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Fostering A Positive Attitude Towards Work in Senior Preschool Children Through Acquaintance with Professions

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Abstract: The article examines how a positive attitude towards work can be fostered in children of the senior preschool group (5–7 years old) through systematic acquaintance with professions. The relevance of the study is determined by the requirements of the Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On Preschool Education and Upbringing" and the state curriculum "Ilk qadam", which treat respect for adult labour and the formation of basic labour skills as one of the expected outcomes of preschool education. The author analyses the psychological and pedagogical foundations of early career awareness, clarifies the structure of a positive attitude towards work as a unity of cognitive, emotional-motivational and practical-activity components, and proposes a pedagogical model of professional acquaintance. The model integrates four interrelated stages: informational-cognitive, emotional-imaginative, play-modelling and practical-productive, supported by cooperation with families and local enterprises. Criteria, indicators and three levels of development of the children's attitude towards work are described, together with a set of diagnostic methods for preschool practitioners. The article concludes that acquaintance with professions becomes a factor of labour education only when knowledge about an occupation is connected with the child's emotional experience and personal participation in feasible work.

Keywords: Senior preschool age, labour education, attitude towards work, acquaintance with professions, early career awareness, role-play, project activity, family–kindergarten cooperation, "Ilk qadam" curriculum.

Introduction: Preschool childhood is the period in which a person forms the first stable ideas about the world of adults, including the world of work. At the age of five to seven, a child already distinguishes between occupations, imitates adults in play and begins to evaluate their actions through the categories of "useful", "difficult" and "interesting". The attitude towards work that appears at this stage is not yet a professional orientation. However, it becomes the emotional and value basis on which later educational and career choices are built.

In the Republic of Uzbekistan, the modernisation of preschool education has made this question part of state educational policy. The Law "On Preschool Education and Upbringing" (2019) defines the upbringing of a healthy, harmoniously developed and hardworking personality as one of the tasks of preschool institutions. The Concept for the Development of the Preschool Education System until 2030 emphasises the need to update the content and methods of upbringing in line with modern socio-economic requirements. The state curriculum "Ilk qadam" includes, among the expected outcomes for children of senior preschool age, an understanding of the significance of adult labour, respect for people of different occupations and the ability to perform simple self-service, household and nature-related tasks.

At the same time, practice in many preschool organisations shows a number of contradictions. Acquaintance with professions is often reduced to verbal explanations, looking at pictures or memorising poems about occupations. The traditional list of

professions (doctor, teacher, driver, cook) rarely reflects the modern labour market, digital professions or occupations typical of the child's own region. Knowledge about work frequently remains detached from the child's practical activity and emotional experience. As a result, a child can name many professions but does not show a stable desire to help, to finish a task or to treat the results of other people's labour with care.

The purpose of this article is to substantiate theoretically and describe methodologically a system of work aimed at fostering a positive attitude towards work in children of the senior preschool group through purposeful acquaintance with professions. The objectives are: to clarify the structure of the concept "positive attitude towards work" as applied to preschool age; to identify the pedagogical conditions under which acquaintance with professions performs an educational function; to develop a stage-based model of this work; and to propose criteria and diagnostic tools for assessing its results.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The theoretical basis of the study is formed by three groups of sources: cultural-historical and activity theory, theories of children's career development, and the methodology of labour education in preschool pedagogy.

Within the cultural-historical approach, L.S. Vygotsky showed that higher mental functions develop through the child's interaction with adults and the appropriation of cultural tools. For the present topic this means that the meaning of work is not transmitted to a child directly; it is constructed in joint activity, where an adult reveals the purpose and social value of an action. A.N. Leontiev's theory of activity adds that an attitude is formed when the motive of an activity becomes personally meaningful for the subject. D.B. Elkonin demonstrated that role-play at preschool age is a form of modelling social relations between adults, including professional relations. Therefore, play about professions is not a simple entertainment but the leading way in which a preschooler "enters" the world of adult work.

Research on children's career development confirms that the foundations of occupational ideas are laid long before adolescence. D.E. Super, in his life-span theory, described the growth stage (approximately from birth to 14 years), during which curiosity, fantasy and identification with significant adults shape the first self-concept in relation to work. L.S. Gottfredson's theory of circumscription and compromise shows that already at the age of 3–5 children orient themselves to size and power, and at 6–8 they begin to classify occupations by gender roles. This means that early, poorly organised acquaintance with professions may fix stereotypes that will later narrow the child's choice. Reviews by P.J. Hartung, E.J. Porfeli and F.W. Vondracek, as well as M. Watson and M. McMahon, stress that children's vocational development has been studied insufficiently and that the learning environment — family, kindergarten, community — plays a decisive role. The international study "Drawing the Future" (Chambers et al., 2018) found that children's occupational aspirations at the age of 7 are already strongly influenced by family background, gender and media, and that direct contact with people from the world of work broadens these aspirations.

