Planning and Recall Time Strategies

This idea will work for either planning time or recall. I also have used toy microphones that echo when spoken into. I pretend to be a TV news reporter that has come into the classroom. I state where I am reporting from (name of school or center), my name & who I am interviewing. I refer to the children as Miss Jackie Jones or Mr. John Jones. This will get the giggles going & keep their attention as the feel like they are being addressed as "Grown-ups". When I begin to interview I say, "Mr. Jones, can you tell us what you did at work today?" then I place the microphone over to the child to respond. Some children will talk away into that mike & name everything & everywhere they were. Others will give a reply such as "The block area" so then I will pretend to not understand & ask," what is in the Block area to work with?" If I get a one word answer such as 'Blocks', I’ll again ask," What did you do with the blocks today?" or "What did you construct with the blocks today?" I keep asking questions as if I don’t understand & am inquiring for a news show. When the child is done, I ask the child, "Who should I interview next?" & they pick the person who goes after them. They children really have a hoot with this.

Wearing Leaves:

For planning during our fall unit, I purchased some inexpensive laminated leaves, punched holes in the middle, and attached yarn. I asked each friend to look through the leave and choose where they wanted to work during center time, and they absolutely loved it. Later in the day, some children actually brought back their leaves and looked through them again. They each got to keep the leaves I made too, so that made them excited!

For planning and reviewing, we use blocks to plan (any type). as they tell their plan the child will add a block to the tower, castle or whatever you choose to name it. as they review they will remove a block and put it back in the center or bucket. be sure to build in a place where the building will be out of the way.

During Review time break up into two or three groups depending on the amount of adult help. Then each group gets a magic stick. (A pencil with a feather as the eraser) One child holds the magic stick while saying, “Magic Stick Magic Stick Tell us were you have played today.” Then when the child is finished they turn in a circle and then pick one of their friends to share.

This is an idea I have just started. At planning time each student is given a bread tag (not the twist tie kind). The student tells me where he/she is going and what will be done at that area. The student brings the tag and puts it on the hook by the area title and description. The tag moves around as the student does. As we review the activities, the student picks the one area most enjoyed that day or where the majority of time was spent. We take the child’s bread tag and place it on a graph and compare more/fewer to determine the most popular area of the day.

One of my students favorite planning activities is using flashlights to plan. We close the blinds and turn out the lights. We tiptoe to the area that we are going to play in and shine our light on it. Another activity that they really enjoy is when I allow them to choose what they plan with. I will pick someone who has been exceptionally good and ask them to choose an item that they would like to plan with. They usually come up with something that I had never thought of planning with!

There are some great ideas for planning on this site. I’m going to give you an idea that has to do with purchasing the area you’d like to work in. The teacher has a cash register and objects from each area. At planning time the teacher will hand out play money and as she hands out the money will say, "Tommy here’s some play money for planning and you’ll be first, Sally here’s some play money and you’ll be second", and so on. (When the children are told who they will be after or told the order of when is their turn they tend to be patient when waiting their turns). So after everyone gets their money the teacher asks the first child what area would you like to purchase and as they get that area they exchange the money like if they were really at a store and then ask them what will they be working with at this area. I work in an ESE Mainstream model and this planning activity really keeps the child’s attention and it’s very motivating.

One I use for planning is to use a microphone. I start by pretending to be a disk jockey welcoming the students to my planning time. I chose a student who plans his/her area. that student takes over and chooses another student until each has a turn. the students really love it!

Take pictures of all the children in your classroom, and place them on felt pieces or refrigerator magnets. Have the pictures of each of the areas on either a felt board or a magnet board. The child can move the picture of him/herself to the area they would like to work.
Planning cans (I love to recycle) Use empty Pringles containers and place each picture of the area on the individual cans that you have saved. Using the pictures of the child that you have taken and placed on felt have them drop the picture of themselves into a can when planning.

Toddlers/preschoolers Using a Storytelling Apron. This can be ordered from toy catalogues. You can place the pictures of the areas on the apron (place Velcro behind the pictures) or you can place the pictures of the toys that are being set out that day on the Apron. Have pictures of the children on anything that Velcro can be put on and plan.

