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DEVELOPMENT OF PRESCHOOL EDUCATION

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Abstract. This article examines the development of preschool education as a fundamental stage in human learning and personality formation. It discusses the evolution of preschool systems, pedagogical approaches, and educational standards from historical and modern perspectives. The study also highlights the significance of early childhood education in shaping cognitive, social, and emotional skills, emphasizing the role of teachers, families, and government policy in creating an effective preschool framework. Finally, it explores global trends and innovative methods that contribute to improving the quality and accessibility of preschool education in the 21st century.

Keywords: preschool education, early childhood development, pedagogy, curriculum, innovation, educational policy.

INTRODUCTION

Preschool education represents the foundation of a lifelong learning process, providing children with the first structured experience of socialization, exploration, and cognitive growth. This stage, typically encompassing ages three to six, is essential for preparing children not only for formal schooling but also for active participation in society. The philosophy of preschool education is rooted in the idea that early experiences have a profound impact on the development of personality, communication, and intellectual potential. Thus, ensuring the quality and inclusivity of preschool programs has become one of the central goals of modern education systems worldwide [1].

The historical development of preschool education can be traced back to the early 19th century with pioneers such as Friedrich Froebel, who introduced the concept of “kindergarten” as a space for nurturing creativity and self-expression through play. Later, Maria Montessori revolutionized early education with her child-centered methodology emphasizing independence, sensory learning, and freedom within structure. Today, the preschool model integrates these classical pedagogical principles with modern innovations in developmental psychology, neuroscience, and digital education.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The modern concept of preschool education is based on the recognition that the first years of life are a period of rapid physical, emotional, and intellectual growth. During this time, neural connections in the brain are formed and strengthened through interaction, play, and sensory experiences. Therefore, early education should not be limited to teaching basic literacy or numeracy; rather, it should foster holistic development, including emotional intelligence, curiosity, problem-solving ability, and interpersonal communication [2].

Effective preschool education requires a developmentally appropriate curriculum — one that balances structured activities with opportunities for spontaneous play and exploration. The role of play in early education cannot be overstated. Play acts as the child’s natural language, through which they experiment with roles, express emotions, and develop creativity. In this context, teachers serve as facilitators, observing children’s interests and guiding them toward meaningful learning experiences instead of imposing rigid instruction.

Another crucial aspect of preschool education is social learning. Preschool institutions are often the first settings where children learn to interact outside their family environment. They encounter

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diversity, share responsibilities, and learn empathy and cooperation. Social interactions help them form a sense of belonging and develop values such as respect, fairness, and teamwork. Hence, preschool teachers must be highly skilled not only in pedagogy but also in communication and child psychology, as they shape the moral and emotional fabric of future citizens.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

From an educational policy perspective, preschool development reflects the broader socio-economic priorities of a nation. Countries with strong early childhood systems, such as Finland, Japan, and New Zealand, have demonstrated that investment in preschool education yields long-term social and economic benefits. Studies consistently show that children who attend quality preschools perform better in school, exhibit fewer behavioral problems, and achieve higher success rates in adulthood. Consequently, governments are increasingly recognizing preschool education as a strategic area of public investment, not a luxury for the privileged few [3].

In many developing countries, including those in Central Asia, efforts are being made to expand preschool access and improve teacher qualifications. The introduction of inclusive education principles ensures that children with disabilities or developmental differences can learn alongside their peers. In Uzbekistan, for example, the national strategy for preschool education emphasizes accessibility, modern infrastructure, digital learning tools, and the training of teachers in child-centered methods. This approach aligns with the global movement toward equitable, high-quality early education for all.

Teacher competence stands at the heart of preschool education quality. A competent preschool educator must possess deep knowledge of child development, pedagogical creativity, and the ability to foster emotional safety. Continuous professional development is essential, as early childhood education constantly evolves with new research in cognitive science and pedagogy. Effective teachers are reflective practitioners who adapt their methods to the needs of each child, recognizing individual differences in learning pace, temperament, and communication style [4].

CONCLUSION

The development of preschool education is not merely an educational issue — it is a social investment that determines the intellectual and moral foundation of future generations. A well-structured preschool system nurtures curiosity, independence, and empathy, forming the building blocks of an innovative and tolerant society. The effectiveness of preschool education depends on a delicate balance between pedagogical theory, psychological insight, and practical implementation.

For sustained progress, nations must continue to prioritize preschool teacher training, inclusive access, and parental engagement while fostering innovation through technology and research. By recognizing the unique potential of every child and providing them with an environment rich in emotional warmth and intellectual challenge, preschool education can truly become the cornerstone of lifelong learning and human development.

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