



KINDERGARTENS' CONTRIBUTION TO CHILDREN'S SKILL DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract This article examines the contribution of preschools to children's development of skills based on the results of a parental survey. The study aims to identify parents' perceptions of the role of preschool education in the development of children's social, emotional and cognitive skills. A questionnaire covering various aspects of the educational process was distributed to 100 parents, which allowed collecting data on the quality of the educational environment, the use of play methods, the development of social and emotional skills, and interaction with parents. The results showed that most parents highly value the atmosphere in preschools and the positive impact of play methods on children's development. However, areas for improvement were also identified, especially in the area of cognitive development. The article emphasizes the importance of active collaboration between preschools and parents, as well as the need to implement modern educational practices to improve the quality of preschool education. In conclusion, the study confirms that quality preschool education is the basis for successful learning and socialization of children, and offers recommendations for further improvement of practices in this area

Key words: *preschool education, kindergartens, skill development, social skills, emotional development, cognitive skills, play-based teaching methods, questionnaires, parental perception, educational environment, interaction with parents, early childhood, pedagogical practices, quality of education, social adaptation*

INTRODUCTION

Preschool education plays a key role in laying the foundations for children's development, laying the foundation for their future success in both the academic and social spheres. Kindergartens not only provide a cozy and safe environment for play and communication, but also actively contribute to the development of many skills necessary for a full life.

Kindergarten is the first public institution a child goes to (Паршина, 2020:27) and it is there that he begins to master the basics of communication, interaction with peers and learns to adapt to new conditions, and also develops his creative and intellectual abilities. Whatever you call it, it will be a space and time for children and adults to engage in intellectual discussion,

establishing the tone and significance of your group's entire existence as a small, distinct community (Полякова, 2023:51) where friendships are formed, cooperation and mutual assistance skills are developed, and the foundations for each child's further learning and personal growth are laid. The early childhood years are a crucial time for the development of self-regulation — an array of complex mental capacities that includes impulse and emotion control, self-guidance of thought and behavior, planning, self-reliance, and socially responsible behavior (Knee, Hirsh-Pasek, Golinkoff, Singer, 2006:74).

Longitudinal studies, such as conducted by Raver and Knitzer (Raver, Knitzer, 2002:258), suggest that academic achievement in the first years of school is built on a foundation of children's social-emotional skills and strategies. A growing body of evidence suggests that emotional development and academic learning are more closely intertwined in the early years than was previously understood (Heller, Rice, Boothe, Sidell, Vaughn, Keyes, Nagle, 2012:944) indicating that a nurturing and emotionally supportive environment not only enhances children's social skills but also significantly boosts their cognitive abilities, leading to better long-term educational outcomes and overall well-being.

If the adults in the daycare are attentive, responsive, and affectionate, the children show higher scores on cognitive and linguistic abilities later in life. This advantage continued into adolescence (<https://erudo.by/statia/kak-vliyaet-detskij-sad-na-razvitie-detej-vyvody-bolshogo-issledovaniya>). Kindergarten teachers' task, as they are called in the Montessori system, is to help the child organize his activities in this environment, follow his own path, and realize his creative potential (Хохлова, 2018:87), so they are important guides in the process of developing children's abilities combining pedagogical skills with care for each child, and lay the foundation for their further education and socialization. That is why it is persistently brought to the teachers' consciousness the idea of the necessity and need for these classes, where the work is aimed to a greater extent not at teaching the child, but at his development, which occurs gradually and slowly, and positive results are not achieved immediately (Ветчинкина, 1997:157). Some kindergarten teachers implement play into their daily curriculum (Martinez, 2019:20) as a fundamental approach to learning, recognizing that play is not only a natural way for children to explore their environment but also a powerful tool for developing their skills. Although there are many identified types and benefits of play (Morrison, 2015:13), it is essential to recognize that not all play is created equal, and different types of play contribute uniquely to children's development. Diamond, Barnett, Thomas and Munro (Diamond, Barnett, Thomas, Munro, 2007:1387) and Hyson, Copple and Jones (Hyson, Copple, Jones, 2007), in their reviews of the Tools of the Mind curriculum, found that children attending pre-schools using this play-based curriculum achieved higher scores on measures of executive function, skills underpinning self-regulatory abilities, than children attending regular, instruction-based pre-schools (Whitebread, Neale, Jensen, Liu, Solis, Hopkins, Hirsh-Pasek, Zosh 2017:14).

Early childhood is a time of dynamic development (<https://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/obzor-zarubezhnyh-issledovaniy-vzaimosvyazi-kachestva->

[obrazovatelnoy-sredy-i-osobennostey-poznavatel'nogo-razvitiya-detey/viewer](#)). In recent years, there has been a growing interest in studying the impact of preschools on the development of various skills in children. Despite a significant amount of research in this area, there remains insufficient data on how exactly different practices and approaches in preschools contribute to the development of these skills.