Use a pop up tent at planning and recall time. The children snuggle inside the tent and make and share their plans with each other keeping them a special secret from me, as I have to guess their plan at recall time. At recall time we all go inside the tent and I guess what each child planned to do, using observations from work time. When I guess correctly the children are amazed and are eager to recall their plan. This is very exciting for the children and also a great way of encouraging children to talk to each other and support one another.

I have been Directing a school-age High/Scope program for the past 8 years and we have done many of the strategies that have been listed. We have also had the children “mail” their plan. A staff member made a mailbox and then they would mail to the letter to the teacher. We have played Charades and have the Older children “Rap” their plans. They like to compose a song and find it fun to rhyme. We have thrown a ball of yarn to the area and then the next person goes to that area and tapers the string down and throws the ball of yarn to their space and at the end it makes a spider web. Tape Recording your plan is fun and the children love to hear their own voices. It does get challenging at times to be creative so thanks for having these types of forms of communication. Gina

While focusing on learning numbers and counting we will count how many steps it takes to get to the center the child wishes to work in first.

At the beginning of the year, we had children go around the room and find a toy from a center and bring it back to a teacher to tell what he/she would do with it in the selected center. Later, we paired the children and had them select a toy and tell each other what they would do. At first we chose children who were already friends and comfortable with each other. Later, we began to pair children who did not usually play together. Our children who speak Spanish were together at first. Later, we had them work with children who speak English. A teacher sat with them and interpreted as needed.

Each child took off one shoe and placed it in a pile. Then as we went around the circle the children found their shoe, put it on and then told of the “work” they had done for the day. Within time each child learned how to tie their shoes :o)

Place little circles of Velcro in each of the play areas. Make hearts out of old file folders, one for each child, and laminate. Put little circles of Velcro hook on the back of the hearts and the child’s name on the front. At planning time the child puts his heart in the area he plans to work in. At review the child must remember where their heart was placed and tell what “work” they did in that area. Thus the name “FOLLOW YOUR HEART”.

For planning time my children enjoy: 1. use a hula hoop and sing “Hi ho, hi ho it’s off to work we go, hi ho, hi ho, hi ho... when the song is done, the child who is closest to the tape marked on the hula hoop is asked by the teacher “where would you like to work today” 2. Remember, “one potato, two potato, three potato four... we do this game with one fist in and who ever is out, chooses where they want to work 3. I spy is fun 4. hot potato with a bean bag 5. name tag find- all the children’s name tags are in a bucket the teacher picks out a name and asks the child to choose somewhere to work.

For planning time, I have my children roll out large foam dice. They count the number of spots on the dice and then state their plan. AS the year progresses, the children count out the correct number of manipulatives to match the number on the dice before stating their plan.
A planning idea I used which the children love is to get a large Hula hoop. Mark off a spot with colored tape. Gather your small group around the hoop. Sing this song (make up your own tune)

"Round and round and round we go, and where it stops no one knows. One, Two, Three.

Where ever it stops, that child gives you a plan. Continue until all children have planned.

My Pre-K kids have been interested in animals lately and we had the best time pretending to be animals as we planned. For example, one child was a lion and got on all fours and told us his plans in a growly voice. It was great fun!

After 'playing around' with riddles for some time, we asked the children to make a riddle about where they plan to work. We all try to guess what area that child plans to work in. Fun!

Questions and Answers about Planning

1. What if a child does not tell you his plan?

Sometimes it's because he does not know what materials are available, the name of the area, or both. Let him go and stand in the area or bring an object from the area with which he wants to work. Talk to him about the area, object, and its attributes.

2. What about the child who knows the area name but not what he wants to do?

Let him bring an object from the area or go with him to the area and help him make his plan.

3. What if a child says, "I don't know what to do," or "I don't want to do anything?"

This is where the teacher acts as a model. There are reasons for planning--it is not simply busy work. A teacher can tour areas with the child, suggest activities from her knowledge of the child's interests, model a plan by saying "Today I plan to go to the Art Area. Would you like to come with me?"

