

PRESCHOOL EDUCATION PROGRAMME (FOR CHILDREN 36-72 MONTHS OLD)

The “Preschool Education Programme for Children 36-72 Months Old” was launched in the school year 2002-2003 to be tested and improved. Since then, there have been studies and feedbacks, new elements introduced to the Primary Education Programme in the school year 2005-2006, researches in the field of preschool education and analyses of practices of preschool education in European Union countries to comply with the EU and international norms in the field.

It is also adopted as an objective to impart in children sensitivity to human rights, democracy and respect for different cultures. After going over relevant data, it appeared that there is need to review and update the programme.

In line with these needs, it was decided to develop a “Preschool Education Programme for Children 36-72 Months Old” and to prepare a “Teachers’ Guidebook.”

A commission comprising an international consultant, academics from relevant departments of universities and officials from the General Directorate of Preschool Education revised the “Preschool Education Programme for Children 36-72 Months Old” and developed a Teachers’ Guidebook in the light of contemporary programme development approaches theories of psychology recognized in our times.

As is the case with all programmes, this programme was developed for testing and further improvements. It is expected that the new programme will contribute significantly to the development of preschool children and to the quality of preschool education while guiding both managers and preschool teachers at the same time.

OBJECTIVES OF PRESCHOOL EDUCATION

In line with the overarching aims of national education and its underlying principles, preschool education pursues the following objectives:

1. Ensuring smooth physical, mental and emotionally development in children and acquisition of positive habits;
2. Preparing children for primary education;
3. Creating a common environment of education and development for children coming from disadvantaged families and environments;
4. Ensuring that children speak Turkish correctly and fluently.

UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES IN PRESCHOOL EDUCATION

The preschool phase is the building stone for future life. The pace of learning is particularly fast in this phase. The overall developmental characteristics of a specific age group are common for all in that group; however, it must not be forgotten that each child is unique in himself or herself.

Preschool education is based on some principles. These principles can be listed as follows:

1. Preschool education should consider the needs of children and individual differences.
2. Preschool education should support the psychomotor, social-emotional, linguistic and cognitive development of the child, build in self-care skills and prepare the child for primary education.
3. To respond to the needs of children, preschool education institutions should provide education environments in compliance with an understanding of democratic education.
4. While arranging for activities, means of the community and school should be considered in addition to the needs and fields of interest of children.
5. The process of education should start from what children already know and provide a room for learning by trying and experimenting.
6. Importance should be attached to children's correct and fluent use of Turkish.
7. Education given in preschool phase should be contributory to the development of children in terms of affection, respect, cooperation, responsibility, tolerance, solidarity and sharing.
8. Education should impart in children self-respect, self-confidence and self-control.
9. Play is the best method of learning for children in this age group. All activities must be arranged on the basis of play.
10. In communicating with children no behaviour that can hurt their personality should be adopted and there must be no place for intimidation or restrictions.
11. Children should be supported in developing independent behaviour and adult support, guidance and comforting proximity should be in place when they need help.
12. Children should be supported in recognizing the emotions of themselves and others
13. Children should be supported in developing their imagination, creative and critical thinking skills, communicative and self-expressive powers.
14. While developing programmes, circumstances in the family and close environments should be taken into account.
15. The child and his/her family should actively take part in the process of education.
16. The child's development and preschool education programme should be regularly evaluated.
17. Outcomes of evaluation on preschool education should feed back efforts for further developing the child, teachers and the programme.

OVERALL OBJECTIVES OF THE PROGRAMME

The programme aims at supporting the psychomotor, social-emotional, linguistic and cognitive development of children 36-72 months old who attend preschool institutions, building in self-care skills and preparing the child for primary education.

Targeting children 36-72 months old, the programme is a **developmental** one. In other words it encompasses all areas of development. **It is holistic as a programme and spiral in terms of its approach to programming.**

Achievements envisaged in this programme encompass all common skills adopted by primary education programmes. Problem solving, communication, reasoning, connecting, decision making, undertaking and fulfilling responsibility, investigating, entrepreneurship, informed consumption, environmental awareness, creativity and many other skills will be

imparted easily and naturally by children through learning situations and environments offered and play-based activities with the active participation self-structured information on the part of children.

While responding to developmental needs, the programme aims at advancing, diversifying and enriching the behaviour of the child in all development areas by supporting the dynamic interaction of various areas of development. As such, **it is also consistent with the arguments and emphases of the “Multiple Intelligence Theory.”**

Major Characteristics of the Programme

- It is for children 36-72 Months old
- Child-Centred
- Objectives and Achievements are Essential
- Developmental Characteristics are Sorted Separately for Each Age Group
- Topics are not Ends but Means
- There are No Units
- It is Flexible
- Entitles Freedom to the Teacher
- Creativity is Upheld
- It Requires the Teacher to Plan Her Work
- It is Important to Provide Environments in which Children can Experiment Freely
- Problem Solving and Play are the Main Activities
- Use of Daily Life Experiences and Means of Close environments for Education Purposes Should be Encouraged
- It is Important to Diversify Learning Experiences
- Family Participation is Important
- Process of Evaluation is Multi-faceted

Process of evaluating the Preschool Education Programme is three-dimensional:

1. Evaluating child development,
2. Evaluating the programme,
3. Self-evaluation by the teacher.

ASSESSMENT IN PRESCHOOL EDUCATION

The final stage in the process of education consists of an assessment geared to measuring and evaluating behavioural changes in children as a result of education activities planned and implemented. Assessment should comprise:

- the child,
- the programme, and
- the teacher.

Teacher gathers information about children from various sources. These are:

1. Observation records,
2. Records of anecdotes,
3. Development checklists and standard tests,
4. Portfolios (development files),
5. Development reports.

LIST OF EDUCATION ACTIVITIES IN PRESCHOOL EDUCATION (Full day, half day, dual education)

ACTIVITIES

- Free Time
- Turkish
- Game and Action
- Music
- Science and Math
- Preparation for Literacy
- Drama
- Field Trips
- Arts

REMARKS:

In a given school day (full time education) morning and afternoon brunches should be 30 minutes each, lunch 60-90 minutes and sleeping/resting time 60-120 minutes.

Of educative activities in the list, the teacher must determine which ones to use in a given day, divide activities into time blocks and proceed as such. It is not necessary to try all activities in the list in a given day. Fore example, some of these activities may be dropped if there is field trip. Also, few works can be incorporated into a single activity.

It is suggested that timeliness should be given due importance in such episodes as arrival to school, breakfast, gathering, cleaning, lunch, sleeping time etc. so that children can grasp better how events take place in a line of time. Lunch and sleeping/resting time are excluded if institution works on half-day basis or in shifts.