In preschool pedagogy, the methodology of labour education was developed by R.S. Bure, V.G. Nechaeva, S.A. Kozlova and others. These authors distinguish self-service, household work, work in nature and manual work as the main types of children's labour and emphasise that acquaintance with adult work and the child's own labour activity must be combined. S.A. Kozlova considers acquaintance with social reality, including professions, as a process in which information must be emotionally coloured and must lead to an active, practical position of the child. In Uzbek pedagogy, the idea of labour upbringing is closely connected with national values of diligence, respect for craftsmanship (hunarmandchilik) and the tradition of passing skills from master to apprentice (usta–shogird).

The analysis of the literature allows us to define a positive attitude towards work in a senior preschooler as an integrative personal formation that includes: (1) basic knowledge about the content, tools, results and social value of various occupations; (2) an emotionally positive, respectful attitude towards working people and the results of their labour; and (3) the desire and ability to participate independently in feasible work, bringing it to a result. Acquaintance with professions serves as the content basis for all three components, but only if it is organised in a way that connects

knowledge, feelings and action.

METHODS

The study is theoretical and methodological in nature. The following methods were used: analysis and generalisation of psychological and pedagogical literature on labour education and children's career development; analysis of regulatory documents of the Republic of Uzbekistan in the field of preschool education, including the state curriculum "Ilk qadam"; pedagogical modelling; observation of educational activities and children's play in senior groups of preschool organisations; and conversations with educators and parents.

The observation and conversations served to identify typical difficulties in current practice rather than to obtain statistical data. On their basis, a diagnostic toolkit was designed that preschool practitioners can use to determine the initial and final levels of children's attitude towards work. The toolkit includes the following methods:

1. **Conversation "Who works where?"** — an individual talk with picture cards, revealing the child's knowledge of occupations, tools, places of work and the social benefit of each profession.

2. **Method of unfinished situations** — short stories in which a character has to choose between helping an adult and continuing to play, or between finishing a task and abandoning it; the child's choice and explanation reveal the emotional and value component.

3. **Drawing "When I grow up, I will be..."** with a follow-up conversation, showing the child's occupational images and the motives behind them.

4. **Observation of children in labour situations** — duty in the dining area, care of plants, tidying up the play corner — recorded on a card that notes independence, persistence, quality of the result and willingness to help peers.

5. **Parent questionnaire** — revealing the child's participation in household work and the family's practice of talking about their own professions.

The results of each method are evaluated on a three-point scale and summarised according to the criteria presented in the next section. This makes it possible to compare the level of the child's development before and after the implementation of the proposed model in a particular preschool group.

RESULTS

The main result of the study is a pedagogical model of fostering a positive attitude towards work through acquaintance with professions. Its target component is the formation of an attitude that unites knowledge, emotions and action. Its content component is a selected set of professions, grouped not by alphabet or random choice but by three principles: closeness to the child's experience (professions of family members and kindergarten staff); regional and national significance (farmer, cotton grower, potter, embroiderer, builder, master of national crafts); and modernity (programmer, designer, ecologist, logistics specialist, rescuer). Its organisational component consists of four sequential stages.

Stage	Aim	Main forms and methods	Expected result
1. Informational-cognitive	To give clear ideas about the content of a profession	Excursions to the kindergarten kitchen, laundry, medical room; meetings with parents of different professions; videos and picture series; didactic games "Who needs what?", "Tools of the master"	The child names the profession, its tools, place of work and result

Stage	Aim	Main forms and methods	Expected result
2. Emotional-imaginative	To form respect and interest in working people	Reading fiction and folk tales about diligence; proverbs about work; conversations about the value of bread, clothes, a house; "Thank-you letters" to kindergarten staff	The child expresses emotional evaluation and gratitude, protects the results of labour
3. Play-modelling	To let the child "try on" the professional role	Role-play ("Hospital", "Bakery", "Construction site", "Craft workshop"); dramatisation; game-based problem situations; a corner of professions with attributes	The child reproduces professional actions and relations, distributes roles, keeps the rules
4. Practical-productive	To include the child in real feasible work	Duty, work in nature, manual work, collective projects ("Our garden", "Toy repair workshop", "My parents' profession" album); presentation of results to parents	The child works independently, finishes the task, helps peers, values the result

The stages are cyclical: each new profession or group of professions passes through all four stages over approximately two to three weeks. The cycle ends with a product that is meaningful for the child — a harvest from the group garden, a repaired book, an exhibition of crafts or a family album. This connects knowledge about a profession with the experience of personal success in work.