4. What about the child who challenges you with "I am not going to make a plan?"

The routine is set up to give the child direction and should be used in that way. A child should not begin Work Time without first considering at least where he wants to go. If he isn't ready to begin the process, he could be given more time for deciding and could be given a quiet activity until he is ready.

5. What can I do with children who always plan to go to the same area?

Some children go repeatedly to one area because they are more visually aware of that area or are more comfortable there. Help them discover other areas. The teacher can put out materials in another area which are similar to the ones he always works with--cars and trucks in the Quiet Area. The teacher can plan Small Group Time activities using materials with which the child usually doesn't work. She can help him plan to use what he always uses in a different way--"Instead of making a house with the blocks, what else could you do with them?"

6. What about the child who has an unrealistic plan?

The teacher has a special obligation to the child who is unrealistic in his planning. The plan is discussed in such a way that the child sees that some parts of it are realistic and others are not. The activity can be altered so that the basic idea remains the same but the means change. For example, making a real fire truck can become a trip to the fire station, constructing a toy-sized fire truck from blocks or tinkertoys, or making a fire truck from cardboard boxes or wood pieces.

7. Can a child make more than one plan at a time?

Some children are able to plan a sequence of related activities and carry them out; other children need to make one plan at a time. Both types of plans require support and extension by the teacher by praising and broadening the child's involvement.

8. What do you do for a child who plans to work in one area but goes to another instead?
The child might not understand the idea of planning. He may think that all he has to say are "the right words" to the teacher and that once he has said them he is able to go on his way. In addition, his plan may have had nothing to do with what he actually wanted to do. Help the child rethink his plans as he works in an area. Talk with him about what he is doing so that he will begin to associate planning and doing.

10. What if a child gets to the area he planned for but doesn't do anything there?

Usually the child can't locate the materials he needs; the materials or space he needs are already being used by other children; or he finds what he needs but can't figure out what to do next. The teacher can help him find the materials he needs, she can help him find alternative materials or space, or she can encourage him to figure out the next step in carrying out his plan.

**HIGH/SCOPE PLANNING TIME STRATEGIES** **most can be used or revised to use at recall time**

1. Binoculars: Children look for areas they want to work in.

2. Umbrella: Get under large, colorful umbrella to plan (It's raining, it's pouring; Danny is planning...) and/or make up other songs and rhymes to sing under the umbrella.

3. Telephones: Children talk to one another about their plans.


5. Planning Train: Children form a train and move through work areas "getting off" train at areas they want to work in.

6. See #5 and instead of a train, try some of these instead: Planning Airplane, Planning Boat, Planning Helicopter, Planning Bus, etc.

7. Pretend to be animals of choice and move to areas like the animal would (hop like a rabbit, etc).

8. Pass the bean bag (Child plans, then tosses it to another child to plan).

9. Puppets: Everyone has a puppet to plan with. Some children may want their puppets to talk; others may not. Just let them do it their way.

10. Camera: Children use a non-working real camera to take "pictures" of areas they want to work in or things they want to use.

11. Telescope: Look through telescopes (aka: paper towel rolls) through the work areas and "spot" something to do.

12. Ball: Roll a ball to a child; child plans, then rolls the ball to another child. Note: The children really love it when we use a beach ball. Variation: Children move the ball in ways of choice (roll, bounce, carry, etc) to work areas they want to work in, then rolls it or gently (hopefully!!) tosses it back to the planning group.

13. Shoot the basket: Toss a ball or a beanbag into a basket labeled with the area in which they will play during Work Time.

14. Use paper plates for "steering wheels" and "drive" through areas, parking at our Work Time destinations.

15. Patty Cake: "Patty Cake, Patty Cake, Baker's man, it is Danny's time to plan.

16. Planning board: Make a planning board by drawing the floor plan with area sign symbols drawn on each work area on a sheet of poster board, then laminate it.

