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happen eventually. When it does, it will lay the foundation for the children's ability as adults to set goals, stick to them until they have been achieved, and work through problems and obstacles that may arise.

Continuing to reflect on work-time experiences after recall

Discussion of work-time activities does not necessarily end with recall time; children often continue to talk about their experiences at snack, small-group time, outside time, or whatever segments of the daily routine are left. Children will also talk about meaningful work-time events at home with their parents and family, long after recall time has ended. When children return to school the following day, they may continue the play episode they were previously involved in or a similar one. They may reflect back on how they set up their activity, what materials they used, and what problems arose. They may then base their new activity on their experiences, choosing to modify or extend their play.

How to Support Children During Recall Time

As with planning time, adults take on a supportive role during recall, using various props, games, and strategies to encourage children to describe their work-time experiences. The examples given earlier demonstrate some of the ways you can support children during recall time, including repeating what children say, asking open-ended questions directly related to what they talk about, and interpreting their gestures. This section will describe in more detail several adult support strategies that will help make recall time more meaningful for both you and the children. Although the purposes of planning, work, and recall time are different, you will probably notice many similarities between the recall support strategies discussed here and the ones previously suggested for planning and work time.

Provide children with interesting props and games

Most children are very excited about having a chance to tell everyone in their group what they did at work time or to show something they made. Many children are also interested in listening to others describe what *they* have done, but depending on their developmental levels and their involvement in the work-time experience being discussed, children may or may not be able to wait through other children's descriptions.

One way to actively involve all children in recall time so that they do not get restless while sitting and listening to others is to provide interesting props and games (for example, having old phones for children to "call" you and discuss their experiences, or singing a chant in which one child at a time is named and gets to recall next). Such activities help hold children's interest while they wait their turn to recall, and recall then becomes a fun time that children look forward to.



An element of mystery in this recall game helps keep children interested in the recall process. Each child retrieves an object from the bag and guesses who played with it at work time.

While it's important to keep recall time exciting and interesting with a variety of activities, occasionally the group may get carried away with the novelty of a prop or game and lose sight of the main purpose for recalling. For example, children may be more interested in playing with the provided props or in playing the recall game than in actually telling what they did at work time. Keeping in mind children's need to explore materials and objects that are new to them, consider introducing new props at other times of the daily routine so that children will not spend planning or recall time simply exploring the materials. Keeping the games simple and straightforward will also ensure that the focus remains on the purpose at hand.

Most planning games and experiences can also be used for recall, with only small modifications necessary. As we will discuss later, however, in general the planning and recall experiences on any particular day should be different. Ideas for planning and recall activities will be discussed in detail in Chapter 7.

Ask children open-ended questions

Begin recall discussions with a general, open-ended question, such as "What did you do during work time?" or "Would you like to tell me (us) what you did at work time today?" After a child has had a chance to respond, consider

asking more specific questions about the experience the child has described. Questions should be asked sparingly and only to more fully understand the child's experience. For example, try to avoid questions that focus on trivial details ("What color dress did you have on?" "What shape were the blocks you used?") unless they are relevant to the conversation or the play experience. Instead, ask questions that encourage children to talk about the discoveries they made, how their work-time experiences related to their original plans, or how they solved a problem they encountered. Questions beginning with "How did you . . . ?" "What happened after . . . ?" or "Why, do you think, . . . ?" encourage children to use language in new ways to construct meaning. These types of questions will also elicit much more detailed and thoughtful responses from children. Such responses give you a better understanding of how children are thinking.

Take a look at the following recall-time interactions, in which the adults ask questions to gain more information about the children's experiences at work time. Notice that, although the adults encourage the children to expand on their descriptions, the conversations are fairly brief.

Samantha: *Would you like to tell me what you did today at work time, Tomas?*

Tomas: *I played at the "take-apart table."*

Samantha: *Can you tell me what you did at the take-apart table?*

Tomas: *I took apart the telephone!*

Samantha: *Oh! How did you take apart the telephone?*

Tomas: *I used the screwdriver and those things over there.*

Samantha: *Can you show me "those things"?*

Tomas: (Goes to the shelf and returns with a pair of pliers.)

Samantha: *Oh, you used the pliers. (Pauses to let Tomas speak, but he doesn't.) Did you find anything interesting inside the telephone once you took it apart?*

Tomas: *Yeah. There were a bunch of wires and metal things and stuff like that.*

Samantha: *I wonder what all of that is for.*

Tomas: *So people can call each other up and talk and stuff!*



Using props and having children recall with a partner are ways to enable all children to participate actively in sharing their experiences.

Kathy: *What did you do during work time, Suki?*

Suki: *I used the train.*

Kathy: *The one in the block area or toy area?*

Suki: *The block area, and I made a track for the train to go on and a train station, too.*

Kathy: *Oh, what did that look like?*

Suki: *Well, the track went like this (uses her finger to draw an imaginary track in the air), and the station went like this. (Again, she uses her finger to "draw" a train station in the air. She makes what appear to be peaks on the rooftop.)*

Kathy: *How did you make this part of the train station? (Imitates the movement Suki made to indicate the peaks on the rooftop.)*

Suki: *I put a long block on the top for the roof, then I put the triangle blocks on top of that to make this part. (Again, she "draws" the top of the train station.)*

Listen to children's responses

Too often when we ask children questions, we appear to be paying attention but our thoughts are actually elsewhere. Perhaps we're thinking of the next question we're going to ask in order to keep the recall conversation going; maybe we're silently planning ahead to the next activity; or we may be focused on the actions of other children in the recall group. Make a conscious effort to focus solely on what the children are saying, and resist the temptation to let your mind wander or become distracted. Not only does this show respect for the children, it also helps you respond appropriately to what has been said.

It's also important to understand that children are still mastering their recall skills and that it may take some time for them to respond to your initial question or statement about what they did. Because recall may take extra time with children who are new to the process, you may be tempted to bombard them with questions in order to trigger their memories of what happened at work time. Give children plenty of time to think back to their experience, form a mental image of what happened, and then express that image through words or actions.

Repeat or rephrase what children say

This strategy, mentioned in the previous chapter on work time, conveys the message that you are genuinely interested in what children are saying. Repeating or restating children's recall accounts also encourages children to expand or elaborate on their experiences in whatever way is important to them. Here are some examples of how this strategy might be used during recall time.