed in making walkie-talkies with wood scraps and belts with “stuff” hanging from them. Making targets and target practice were very popular activities with all the children. Speeding tickets were issued in the block area, while accidents on the train tracks or the block roads were attended by the officers on duty. Hungry police officers patronized the restaurants in the house area, and money had to be created in the art area to pay for food and fines.

As problems with over-aggressive officers came up in the classroom, we could “stop action” and talk about Officer Johnson to problem-solve more effectively. One problem we needed to...
address right away was pointing guns at other children. The children helped to set reasonable limits, outlining the shooting range with tape, drawing targets and “bad guys” to shoot at, and agreeing that loss of a child’s license was the solution to pointing a gun at children or teachers.

Officer Johnson’s visit helped us understand the power and control issues that all of the children were trying to understand. Engaging the children in problem-solving solutions helped everyone feel safe and empowered, and led to creative negotiations and child collaboration that we might not have supported otherwise.

In the end, the large-group experience with Officer Johnson resulted in a variety of play and problem-solving experiences for children at other times of the daily routine.
Highscope | Extensions

Tuning in to Boys’ Interests

By Sandy Slack and Gerin Martin

Tuning in to children – both boys and girls – can help you achieve goodness of fit in your classroom. This 70-minute workshop will help participants learn to identify child behaviors and activities and then plan for supporting these interests throughout the daily routine.

What You Will Need:
- Pieces of recycled paper – several for each participant (Opening Activity)
- Bell (Opening Activity)
- Paper and pens for each table group (Central Ideas and Practice)
- Handout of things to consider when planning around children’s interests (make from point #6, under Central Ideas and Practice)
- Chart paper (Opening Activity; Central Ideas and Practice; Application)

Objectives (5 minutes)
Tell participants that, by the end of this workshop, they will be able to identify strategies to support boys’ needs and interests in active play, such as running, jumping, kicking, and throwing.

Opening Activity (10 minutes)
Snowball Fight
1. Give each participant several pieces of recycled paper to crumple into “snowballs.” Tell them that they will be throwing snowballs at each other!

2. State the reasonable limits for throwing snowballs (e.g., throw snowballs low; when you hear the bell, stop) – and have these posted in picture form on chart paper.

3. Have participants play for two minutes, throwing snowballs at each other. Encourage participants to tune in to both their body and their brain.

4. Ask participants, “What behaviors might you have seen in your classroom for you to decide to plan a snowball fight activity?” Also ask, “Why do you think these activities appeal to boys?” Facilitate a group discussion.

Central Ideas and Practice (20 minutes)

5. Talk with participants about how, although the interests of boys and those of girls are typically different from each other, it is not always the interest in subjects such as dinosaurs, race cars, firefighters/policemen, sports, or even gun play that causes teachers to cringe; rather, it is often the actions associated with those interests that lead to a banning of the activity – actions such as running, jumping, kicking, or throwing.

Also talk about the following:
- According to a 2013 Bureau of Labor Statistics report, of the 695,000 preschool and kindergarten teachers employed across the United States, 98% of them are women. Jumping, running, throwing, and kicking typically are out of the comfort zone for women, and teachers may resist planning activities that support and even encourage such actions for fear of somebody getting hurt. Facilitate a discussion about how participants feel about jumping, running, kicking, and throwing in the classroom.
- Talk about how a boys’ interest in these big body actions is driven by brain development. Explain that the boy brain and the girl brain develop in a different sequence. One of the differences that impacts boys’ need to move – and move a lot – is the development of the cerebellum. The cerebellum is located at the base of the brain. The cerebellum is responsible for big body (gross motor) movements, balance, and posture. During the first couple of years of life, the cerebellum in both boys and girls develops rapidly. In girls, the brain tends to begin...
developing language and fine-motor centers sooner than is true for boys. In a boy’s brain, the cerebellum develops for a much longer period of time than it does in a girl’s brain. Hence, boys’ interest in movement and their need to move – a lot!