The planning board can be used in many ways:

**Children can trace their signs on a piece of note paper and tape it to the area of choice.

***"Drive" small cars to areas of choice.

**Use other small things with the planning board (such as plastic bugs and children's sign "game-pieces" made by drawing their sign on a milk-jug top or other kind of lid).
I'm sure you can think of many other ways to use the planning board. A planning board is good to use at the beginning of the year because it helps children learn the work areas.

17. Planning Cloth: Using a square, vinyl tablecloth, draw the floor plan of your class-room then the area symbols on each area. My favorite ways to use the Planning cloth are:

**children can walk on it and stand in the area they want to work in.

**toss a bean bag to areas of choice

18. Individual Planning mats: Draw floor plans on pieces of construction paper and laminate them. Have enough for everyone in the group to have one. My children's favorite way to use these is to "drive" small cars to the areas of choice. We have also used checkers, sticky notes, bugs, rubber fishing worms, and other small items on these mats. These individual mats are one of our favorite ways of planning.

19. Sheet tent: Drape a sheet over a table and plan under it. Take a flashlight under the "tent" and let children hold it when they're planning.

20. Spin the bottle: Take turns spinning a bottle. The child who the bottle top points to plans, then spins the bottle for the next child's turn.

21. Use walkie-talkies to talk about plans.

22. Child plans, then tosses a bean bag gently toward the work area of choice.

23. Children move a beach ball in assorted ways of choice to the work areas they want to work in (move it by rolling it with a foot, toss it, push it with your head, whatever they think of).

24. Children move in ways of their choice to their planned activities (baby steps, giant steps, hop, skip, walk backwards, etc).

25. Using markers, crayons, or pencils, children make drawings of their work plans, then talk about their drawings.

26. Draw work plans on chalkboards using chalk.

27. Planning wheel: have small versions of work area sign pictures arranged on a circular piece of laminated poster board or card board with lines separating the pictures (like pie sections). Attach a spinner of some sort in the middle and the children turn the spinner to work areas of choice.

28. "I Spy" game. Describe a child by hair color, clothing color, girl or boy, etc. When the child is guessed, he/she plans. Repeat until all have planned. After the children know the game, let them do the "spying."

29. Child describes something he is going to use at work time and the others try to guess what is being described.

30. Musical instruments: choose an instrument from the box. Play it and plan. Some children may want to sing their plan to their music.

31. Color cube (a hand-made cube that you have made using a different color on each side of the cube. A plastic photo cube works good for this).

Some ways to use the cube are:

A. Roll the cube and then plan.

B. Roll the cube, name the color, then plan.

C. Roll the cube, then find something in the work area of choice of the same color the cube landed on.

32. Talk into a paper towel tube or a paper cup about plans (each of them make different sounds). Try both of them - it's fun!

33. Child's choice: Let children choose how they want to plan. After the children become familiar with the planning/recall process, child's choice becomes a planning strategy that the children really enjoy doing. I like to use it once a week, taking turns with the children. One child can choose the planning strategy and another can choose the recall strategy, which allows children to have their turn sooner. Be sure to rotate turns with all the children.

34. Okay, this is a real favorite, but can also get the kids a little too excited in the classroom sometimes. But I love to use it anyway. Make paper airplanes for each child and let them "fly" them to areas of choice. So simple, yet so stimulating! (This is also a GREAT large group activity).
35. "Brown bear, Brown bear, Who do you see?" I see (child's name) planning with me." Variation: Use other animals or puppets instead of Brown Bear.

36. Go on a "Planning Hunt." It's like "Going on a bear hunt," but you substitute "planning" for "bear."

37. Use finger puppets to plan with. These can easily be made by attaching a cut-out to a craft stick, a drinking straw, or to a marker top. The marker top fits just right on a finger. Cut-outs from the shape cutting machine in the media center or resource center are good for this. Also, real people cut-outs from books and catalogs are great.