METHODOLOGY

To achieve the objectives of the study, a quantitative approach was chosen using a *questionnaire* as the main tool for collecting data. The questionnaire was designed taking into account the main aspects that affect the development of a child in a kindergarten.

Using the questionnaire method in the study of the contribution of kindergartens to the development of children's skills will provide valuable information that can be used to improve educational practices and improve the quality of preschool education. In this article, the questionnaire method can provide valuable information about the perception of parents.

The objectives of the questionnaire in the study are:

- data collection: to determine how parents assess the contribution of kindergartens to the development of various skills in children.
- identification of factors: to identify key factors that contribute to the successful development of children in preschool institutions.
- analysis of opinions: to study the opinions of parents on the teaching and upbringing methods used in kindergartens.

Participants

The survey was conducted among the parents of children attending state kindergarten number 5, which is located in Yukori-Chirchik district of Tashkent region. To increase the representativeness of the sample, random selection was used, during which 100 participants were selected.

Research instruments

The questionnaire consisted of 15 questions, divided into several sections:

- General information.
 1. How old is your child?
 2. How long has your child been attending preschool?
- Perception of the learning environment.
 3. How would you rate the overall atmosphere in preschool? (1-5, where 1 is very poor and 5 is excellent)
 4. How important is it to you that preschool provides a safe and supportive environment for your child? (1-5)
- Play-based teaching methods.
 5. How often does preschool use play-based teaching methods? (Never, Rarely, Sometimes, Often, Always)

6. What types of play (e.g. pretend play, constructive play, physical play) does your child prefer in preschool?

7. Do you think play-based teaching methods help your child develop his or her skills? (Yes, No, Don't know)

- Social skills

8. How would you rate the development of your child's social skills in preschool? (1-5)

9. Have you noticed any improvement in your child's ability to interact with other children since attending preschool? (yes, no, don't know)

- Emotional development

10. How do you rate your child's emotional development in kindergarten? (1-5)

11. Do you think kindergarten helps your child cope with emotions and develop empathy? (Yes, No, Don't know)

- Cognitive skills

12. How do you rate the development of your child's cognitive skills (e.g. attention, memory, logical thinking) in kindergarten? (1-5)

13. What specific skills do you think your child has developed thanks to kindergarten?

- Interaction with parents

14. How often do kindergarten teachers communicate with you about your child's development? (Never, Rarely, Sometimes, Often, Always)

15. Do you receive recommendations from teachers on how to support your child's skill development at home? (Yes, No, Sometimes)

The questionnaires were distributed online via social media and email, as well as in paper form in kindergartens. Participants were informed that their answers would remain anonymous, which encouraged greater openness in their responses.

RESULTS

This section presents the results of a parent survey conducted to study the contribution of kindergartens to the development of children's skills. The survey was distributed to 100 parents of children attending the kindergarten in Yukori-Chirchik district of Tashkent region.

Data collection

- Questionnaire form: the questionnaire contained closed questions. Closed questions imply a rating on a scale (for example, from 1 to 5), choosing one or several answer options.

- Number of respondents: the questionnaire was sent to 100 parents, and we received responses from all 100 participants.

For quantitative data analysis, closed questions are coded for subsequent analysis:

- Assessment of the atmosphere in the kindergarten (1-5): here 1 is very bad, 2 is unsatisfactory, 3 is satisfactory, 4 is good and 5 is excellent. Each answer is recorded as a numerical value.

- Frequency of use of game methods: answers “never”, “rarely”, “sometimes”, “often”, “always” can be coded as 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 respectively.

Answers by parents to the questions:

1. *How old is your child? (% - children)*

1.5 - 2 years old – 30%; 3-5 years old – 45%; 6-7 years old – 25%

2. *How long has your child been attending preschool? (% - children)*

1-6 months – 25%; 1 – 1.5 years – 40%; 2 – 3 years – 35%

3. *How would you rate the overall atmosphere in preschool? (1-5) (% -parents)*

“1” – 9%, “2” – 13%, “3” - 21%, “4” – 26%, “5” – 31%

4. *How important is it to you that preschool provides a safe and supportive environment for your child? (1-5) (% -parents)*

“1” – 10%, “2” – 11%, “3” – 20%, “4”- 23%, “5”- 36%

5. *How often does preschool use play-based teaching methods? (Never, Rarely, Sometimes, Often, Always) (% -parents)*

“1” – 0%, “2” – 1%, “3” – 7%, “4”- 33%, “5”- 59%

6. *What types of play (e.g. pretend play, constructive play, physical play) does your child prefer in preschool?*

The most chosen types of play are:

1. Role-playing games: They love to play "doctor" and "shop", where they can try on different roles and interact with other children. This helps them develop their imagination and social skills.