6. Encourage participants to consider each of the following when planning around children’s interests (you may also pass these out on a handout you have created):
   - What type of activities are the children engaging in?
   - What materials are they using, and how are they using them?
   - How are the children interacting with their peers and adults?
   - Is the learning environment arranged in such a way that children are able to carry out their intentions?
   - Do I need to physically modify the learning environment to accommodate children’s interests?
   - How will I plan new experiences that enhance, build on, and extend children’s interests?

7. Talk about how we need to acknowledge, support, and plan around the interests of boys, even if their interests are out of our own comfort zone. We know that when we pair children’s high levels of interest with curriculum content and continue to support those interests throughout the daily routine, we engage children in their learning at an intrinsically motivating level, yielding the greatest results and engagement.

Application (15 minutes)

8. Ask participants to remember the “snowball fight.” Explain that the “snowball fight” is an activity that appropriately supports the interest that some boys have in throwing. In their table groups, have participants identify common actions they have observed that are of interest to boys that typically cause problems. After the groups have had time to discuss, ask each group to report out, one at a time, the problematic actions they’ve discussed. The trainer will record the actions on the flip chart and continue “round robin” style until the tables have reported out all of the actions from their lists. Possible actions that trainers can expect may include (but are not limited to) throwing, kicking, jumping, punching, bumping, and running.

9. From the list of common actions generated and recorded on the chart paper, assign one action to each table group. Give each table group a piece of chart paper and markers and tell participants to brainstorm a list of activities that would support the action they were assigned and write their ideas on the chart paper. Challenge the participants to think of ideas that would support their assigned action during all parts of the daily routine. Ask the groups to hang their lists around the training room. Ask for a “reporter” from each group to present their list to the whole group.

Implementation (10 minutes)

10. Ask participants to look at the list of ideas hanging around the classroom. Then ask them to identify and choose three activities that they want to try in their classroom during the upcoming week to support the interests of boys.
Findings of the Institute of Medicine (IOM) for Early Learning

On May 7, 2015, LaRue Allen, PhD, will address the HighScope International Conference in a talk titled “The Science of Children Birth to Age 8: Deepening and Broadening the Foundation for Success.” This consensus report by the National Academy of Sciences addresses the question “How can the science of children’s development from birth through age 8 inform how we prepare a workforce to seamlessly support children’s health, development, learning, and school success?” Dr. Allen is chair of the 18-member Institute of Medicine (IOM) and the National Research Council (NRC) of the National Academies Board of Children, Youth, and Families Committee on the Science of Children Birth to Age Eight: Deepening and Broadening the Foundation for Success. The HighScope conference is one of a limited number of national opportunities to hear about the committee’s important findings from this key committee member.

The report (explained in this recorded briefing) includes findings that the latest scientific research is effectively used in setting standards for early child care programs but that the capacity, practices, infrastructure, and oversight of these programs must be more intentional. The report delivers a plan for action based on a unifying foundation of research and knowledge that will underlie more consistent and cumulative support for the development and early learning of children from birth through age 8.

Ms. Allen is Raymond and Rosalee Weiss Professor of Applied Psychology and Chair of the Department of Applied Psychology in the Steinhardt School of Culture, Education, and Human Development at New York University. She also directs the Child and Family Policy Center, which focuses on bringing social science knowledge to policymakers and practitioners concerned with children and their families.

Senior Director of Curriculum Development. Her commitment to early education began with the promise of Head Start, created when she was an undergraduate, and extends to today’s public awareness about the life-changing potential of high-quality programs for young children. Dr. Epstein has written numerous books and articles on early childhood curriculum topics, professional learning, program evaluation, and assessment, most notably The Intentional Teacher, which was published in conjunction with the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). She retires with optimism that today’s leaders will continue to advocate for active and meaningful learning experiences for young children of all backgrounds, and for the loving family members and dedicated educators who care for them.

COR for Kindergarten

COR for Kindergarten is designed to address the need for a simple and easy way to assess children enrolled in kindergarten at the beginning of the school year and to monitor each child’s progress throughout the year.

To learn more about the development of this assessment tool, please join our mailing list and we will send you a PowerPoint overview of COR for Kindergarten.