The model is implemented under the following pedagogical conditions: the integration of acquaintance with professions into all types of children's activity provided for by the "Ilk qadam" curriculum, rather than allocating it to separate occasional lessons; the systematic involvement of parents as "experts" who talk about and demonstrate their work; cooperation with local enterprises, craft workshops and social institutions (mahalla, library, fire station); and a gender-neutral presentation of professions that prevents early stereotyping.

To assess the results, criteria, indicators and levels were defined.

Criterion	Indicators	Diagnostic method
Cognitive	Knowledge of professions, tools, places of work, results and social value of labour	Conversation "Who works where?", drawing with conversation
Emotional-motivational	Interest in work, respect for working people, careful attitude to results of labour, motives of occupational choice	Method of unfinished situations, drawing "When I grow up..."
Practical-activity	Independence, persistence, quality of result, willingness to help, participation in household work	Observation card, parent questionnaire

Three levels of development are distinguished. At the high level, the child has systematic ideas about a wide range of occupations, explains why people need them, expresses respect for working people, takes up work on their own initiative and finishes it with good quality. At the medium level, the child's knowledge is correct but fragmentary, interest in work is situational and depends on the adult's encouragement, and the child often needs help or reminders to complete a task. At the low level, ideas about professions are limited to a few external features, the attitude towards work is indifferent, and the child avoids work assignments or abandons them.

DISCUSSION

The proposed model differs from the traditional approach in several respects. First, it treats acquaintance with professions not as an independent informational topic but as a means of labour upbringing. Knowledge about a profession is considered valuable only to the extent that it helps the child understand the meaning of work and wish to take part in it. This corresponds to the activity approach of A.N. Leontiev, according to which an attitude arises when the socially given meaning of an action becomes the child's personal sense.

Second, the model places role-play and real productive work side by side. Role-play allows the child to model the relations between people in a profession, as D.B. Elkonin described, but it remains in an imaginary plan. Practical work, by contrast, gives a real result and the experience of effort. The combination of these two forms creates a bridge between the image of a profession and the child's own labour behaviour. Without this bridge, as practice shows, a child may enthusiastically "play doctor" but remain passive when asked to tidy up the group room.

Third, the model takes into account the findings of career development research. Gottfredson's theory and the "Drawing the Future" study show that occupational stereotypes, including gender stereotypes, start to form at exactly this age. Therefore, the model recommends presenting professions through people of both genders, showing modern and regional occupations along with traditional ones, and inviting parents with diverse professional backgrounds. In this way, early career awareness widens the child's horizon instead of narrowing it.

Fourth, the model relies on national pedagogical traditions. In Uzbek family culture, children have long been involved in household work, in caring for the garden and in helping parents in crafts. The usta–shogird tradition, proverbs and folk tales praising diligence provide rich content for the emotional-imaginative stage and strengthen the connection

between the kindergarten and the family.

At the same time, the model has limitations. Its effectiveness depends heavily on the educator's preparedness and on the willingness of parents and local organisations to cooperate. In addition, the diagnostic toolkit is qualitative and requires careful interpretation. Further research should include an experimental verification of the model on a representative sample of preschool organisations with statistical processing of the results, as well as the development of digital resources (interactive games, virtual excursions) for acquaintance with professions that children cannot observe directly.

CONCLUSION

The study allows the following conclusions to be drawn.

1. A positive attitude towards work in senior preschool children is an integrative formation consisting of cognitive, emotional-motivational and practical-activity components. Its development requires their simultaneous and interconnected formation.

2. Acquaintance with professions performs an educational function only when information about an occupation is emotionally meaningful for the child and leads to the child's own participation in feasible work.

3. The proposed four-stage model (informational-cognitive, emotional-imaginative, play-modelling, practical-productive) provides a cyclical organisation of work in which each profession is studied through knowledge, feeling, play and real action, ending with a meaningful product.

4. The key pedagogical conditions are the integration of the work into all types of activity of the "Ilk qadam" curriculum, the active involvement of families and the local community, the selection of traditional, regional and modern professions, and a gender-neutral presentation of occupations.

5. The developed criteria, indicators, levels and diagnostic methods give educators a practical tool for monitoring the results of labour upbringing.

Practical recommendations for preschool educators include: creating a "corner of professions" in each senior group with attributes for role-play; planning monthly meetings with parents representing different professions; organising at least one collective labour project per month with a product presented to families; and using national proverbs, folk tales and examples of local craftsmen to strengthen the emotional component. The materials of the article can be used by preschool educators and methodologists, as well as in the training and professional development of preschool education specialists.

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