

Planning and Recall with Older Toddlers

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Options for Planning and Recalling with Toddlers

When teachers see signs that older toddlers can participate in more formal planning and recalling, they can begin to do this in very concrete ways. This may play out in two different ways.

- Option 1 – If it is at the beginning of the year and caregivers are working with a group of children that are mostly young toddlers, use planning and recall language throughout the day (e.g., “What will you play with?” “What did you do with the blocks?” or nonverbally “Show me what you want to use.”). Over time, teachers read the toddler’s cues and see that they are beginning to understand what you are asking and can participate in these conversations verbally and/or nonverbally. Caregivers can then change the routine to regularly include planning and recall times and begin to plan/recall with the children more formally in concrete ways.
- Option 2 – If the children are of mixed ages, caregivers can do formal planning and recalling with the older toddlers in one area of the room while the other children are involved in choice time or other parts of the day. Caregivers use planning and recall language with all children throughout the day and throughout the year. As teachers read the younger toddlers cues, as in option 1 above, they can be added to the group and included in the concrete planning and recall strategies.

Planning Scaffolding Chart

Planning: Children make plans and decisions, and express choices and intentions through gestures, one or two words or simple sentences based on their interests.

Scaffolding Chart Always support children at their current level.		
Earlier	Middle	Later
<p><i>Children may</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wonder around and choose something they see. • May choose a material but quickly chooses something else. 	<p><i>Children may</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead caregiver or point to what they want to use or play with. • Say the area they want to play in. • Make a plan and then do something else. 	<p><i>Children may</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name the area where they plan to play and name one or two materials. • Plan to work with the same materials or repeat the same activities with no variation day after day. • Begin to carry out their plan but then move to other areas or activities.
<p><i>To support children's current level, adults can</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe children's actions and the choice they make (e.g., "Oh, you decided to play in the block area and use the cars.") • Describe children's choices (e.g., "You were going to play with the blocks and now you are going to play with the baby doll.") 	<p><i>To support children's current level, adults can</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add words to children's gestures (e.g., "You're going to play in the art area.>"). • Comment on where children play and what they do (e.g., "You're going to the book area." "You're going to do the animal puzzle instead of looking at a book.>"). • Label the new plan and suggest children say the label at planning time (e.g., "You're playing with blocks. Next time, you could say 'blocks' when you make your plan.>"). 	<p><i>To support children's current level, adults can</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask if there are other materials children might need to carry out their plans. • Accept children's plans for repeated use of materials and actions. Provide opportunities to combine materials in new ways at group time with materials. • Acknowledge the changed plan and ask children what their new plan is.

Reflection Scaffolding Chart

Reflection: Children use their immediate experiences to draw conclusions about people, materials, events, and ideas. They begin to make connections between their actions and with something that they just did.

Scaffolding Ideas Always support children at their current level.		
Earlier	Middle	Later
<p><i>Children may</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nods head yes, or say they used a material when shown. • Go and get something they did not play with and say they did. 	<p><i>Children may</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Point to or show you something that they played with. • Recall a material they used or one thing they did (e.g., “Water” or “I splashed”). 	<p><i>Children may</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recall on thing they did with some detail (e.g., “I played with the dolls”). • Tell something they did closely connected to the event (e.g., say the last thing they did at choice time).
<p><i>To support children’s current level, adults can</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add words to children’s gestures and actions (e.g., “Yes you did play in the house area feeding the baby doll”). • Remind children of what they did play with (e.g., “I saw you over in the toy area stacking up the cups and then they fell over”). 	<p><i>To support children’s current level, adults can</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask open-ended questions about what they used and how they used it (e.g., “You went to the block area. Tell me what you used”). • Restate and add to what the children said in a sentence (“You played in the water table and were splashing the water with your hands”). 	<p><i>To support children’s current level, adults can</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add details about what they observed children doing at choice time. • Add a time frame to what the children said (e.g., “The last thing you played with before cleanup time was the cars”).