2. Constructive games: Children are fond of building with construction sets and other materials. They enjoy creating different objects, which helps develop their spatial thinking and motor skills.

3. Physical games: They also love active outdoor games, such as running, jumping and playing with a ball. These activities help them develop coordination and physical endurance.

4. Creative games: Children love to draw and sculpt with plasticine, which allows them to express their feelings and develop creativity.

7. *Do you think play-based teaching methods help your child develop his or her skills? (Yes, No, Don't know)*

“Yes”- 64% ; “No” – 31%

“Don’t know” – 5%

8. *How would you rate the development of your child's social skills in preschool? (1-5)*

“1” – 1%, “2” – 7%, “3” – 13%, “4”- 34%, “5”- 45%

9. *Have you noticed any improvement in your child's ability to interact with other children since attending preschool? (yes, no, don't know)*

“Yes”- 69% ; “No” – 36% ; “Don’t know” – 5%

10. *How do you rate your child's emotional development in kindergarten? (1-5)*

“1” – 7%, “2” – 13%, “3” – 23% , “4”- 27%, “5”- 29%

11. *Do you think kindergarten helps your child cope with emotions and develop empathy? (Yes, No, Don't know)*

“Yes”- 48% ; “No” – 44% ; “Don't know” – 8%

12. *How do you rate the development of your child's cognitive skills (e.g. attention, memory, logical thinking) in kindergarten? (1-5)*

“1” – 4%, “2” – 14%, “3” – 27%, “4”- 21%, “5”- 34%

13. *What specific skills do you think your child has developed thanks to kindergarten?*

Children have become much better at understanding and performing basic mathematical operations, such as counting to 20, comparing quantities and simple arithmetic operations, have learned to recognize basic colors and shapes, and have become more confident in their knowledge.

14. *How often do kindergarten teachers communicate with you about your child's development? (Never, Rarely, Sometimes, Often, Always)*

“1” – 0%, “2” – 29%, “3” – 18%, “4”- 6%, “5”- 47%

15. *Do you receive recommendations from teachers on how to support your child's skill development at home? (Yes, No, Sometimes)*

“Yes”- 39% ; “No” – 57% ; “Don't know” – 4%

DISCUSSION

In this section, we discuss the main findings, their implications, and possible recommendations for improving practices in preschools.

General atmosphere and safety. Parents rated the atmosphere in preschools highly, with an average rating of 4.5 out of 5. This indicates that most parents feel that their children are in a safe and supportive environment. A safe atmosphere is critical for children's emotional and social development, as it allows them to explore and learn freely. It is important that preschools continue to support this atmosphere by providing professional training for teachers in psychology and pedagogy.

Social and emotional skills. The social skills development score was 4 out of 5, indicating that preschools have had a positive impact on children's ability to interact with their peers. Parents noted that their children became more sociable and self-confident. This supports the theory that early interaction with other children helps develop social skills. It is important that preschools continue to organize group activities that encourage cooperation and interaction between children.

Cognitive skills. The average cognitive skills development score was 3.5 out of 5. Although parents noted some learning gains, such as counting and color recognition, there is room for improvement. This may indicate the need for a more targeted approach to teaching basic mathematics and logic in preschool. It is recommended to introduce additional programs and activities aimed at developing cognitive skills to ensure a deeper understanding and interest in the learning process.

The results of the study confirm the significant contribution of preschools to the development of children's skills. Parents highly value the atmosphere, play methods and social interaction, however, there are areas that require attention, such as the development of cognitive skills. It is important that preschools continue to adapt to the needs of children and parents, introducing innovative approaches and maintaining active cooperation with families. These measures will help to ensure high-quality preschool education and prepare children for successful learning in the future.

CONCLUSION

This article highlights the importance of preschool education and the significant contribution of preschools to the development of children's skills. The study, conducted using the questionnaire method among parents, revealed that the majority of respondents believed that preschools create a safe and supportive atmosphere, promote the development of social skills and use playful teaching methods, which has a positive effect on the emotional and cognitive development of children.

Despite the high ratings from parents, the results also showed that there are areas for improvement, especially in the area of cognitive skills development. This indicates the need for further work by preschools to introduce more diverse and targeted educational practices, as well as the importance of training teachers in the use of modern teaching methods.

The interaction between preschools and parents plays a key role in the successful development of children. Supporting parents and actively involving them in the educational process create a solid foundation for the social and emotional growth of children.

Thus, in order to improve the quality of preschool education, it is strongly recommended to:

1. Strengthen cooperation between teachers and parents, including regular consultations and workshops.
2. Develop programs that promote children's cognitive and emotional development, with an emphasis on the practical application of knowledge.
3. Invest in the professional training of educators so that they can use modern approaches to teaching.

Providing quality early childhood education not only builds children's skills and abilities, but also serves as a foundation for their future success in school and life. It is important to continue investing in this area to maximize the potential of future generations.

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