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**THE PSYCHOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF DEVELOPING SKILLS IN
PRESCHOOL EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS**

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**MAQOLA
MALUMOTI**

ANNOTATSIYA:

MAQOLA TARIXI:

Received: 10.11.2025
Revised: 11.11.2025
Accepted: 12.11.2025

KALIT SO'ZLAR:

child, preschool
education, educator,
skill, speech,
socialization, hygiene,
self-care, psychological
adaptation, cognitive
development,
pedagogical approach.

This article explores the psychological, linguistic, social, and cognitive development processes of preschool-aged children, their adaptation to the social environment, and the stages of skill formation. The first three years of a child's life play a crucial role in the development of speech, thinking, and social relationships, forming the foundation for future personal growth. The article highlights the role of educators and parents in developing children's hygiene habits, self-care abilities, speech, social, and cognitive skills. It also presents pedagogical approaches and practical recommendations for fostering these essential competencies in preschool education.

Introduction

A child is a young human being from birth to adolescence, often viewed with affection and protection. Children are vital members of society because they are the builders of the future. Understanding the cooperative nature of relationships between adults and children is essential for establishing healthy communication and emotional connections.

By the age of three, children's comprehension of language expands significantly, and their speech quality improves. The preschool period is a decisive stage in child development, as the skills formed during this time serve as a foundation for learning and social adaptation. The success of this process largely depends on the collaboration between educators and parents.

The transition to preschool is often described as a developmental crisis, marked by separation anxiety, fear, or unfamiliarity with a new environment. During this period, children begin to enjoy listening to stories, fairy tales, and poems — developing

imagination and forming their first concepts. Their communication gradually extends beyond family members to peers, leading to active speech development.

The Role of Educators and Parents in Child Adaptation

To help children adapt smoothly to preschool settings, educators and psychologists must approach each child with respect, empathy, and understanding of their emotional needs. Creating a supportive atmosphere that acknowledges individual temperament and emotional states helps children overcome adaptation challenges.

At this age, play, repetition, and observation are the main ways through which children acquire essential skills.

Main Categories of Skills Developed in Preschool Institutions

1. Hygiene and Self-care Skills

These include dressing, washing, eating properly, and maintaining discipline. Hygiene habits promote cleanliness, responsibility for health, and respect for others. Proper hygiene also helps prevent diseases and supports overall well-being.

Examples:

- ✓ Washing hands before and after meals
- ✓ Brushing teeth regularly
- ✓ Keeping the body and clothes clean
- ✓ Sneezing and coughing etiquette
- ✓ Following hygiene routines consistently

2. Self-care Independence

Self-care means a child's ability to meet their own needs independently — an important foundation for self-sufficiency and confidence.

These skills include:

- ✓ Eating independently without spilling food
 - ✓ Dressing and undressing
 - ✓ Putting on and taking off shoes
 - ✓ Making the bed
 - ✓ Taking care of personal belongings
 - ✓ Cleaning up toys and keeping the environment organized
- Such habits help develop responsibility, orderliness, and self-confidence.

- ✓ The educator's and parents' role:
- ✓ Demonstrating by personal example
- ✓ Teaching through play and activities
- ✓ Step-by-step and consistent guidance
- ✓ Reinforcing habits through reminders and supervision

Encouraging and motivating through praise

Parents should continue these routines at home to maintain consistency with preschool practices.

3. Speech Development Skills

Speech skills include vocabulary expansion, expression of thoughts, listening, and question–answer interaction.

Vocabulary building: introducing new words through stories, conversations, and games.

Expression of thoughts: encouraging children to share opinions about stories, objects, or drawings.

Listening skills: teaching children to listen attentively, understand meaning, and wait for their turn to speak.

Question–answer development: motivating children to ask “why,” “how,” “where,” and “who” questions to foster curiosity and thinking skills.

Speech development strengthens logical thinking, creativity, and emotional expression — all of which are vital for school readiness.

4. Social Relationship Skills

Preschool institutions provide the first environment where children gain social experience. Through interaction with peers, they learn cooperation, friendship, patience, and cultural behavior.

Role-playing games such as “At the Store,” “In the Garden,” “A Guest Came” help children understand social norms and relationships. Educators serve as behavioral models by demonstrating polite communication, empathy, and respect. Each child requires an individual approach and emotional sensitivity to resolve interpersonal conflicts constructively.

5. Preparation for Cognitive Activity

Cognitive readiness refers to developing mental functions such as thinking, attention, memory, and imagination — crucial for school preparation.

Main objectives:

- ✓ Develop logical thinking and reasoning
- ✓ Improve attention and memory
- ✓ Strengthen speech and imagination
- ✓ Encourage creative and independent thinking
- ✓ Form mathematical and spatial understanding

Skills developed:

Direction	Skills
Thinking	Comparing, analyzing, generalizing, understanding cause and effect
Memory	Remembering, retelling, maintaining sequence
Attention	Focusing, distinguishing details, avoiding distraction
Speech	Clear and logical expression, forming complete sentences
Math/Spatial	Counting, recognizing shapes and sizes

Methods:

- ✓ Didactic games (“Find the Missing Part,” “Reverse Counting,” “Sort It Out”)
- ✓ Drawing and construction activities
- ✓ Problem-solving exercises
- ✓ Logical reasoning tasks (“What could happen?”, “Why did it happen?”)
- ✓ Observations and experiments to explore the environment

Recommendations for educators and parents:

Encourage free and independent thinking

Conduct mental exercises through play

Develop reasoning through reading and discussion

Support the child’s curiosity and provide learning opportunities

Emotional and Behavioral Considerations

Ignoring the child’s emotional and physical development can create behavioral challenges. When adults fail to recognize a child’s growing independence, conflicts may arise. Stubbornness, disobedience, and defiance often stem from the child’s desire for autonomy.

Therefore, adults should maintain a calm, consistent, and respectful attitude — neither overindulging nor neglecting the child. Teaching persistence, patience, and self-control helps children overcome difficulties and strengthen character.

Conclusion

The formation of a child’s personality during the preschool period requires careful attention to individual characteristics and collaboration between educators and parents. Hygiene, self-care, speech, social, and cognitive skills collectively form the basis for raising an independent, responsible, active, and creative individual. Respectful, patient, and supportive adult behavior fosters a child’s healthy psychological and emotional development. Through play, observation, and guided activities, preschool institutions lay the foundation for lifelong learning and social competence.

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