Concrete Strategies for Planning and Recalling with Older Toddlers

The following is a list of concrete strategies for planning and/or recall that can be used with individual children and/or with your primary group of toddlers. Concrete means that children see and often touch the materials while they plan, and the materials are also in front of them when they recall. Caregivers should *not* use strategies that are more appropriate for preschoolers, such as providing abstract props (e.g., drawing, area signs only, planning/recall sheets), encouraging children to elaborate on their ideas in complex ways, or using verbal strategies alone.

1. Nonverbal pointing or touching (Planning and/or recall)
 - Children point to an area. Adult models planning (recall) language by describing where the children are pointing.
 - Children point to or touch an object in an area. Adult models planning (recall) language by describing what children are pointing to.
2. Get a toy (Planning and/or recall)
 - Children bring something they plan to (or did) play with to the table. Each child tells what he or she plans to (or did) do with the object.
 - Children wrap a scarf around something they plan to (or did) play with and bring it back to the table. Each child tells what he or she plans to (or did) do with the object.
3. Purse (Planning and/or recall)
 - Children use a purse to collect something they want to (or did) play with.
4. Riding toy (Planning and/or recall)
 - Children drive a toy to the area they want to (or did) play in.
5. “Feelie” box (Recall)
 - Adult places objects that children used during work time in a box. Children take turns guessing objects by how they feel, naming the object, recalling what they did with it.
6. Boxes (Planning)
 - Adult sets out boxes of different sizes. Each child finds an object from the interest area where he or she is planning to play that fits in one of the boxes.
7. Ball (Planning and/or recall)
 - Children roll or bounce the ball into the area they want to (or did) play in.
8. Objects from areas (Planning and/or recall)
 - Adult gets items that represent each area and children choose the area they want to (or did) play in.

9. Train (Planning)
 - Children line up behind adult and pretend to be a train. Train moves around to each area where caregivers and children talk about the materials in the area. If a child plans to play in that area, he or she “gets off” the train. Then the train goes to the next area.
 - *Variation.* Instead of a train, the children pretend to move around the room on a boat, car, or truck, or they crawl, jump, etc. from one area to the next.
10. Rope (Planning and/or recall)
 - Children and adult grasp the rope and move about the room like a train; each child “gets off” at the area in which he or she wants to (or did) play.
11. Paper towel tube (Planning and/or recall)
 - “I Spy” — Child looks through the “spy glass” at the area he is going to (or did) play in.
 - *Variation:* Children use real binoculars.
12. Camera (Planning and/or recall)
 - With a pretend camera, children point and take a picture of the area where they want to (or did) play and talk about what they will (or did) do there.
13. Flashlight (Planning and/or recall)
 - Children spotlight the area they want to (or did) play in.
14. Tape measure (Planning and/or recall)
 - As the adult holds one end of the tape measure, children take turns pulling the end of the tape to the area(s) they are going to (or did) play in.
15. Tape (Planning and/or recall)
 - Children put a piece of tape on the object or area where they want to (or did) play.
17. Hats (Planning and/or recall)
 - Children take turns pulling objects (that they’ve brought from different areas of the classroom) out of a hat. As children identify the area an object comes from, the adult asks who brought that particular object and what they will (or did) do with it.
18. Mystery bag (Recall)
 - Adult gathers items that children played with and children tell what they did with them.

Logistics of Planning/Recall with Toddlers

	Informally	Formally
Planning/ Recall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brief • Intimate • One-on-one interaction • On the child's physical level • Restate, repeat or translate the child's gestures, actions or words • May occur any time of the day 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Divide toddlers into primary groups • Plan before choice time • Recall after choice time and as children make another choice • Use concrete strategies to help toddlers plan/recall
Language	Planning and recall language throughout the day: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • • • 	List some open-ended questions and language to support planning/recall with toddlers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • • • • • •
Routine	Do mini planning/recall throughout the day: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • • • • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • • • •

Implementation Plan

1. When your toddlers are ready for planning/recall, how will you begin incorporating this part of the day into their routine?

2. What strategies will you begin to use with your toddlers to help them plan/recall?