

# The Importance Of A Developmental Play Environment In Shaping Personal Qualities Of Preschool Children

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**Abstract:** This article analyzes the role and significance of a developmental play environment in shaping the personal qualities of preschool children. The study reviews literature related to the topic and highlights the play environment as a key tool for developing essential mental functions such as thinking, speech, memory, attention, communication, and social adaptation. Furthermore, it is substantiated that a developmental play environment serves as an effective factor in forming children's intellectual abilities, initiative, empathy, and social responsibility. The article presents effective methods of organizing a developmental play environment based on modern pedagogical and psychological approaches and demonstrates their effectiveness in education and upbringing with practical examples. In conclusion, the relevance of creating a developmental play environment tailored to the comprehensive development of preschool children is emphasized.

**Keywords:** Preschool age, developmental play environment, intellectual development, personal qualities, critical thinking, independence, social adaptation, psychological development.

## Introduction

"In the process of education, there is no aspect untouched by the surrounding environment, no ability that forms in a child that is not directly connected to the world around them... Whoever manages to create such an environment makes their work significantly easier. The child lives within this environment—continues their inner, independent life, and their spiritual growth improves naturally, by itself..."

— Ye. I. Tikhayeva

At the early stage of development in preschool children, the formation of intellectual and personal qualities plays a crucial role. During this period, children develop thinking, communication, social skills, and emotional stability. In modern pedagogy and psychology, special attention is given to the role of the play environment in child development. A developmental play environment stimulates children's activity, enhances their creative and critical thinking abilities, helps them make independent decisions, and strengthens their self-awareness as individuals. Therefore, the purposeful and systematic organization of the play environment is required in preschool education institutions.

Modern pedagogical technologies aim to implement the state educational standards in preschool

education. One of the key aspects of pedagogical technology is the child's role in the education and upbringing process, and the adult's attitude toward the child.

Today, preschool education teachers widely apply various pedagogical technologies in their work. Pedagogical technology is the process of qualitatively influencing the learner. There are many types of pedagogical technologies: health-promoting educational technologies, problem-based learning, play technologies, project-based methods and the development of research skills, interactive technologies, and others. Among these, the most common and in-demand technology used daily in preschool institutions is play technology, because play is the leading activity type in preschool age and is where many psychological novelties emerge.

Preschool age is a unique and critical period during which the foundations of personality are laid, willpower is formed, and social competence is developed. In early childhood, children express their independence through play, learn to communicate voluntarily with peers, choose toys, and overcome various difficulties related to the storyline and rules of games.

Play technology is the organization of the pedagogical process in the form of various educational games. This includes selecting, designing, and preparing games by the teacher; engaging children in play activities; conducting the play process; and summarizing the outcomes of the play activity.

The importance of play technology lies in its ability, if properly organized, to become an educational method and provide an opportunity for children to express themselves and reveal their creative potential. The goal of play technologies for preschool children is to create conditions for children to fully live out their childhood through play before entering school while simultaneously forming knowledge based on motivation.

Tasks are clearly defined in accordance with the child's age-specific characteristics. According to the Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan on "Additional measures to improve the quality and effectiveness of preschool education":

Within the framework of the state educational program for preschool education: in younger and middle groups, tasks are set to develop cognitive, psychomotor, and social skills; in senior and preparatory groups, the development of learning, communication, and creative competencies is emphasized.

The goal of the state requirements is to raise spiritually mature and intellectually developed individuals in the preschool education system, taking into account the ongoing socio-economic reforms in the country, the best foreign practices, scientific achievements, and modern information and communication technologies. Considering all the above, the developmental play environment should be organized purposefully, based on the play needs of children. It should meet the following principles: activity, stability and dynamism, complexity and flexible zoning, emotional appeal, openness and closeness, consideration of gender and age differences, modernity, variability, safety, functional comfort, reliability, and richness.

Moreover, the developmental play environment must meet the following requirements and standards: correspond to the laws of development of play activity, fulfill pedagogical tasks in the upbringing of children of different ages, have a developmental character, be in line with the child's cognitive sphere—that is, be limitless, information-rich, and meet the child's needs for novelty and change.

## RESEARCH METHODS

In the process of educating and nurturing preschool children, the formation of intellectual and personal qualities is most effectively achieved through educational play activities organized by the educator in

a developmental play environment, together with adults and peers in various formats. For this purpose, a special environment should be created around the child where they can live and learn independently. Within this environment, a preschool child develops sensory skills, gains life experience, learns to organize and compare various objects and phenomena, engages in emotional-practical interactions with adults and peers, and acquires knowledge through personal experience.