COR Advantage Approved by Florida as an Assessment Option

COR Advantage is one of four early learning pre- and post-assessments approved for School Readiness Programs by the State of Florida Department of Education. An authentic child assessment tool, COR Advantage is research-validated and can reliably serve the dual purpose of monitoring instruction and capturing program impact. It works seamlessly with the HighScope Infant-Toddler and Preschool Curriculum, both approved to meet School Readiness Program performance standards. Further, COR Advantage aligns with any School Readiness-approved curriculum. For more detail about COR Advantage and how your program can get started, please contact Karalyn Huey, Curriculum, Assessment, and Training Supervisor, at khuey@highscope.org, or call 800.587.5639, Ext. 237.
New From HighScope Press — Let’s Play and Learn Together!
All teachers know that learning doesn’t have to stop when children leave school for the day! The 30 preschool activities in this book are designed to help children and their families keep active participatory learning going at home as well. Whether at parent meetings or other times, you can offer family members copies of the activities along with tip sheets, all of which can be photocopied from the book or printed from the accompanying CD.

The activities are grouped into five categories:
1. Art, Music, and Movement
2. Language, Literacy, and Communication
3. Physical Development and Healthy Habits
4. Math, Science, and Technology
5. Myself and Others

Each activity in this book lists the corresponding assessment item from COR Advantage; materials and their cost; the “mess” factor; learning experiences provided; step-by-step instructions; tips and strategies; and suggestions for special needs. This book, which is part of the Teachers’ Idea Series, is also available in Spanish. Look for it at highscope.org in May.

Professional Learning Opportunities at HighScope This Summer
Ongoing learning is essential to providing high-quality services to children and families. Join us this summer for a week-long workshop. HighScope courses apply the same principles of active learning to training adults that teachers use in the classroom with children. Register at highscope.org/training or call 800.407.7377.

Two new sessions this year include
• “I Want All the Turns!” Tools for Conflict Resolution and Bullying Prevention
• Best Practices for Coaching Teachers

Other sessions to choose from include
• Introduction to the HighScope Curriculum for Infants and Toddlers
• Introduction to the HighScope Curriculum for Preschool Teachers: Basic Principles and Strategies
• Promoting Key Developmental Indicators (KDIs) During Small-Group Time

• COR Advantage
• Preschool Program Quality Assessment (PQA)

CEEE Annual Conference — Save the Date
The 4th Annual Conference for Early Childhood Research and Evaluation will be held on October 16, 2015, in Ypsilanti, MI. This year’s theme is Assessing Children’s Progress in Early Education and Intervention: Challenges and Innovations in Diverse Contexts. Contact Carol Markley at cmarkley@highscope.org and watch highscope.org/2015CEEEconf for details.

Michigan’s Great Start to Quality Assessment Component Transitioned to HighScope
The Center for Early Education Evaluation (CEEE) at HighScope now administers the Program Quality Assessment (PQA) for Michigan’s state-run preschool assessment program. In January 2015, the Early Childhood Investment Corporation (ECIC) established a partnership with HighScope to support the assessment component of Great Start to Quality, Michigan’s tiered quality rating and improvement system for child care and preschool programs. As part of this partnership, HighScope is responsible for the hiring, training, and monitoring of assessors conducting the PQA, a series of tools developed by HighScope, for Great Start to Quality. The goal of this partnership is to strengthen and maintain the integrity of the assessment component of Great Start to Quality. CEEE, the research and evaluation arm at HighScope, will administer and oversee the transition and implementation.

Tomoko Wakabayashi, EdD, Director of the CEEE at HighScope, states, “We have a regular communication system in place with ECIC, and have our best staff working on the transition and implementation. We have been able to transition the contracts of an experienced assessment coordinator and assessment specialists from ECIC to continue their respective roles with us. The CEEE is known to maintain objectivity as researchers, and we’re excited that we may have the opportunity to make suggestions to the process as well as adjustments to the PQA tools based on data we help collect.”

Look for us at this upcoming conference!
June 7–10 NAEYC PDI, New Orleans, LA