

PEDAGOGICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS OF PLAY ACTIVITIES IN PRESCHOOL EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

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Abstract: This article analyzes the pedagogical and psychological foundations of play activities in preschool educational institutions. Play is considered a vital tool in a child's personal, social, and intellectual development. The authors highlight the use of didactic, role-playing, creative, and physical games in the pedagogical process. Special attention is given to how interactive games foster independent thinking, socialization, and moral values in children. The effective organization of play activities is emphasized as being dependent on the educator's skills and innovative approach.

Keywords: preschool education, play activity, pedagogical technology, psychological development, *Nizami Tashkent State Pedagogical University* interactive games, role-playing games, didactic games, educator, child development, play method.

INTRODUCTION

In the modern educational system, one of the urgent tasks is raising a well-rounded, creative, independently thinking, and healthy generation (G'ofurov, 2020). In this regard, the preschool stage holds a special place as this is the period when a child's personality is formed, mental processes are activated, and adaptation to the social environment begins (Karimova, 2021).

In today's globalized world, educating a harmonious, creative, and independently thinking generation remains one of the core tasks of the education system (G'ofurov, 2020). Preschool education is particularly significant in this process, as this is when the child's personality forms, mental processes are activated, and adaptation to the environment begins (Karimova, 2021). Play has an invaluable role in this process.

According to UNESCO, play activities with young children are crucial for their healthy development, socio-emotional stability, and readiness for future learning (UNESCO, 2022). Therefore, the role of play in education must be analyzed on a scientific basis.

MAIN PART

The central issue of pedagogical technology is achieving educational goals through the development of the child's personality. The key principles of pedagogical technology include guaranteed final results, effectiveness, feedback mechanisms, and clearly defined learning objectives.

Game-based technology differs from general play methods by having a specific goal, a logical sequence of processes, interrelation, and guaranteed achievement of predefined outcomes.

The structure of play includes components such as goal-setting, planning, implementation, and result analysis. The most distinctive feature of play is its creativity, often expressed through competition, rivalry, and challenge.

Research shows that play can be viewed theoretically as an activity, a process, and a teaching method.

As an activity, play includes setting a goal, planning and execution, and analyzing the outcomes. In this way, the child as a subject fully realizes their potential.

Motivation in play arises from the competitive nature of play, the desire to express oneself, and the need to fulfill one's capabilities.

As a process, the structure of play includes:

- roles taken by players;
- play actions as means of enacting roles;
- replacing real objects with symbolic ones;
- real interactions among participants;
- a conditionally created plot (content).

In any technology, including game-based ones, the learning goal must be clearly defined. For this, the educator must know what they want the child to learn. Ideally, each session should focus on one specific objective—e.g., introducing the number 3 or explaining the seasons (Yuldasheva, 2022).

In preschool education, games serve as teaching methods for passing on the experiences of older generations to the younger ones. Depending on the method, subject-based, plot-based, and dramatized games are widely used to meet educational goals.

Pedagogical essence of play activity:

From a pedagogical perspective, play is not merely entertainment but an integral part of the educational process (Elkonin, 1989). For preschoolers, games help acquire knowledge, apply it to daily life, and develop communication skills (Vygotsky, 2004). For example, role-playing games like "Shopkeeper and Customer" or "Doctor and Patient" help children adopt social roles (Piaget, 1972). Didactic games enhance logical thinking, mathematical understanding, and analytical skills (Nasriddinova, 2022).

Psychological foundations of play activity:

Psychologically, play ensures emotional stability and enhances personal development and self-awareness (Yuldasheva, 2023). Vygotsky (2004) describes play as the child's "zone of proximal development," where the child performs above their usual capabilities. Piaget (1972) considers play a key stage in intellectual development, helping the child develop synthesis and analysis skills. Elkonin (1989) emphasizes play as a means for gaining social experience and personal growth.

Types of games and their developmental functions:

Didactic games - help consolidate knowledge and skills and develop thinking (G'ofurov, 2020). For instance, games involving categorizing shapes, colors, and quantities enhance perception (Olimova, 2023).

Role-playing games allow the assimilation of social roles and modeling of relationships (Karimova, 2021), which helps in understanding social competencies and moral norms (Saidov, 2022).

Creative games develop imagination, emotional expression, and artistic abilities. Acting out stories helps develop dramatization and creative thinking (Vygotsky, 2004). Physical games promote physical development and improve agility, coordination, and quick reflexes (Preschool Education Ministry Methodical Guidelines, 2023).

Educational potential of play:

Through games, children internalize social and moral values such as honesty, friendship, cooperation, and mutual assistance (Elkonin, 1989). Play serves as a tool for integrating education and upbringing (Karimova, 2021). Games also promote socialization—children engage with peers, resolve conflicts, and internalize social norms (Piaget, 1972; Yuldasheva, 2023).

Role of the educator in organizing play:

The effectiveness of play activity depends on the educator's skills, knowledge, and organizational ability (G'ofurov, 2020). The educator: motivates the child, explains the rules, encourages participation, and ensures psychological and pedagogical support (Karimova, 2021).

Their professional preparation and innovative approach lead to better outcomes (Saidov, 2022).

Play-based developmental pedagogy in preschool:

Firstly, developmental pedagogical games consist of structured tasks. Secondly, the tasks are carried out using colorful cubes, blocks, squares, modeling clay, cardboard, and other decorative objects. Thirdly, these tasks should be arranged from easy to complex and completed within a specific time frame to ensure quality outcomes.

Interactive games in preschool institutions yield positive results. They transform the child from a passive object into an active subject. The educator's role is to organize the game and create space for the child's creativity.

In interactive games, the child learns to express independent thoughts clearly and to listen to others, helping to develop qualities necessary for their future. Effective interactive games must follow these principles:

1. Ensure that children understand the game rules and content beforehand.
2. Consider the children's age and interpersonal relationships.
3. Take into account individual abilities and psychological traits.
4. Use materials that interest the children.
5. Employ techniques that attract attention and focus.
6. Distribute roles appropriately.

7. Understand the purpose of the game.
8. Be aware of the main stages and predict the outcomes.

From a pedagogical perspective, properly organized games not only develop moral and volitional qualities but also spark curiosity and a desire to learn. Therefore, game technologies should be widely used in preschool institutions.

The concept of game technology is a component of pedagogical technology. Unlike traditional play methods, game technology ensures specific objectives, logical sequences, interrelated processes, and guaranteed results (Yuldasheva, 2022).

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, play activities in preschool educational institutions serve as a key factor in a child's holistic development. Play is not only a recreational activity but also a pedagogical tool that fosters independent thinking, communication, social role acquisition, emotional stability, and moral development. Through play, children simulate real-life experiences, test their abilities, and gain self-awareness. Therefore, educators must integrate play into the pedagogical process appropriately, organize games according to age characteristics, and create an environment where children can freely express themselves. The correct use of play technologies in preschool education enhances the effectiveness of the educational process and lays the foundation for raising well-rounded individuals in the future.

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