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Abstract: High Scope in Family Daycare/Childminding

High/Scope was founded in 1962 by Dr. David P Weikart as a quality approach to early childhood education. The High/Scope approach is used in early years settings in over 20 countries. It requires no special equipment, materials or environment and is based on 40 years of longitudinal research and practice.

The results of research studies show how the High/Scope Approach to pre-school education produces lasting benefits for children, families and society. The following examples are specific findings from the research studies:

- increased social responsibility
- increased chance of higher economic status
- improved educational performance
- increased commitment to relationships.

An overall conclusion from the research is that children across cultural and socio-economic backgrounds and of varying abilities benefit from the High/Scope Approach.

The approach centres on the recognition and support of unique differences in children and develops self-confidence by building on what they can do.

The key principles of High/Scope are that children learn best when:-

- They have active involvement with materials and ideas
- They plan and carry out activities of their own choosing and reflect on them
- Their work is supported by adults who share control with children

The High/Scope Approach gives children a head start into education, it enables them to become independent, solve problems and make decisions using their initiative. It helps them create skills, recognises the uniqueness of children, and develops their self-confidence by building on what they can do.

In High/Scope programmes adults are as active in the learning process as children. A mutual give-and-take relationship exists in which both groups participate as leaders and followers, speakers and listeners. Adults interact with children by sharing control with them, focusing on their strengths, forming genuine relationships with them, supporting their play ideas, and helping them resolve conflicts. Adults participate as partners in children's activities rather than as supervisors or managers. They respect children and their choices, and encourage initiative, independence, and creativity. Because adults are well trained in child development, they provide materials and plan experiences that children need, to grow and learn.

High/Scope and childminding [family day care] are a natural combination. High/Scope recognises the special relationship that childminders have with children and sees the home as the natural setting for active learning.

Sylvia Moore a Registered Childminder in Northern Ireland reflects on the training course “High/Scope in Family Day Care Childminding Setting”:-

“I was first introduced to High/Scope 13 years ago when looking for a Pre-school placement for my eldest son Christopher. A local playgroup has just begun using this teaching method, and so have all three of my children begin their education this way, I was delight as a childminder, to be awarded a place on this High/Scope course. My High/Scope training has changed my whole approach to educating children both as a parent and as a childcare provider. The most important change in my setting has been the role of the adult in children day-to-day learning. I believe if the High/Scope approach of shared power between adult and child is maintained it will create a positive learning environment within which the child’s self-confidence will grow thus allowing them to reach their full potential. As most of our child minded children spend a large part of their day with us we have a huge responsibility as “what we are our children become.””

NICMA – the Childminding Association is a membership organisation and charity working to promote and develop quality home-based childcare across the whole of Northern Ireland for the benefit of children, families and communities. It is the sole organisation representing childminders in Northern Ireland with 74% of registered childminders as members.