1. Each child states their plan—everyone repeats it.
2. Take pictures of the areas in your classroom. Children could place their name next to the picture they want to work in or place a clothes pin on the picture.
3. Make a butcher paper map of the room. Have the children use Weebies, cars, or individual pictures of themselves and place them on the area they worked in.
4. Everyone closes their eyes and have one child place their picture on the map or on the picture of a specific area then let them guess.
5. Use these props to enhance language skills: telephone, microphone, picture frame, tape recorder, toilet paper roll puppets. Have the children plan/review with these props.
6. Mystery bag—filled with the things kids used or could use to plan and review. Pillow cases, sensory boxes work well also.
7. Take a tour of the room and discuss plans.
8. Use sight words for the areas.
9. Have the teacher draw or write what the children say; so the group can all see it.
10. Imitate action and sing: "Sally used the blocks today—blocks today, blocks today. Sally used the blocks today and she had fun."--
11. Large path to stand on or next to. It could be a path of toys, pictures of people you played with, pictures of specific areas, etc.
12. Graph: area, object, etc. You could also use themes for the graph like paint no paint.
13. Draw planning murals on long butcher paper. Use the other side to review.
14. Tell
15. Draw a plan
16. Trace an item where the child will work/worked.
17. HighScope picture boards.
18. Show an item that you will/did work with
19. Pantomime your plan/review.
20. Use partners to plan or review. One person tells and the other listens then they switch roles. Or they can pantomime, show, draw etc. and switch roles.
21. Use a ditto showing the areas and names of areas. The children can color the appropriate area or even X out the areas they won’t use. Pictures should be very basic.
22. Make a train using chairs. The conductor asks questions about each child’s destination (Plan) or trip (review).
23. Dictate plan/review on an experience chart.
24. Someone says an area or object, if you used it you stand up or follow some other direction then you count the people standing. This is good for following directions and for when there is only one teacher.
25. Toilet paper rolls—look at the area you will work or worked in.
26. Tell a stuffed animal your plan/review and it tells us.
27. Plan/review under a table—if this does not interfere with classroom rules.
28. Plan/review under a blanket—depending on the kids you should leave a space open for them to see.
29. A Plan/Review Song sung to Are You Sleeping

What will/did you do?

What will/did you do?

At work time, At work time?

Tell us what you’ll do/you did today

Tell us what you’ll do/you did today

At work time, At work time

31. Use a car to move towards where you will play or where you played.

32. Relative positions. Who will use the farthest/closest center from the large group area.

33. Plan/review in different areas so you can look at the room from different viewpoints.
34. Use pictures of the areas. Give each child some tokens. Put tokens on pictures that you played in. Count tokens, graph.

35. Use number cards for those ready to make more than one plan. For example number one plan, number two plan, etc.

36. Go to areas or area and bring back 2, 3, 4, items you will/did work with.

37. Bring biggest/smallest thing you worked with.

38. Place objects the children will use/used on the table. Are you going to use/did you use something that was larger/smaller, thicker/thinner, rougher/smooth, lighter/heavier etc?

39. I see something game. “I see something in the art area Sally used today. Can you guess what it is?”

40. Hide objects (in a bag, in a sock, under a blanket) that you observed the children using during work time. You could describe it or have the kids feel the object and tell what they are touching. Ask the children who worked with these items.

41. Ask “Did anyone do/will do the same/different activity than yesterday?”

42. Use not statements. “Stand up if you did not work in the block area.” Have toys or center items and ask who did not use these today.

43. For recall-play back the tape recordings made during work time. Guess who is playing and what they are doing.

44. Make models out of clay, playdough of what the children used/will use.

45. Nonsense rhymes—“Oh you played with—— that rhymes with——.”

46. Encourage children to use large muscles by mimicking with exaggerated motions. For example, if Vanessa plans to paint at the easel, have the whole group pretend to paint at a very BIG easel.

47. Recall- collect toys the children used. Ask them how else could they use them?

48. Cut out toy or area pictures and back them with flannel. Have the children sequence the pictures according to where they worked 1st, 2nd, etc.

49. Have each child stand in the area they worked in/will work in or stand in an area and have others guess what each child will do/did do there.

50. Occasionally, plan and review outside the classroom.

51. Make finger puppets so they can do the talking for each child.

52. Child interviews others as to what they did/will do. Child should decide what questions to ask. A microphone prop helps.