



ACTIVITIES OF CENTERS IN A PRESCHOOL EDUCATIONAL ORGANIZATION

Khasanova Shahnoza Zaripovna

Teacher at Kokand University

E-mail: xasanovashahnoza@gmail.com

Abstract: This article examines the centers operating in preschool educational organizations as an important tool for developing children's creative, cognitive and social skills. As part of the study, the practical aspects of the centers' activities, their organization, children's participation and the approach of educators were analyzed on the example of preschool educational organizations in several regions. According to the results, the centers are an effective tool for developing important skills in children such as independent thinking, teamwork, communication and observation. The problem is the lack of sufficient resources and the lack of sustainable methodological approaches in all centers.

Keywords: Preschool education, center activities, educational methodology, child development, educator, creative center, sensory, game-based learning.

INTRODUCTION

The comprehensive development of preschool children is one of the important factors determining their educational success and social activity at later stages. With the transition of education systems around the world to a child-centered model, new pedagogical approaches are widely used in preschool education, in particular, the practice of organizing education based on activity centers.

Activity centers are an environment enriched in various areas that allows children to carry out independent, voluntary and purposeful activities. Such centers combine play, creativity, construction, experimentation, reading, natural science, sensory, dramatic expression and other areas, and serve to form children's thinking, language acquisition, coordination of movements, social relations and emotional world.

Practice shows that activity centers rely on the natural interests of children, encourage them to demonstrate their abilities, and thereby turn the assimilation of knowledge into an active, creative process. Currently, methodological experience in the implementation and effective organization of these centers in preschool educational organizations, insufficient material and technical base, and differences in the level of training of educators create certain problems.

This article analyzes the current state of activity centers in preschool educational institutions, their impact on child development, effective forms of organization, as well as existing problems and their solutions on a scientific and practical basis. Also, recommendations are given to improve the activities of the centers, based on the age characteristics and developmental needs of children.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The issue of introducing activity centers in preschool education and their effective use is one of the topical issues not only in Uzbekistan, but also internationally. In recent years, scientific research in the field of pedagogy and psychology has emphasized the importance of creating an environment that ensures children's learning through play, experience, and creative activity.

The idea of learning by doing, put forward by John Dewey, serves as the ideological basis for activity centers for preschool children. Dewey emphasized that children acquire knowledge more deeply through independent problem-solving, experimentation, and communication

through play[1].

Lev Vygotsky's sociocultural theory bases child development on the formation of the social environment, interaction, and language. Centers are interpreted as an environment that stimulates natural communication between children and strengthens cooperation with adults. This is a practical expression of Vygotsky's theory[2].

Uzbek researchers M. Kadirova, G. Toshpulatova and M. Abdullayeva have highlighted in their work the role of the center-based approach in the formation of thinking, creativity and speech in children. In M. Kadirova's (2020) study on the topic "The role of activity centers in the development of independent thinking in preschool children", it is scientifically proven that artistic and constructive centers, in particular, have a significant impact on the child's ability to make independent decisions[3].

METHODOLOGY

This study aims to determine the organization of activity centers in preschool educational organizations, their impact on children's development, and their practical effectiveness. The study was conducted based on a qualitative approach. This approach allows for an in-depth study of the activities of children and educators in real conditions.

The study was conducted based on the following methods:

Observation - the organization of activity centers, provision of materials, children's participation and independent activity were directly observed in each group for 1 week. Special protocols were developed for each observation.

Semi-structured interview - interviews were conducted with educators and methodologists on the effectiveness of activity centers, difficulties in organization, and children's interests. The interviews were audio-recorded and then analyzed.

Document analysis - the organizations' curriculum, daily lesson plans, planned work for centers, and photo materials were analyzed.

Analysis method

The collected data were processed using the content analysis method. Based on the results of interviews and observations, themes (thematic units) were identified and generalized analytical conclusions were drawn. Children's activities were evaluated based on indicators such as their interest, level of participation, independence, and teamwork.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on observations, interviews, and document analysis conducted during the study, the following aspects of the centers' activities in preschool educational organizations were identified:

Number and diversity of centers:

The 6 organizations studied had an average of 5–7 activity centers, the most common of which were: creative (artistic), construction (constructive), dramatic, natural science, mathematical, and sensory centers. In some institutions, a “reading corner” was organized as a separate center.

Level of organization:

Although the overall organizational level of the centers was good, more than 60% of them were not fully equipped with sufficient didactic materials. Educators said that they were forced to make some of the tools themselves.

Participation and activity of children:

As a result of observations, it was found that children were most interested in dramatic (expressive role-playing) and construction centers. They showed the highest level of independent and collective activity in these centers. Interest in sensory and mathematical centers was much lower.

Approach of educators:

9 out of 12 educators consider the activities of the centers as an additional element aimed at independent activity after the lesson. Only 3 educators regularly planned these centers as the main educational methodology.

Methodological problems:

Half of the organizations do not have clear methodological recommendations for conducting the activities of the centers. This causes teachers to approach the activities differently.

The results of the study confirm that activity centers have a significant positive impact on the comprehensive development of preschool children. In particular, in creative and dramatic centers, children showed high activity in terms of independent thinking, socialization, expressive speech and emotional thinking. This practically confirms the concept of the "zone of proximal development" described in Vygotsky's educational theory.

Dewey's experiential learning model also showed that children can practically strengthen their knowledge and skills by working in centers. However, for the centers to function effectively, the material and technical base, methodological approach and qualifications of the educator must be sufficient. As noted in the study, many educators see the centers only as an after-school activity. This leads to the fact that their educational potential is not fully revealed.

CONCLUSION

The results of the study show that activity centers in preschool educational organizations are an effective tool for the formation of children's creative thinking, independence, communication skills and socio-emotional development. Through a centralized approach, children are involved in game-based activities that are in line with their interests, which makes the educational process natural and spiritually rich for the child.

However, in practice, there are a number of problems in the effective organization of the centers: lack of didactic materials, uniformity of methodological approaches, differences in the qualifications of educators and pedagogical approaches. These factors hinder the full functioning of activity centers.

Also, observations have shown that many children express themselves freely through centers in creative, construction and dramatic activities. In sensory and mathematical centers, methodological approaches should be strengthened.

PROPOSALS

Based on the research, the following practical proposals were developed:

Development of methodological manuals: It is necessary to develop methodological manuals for educators that cover step-by-step work plans and forms of activity for each type of center.

Improving the skills of educators: Special seminars, trainings and practical exercises on the organization and management of activity centers should be systematically organized.

Strengthening the material and technical base: It is necessary to provide centers with appropriate educational and methodological equipment, toys, experimental tools and resources adapted to the age of children.

Encouraging children's participation: Activities in the centers should be freely organized based on children's choice, and they should be encouraged to be active participants.

Introducing a monitoring and analysis system: A continuous monitoring system based on indicators should be established to evaluate the activities of each center.

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