The developmental play environment in preschool education institutions creates conditions for children's intellectual and creative activity. It stimulates their play interest, fosters imagination, and becomes the material basis for the thinking process. Therefore, a developmental play environment aimed at forming intellectual and personal qualities in preschool children should be aesthetically pleasing and equipped with didactic tools and modern play materials. A modern developmental play environment must function as an open system that fulfills educational, upbringing, and motivational roles.

In creating such an environment, it is appropriate to turn to the historical-pedagogical heritage, particularly to the works of the 18th-century French educator Jean-Jacques Rousseau. His theory of natural and free education views the environment as a key factor in a child's optimal self-development. This theory is based on three sources: nature, people around, and objects. Nature forms human abilities and stimulates the development of the senses. People help to reveal the child's innate potential and sensory abilities. Objects, through interaction, help the child accumulate personal experience. The importance of a developmental environment is a topic that many researchers continue to explore.

According to Doctor of Philosophy Lyudmila Panteleyevna Buyeva, the environment contributes to the formation of core values, which happens through the internalization of social experience and the improvement of essential life qualities. Russian philosopher Vladimir Solomonovich Bibler defines the educational environment as a morally and aesthetically meaningful way of life and development. Professor Yuri Grigoryevich Volkov and his colleague Vitaly Semyonovich Polikarpov view the developmental environment as a sociocultural system characterized by the transformation of values into cultural norms, the encouragement of group interests, and the shaping of interpersonal relationships.

According to V.A. Yasvin, the educational (developmental) environment is a system of factors and conditions that influence personality formation and includes social and spatial-activity contexts that support development. Therefore, in creating a

developmental play environment, it is important to consider factors that affect the formation of the child's personality and contribute to their intellectual growth. The child's interaction with the environment, along with changes within themselves and their surroundings, determines the dynamics of their development and the formation of new psychological processes in terms of quality. A child's attitude toward the environment also defines their activity. A.N. Leontiev emphasizes that the environment is both a condition, a process, and a result of the creative self-development of the individual.

According to L.S. Vygotsky's concept, a child's psychological development is defined by their social situation, that is, by their position in society and the system of relationships with adults and peers. This situation is not imposed externally but emerges through the child's active interaction with their environment.

The transition from one age stage to another is accompanied by changes in the social development situation. For instance, a preschooler is defined as a "playing child," and this status determines their system of relationships. A schoolchild, on the other hand, is defined as a "learning child," existing within a completely different relational system. Taking these specifics into account, organizing activities for preschool children within a developmental play environment is the most appropriate approach.

In Leontiev's framework, leading activities are those that fully express the system of a child's social relations and play a primary role in their psychological development. Changes between age stages are viewed in the context of changes in the leading type of activity. This concept has proven to be highly effective in researching psychological development during different childhood periods. However, many of these studies focused mainly on the child's individual activity, leaving out the central aspect emphasized by Vygotsky — the child's relationship with society, especially with close adults.

Almost every preschool-aged child equates themselves with the image of a "good child." Kind, diligent, skillful, agile, friendly, helpful to their mother, and humble — this is how they describe themselves. Harmful, rude, arrogant, lazy — these qualities, they believe, do not apply to them. This perception reflects how personal qualities begin to form during preschool years, as explained by developmental psychology.

During the preschool period, children begin to form concepts of personal traits such as kindness, discipline, politeness, honesty, courage, generosity, modesty, and diligence. At the same time, they also start to understand their opposites — cruelty, carelessness, rudeness, dishonesty, cowardice, greed, boastfulness,

and laziness. This short list encompasses the personal qualities that are most comprehensible for young children.

**Organizational and Self-Care Skills in Everyday Life:** Organizational behavior and self-care in daily life are among the essential skills that a 5-year-old child should acquire. The following games contribute to developing personal qualities in children.

**Game: "Choose the Right Path"**

**Didactic objective:** To clarify children's ecological knowledge, reveal the interconnection between natural objects, and guide them toward understanding the relationship between humans and nature based on specific behavioral rules (in forests, pastures, and other natural environments).

**Materials and equipment:** An illustrated path map. Along the paths, signs are placed with behavioral rules relevant to forest environments.

**Game action:** The child must choose which path to take and justify their choice.

**Game flow:**

**Option 1:** The first path goes through an anthill (ants and their nest are shown), and walking there may harm them. The second path is too narrow and covered with spiderwebs between trees. The third path has a snake basking in the sun along with its young. The fourth path passes by a bush where chicks are nesting. Walking this path is possible, but the child must proceed quietly.

**Option 2:** On the first path, there is a large campfire that hasn't been completely extinguished. The rest of the paths are identical to those in Option 1.

Children analyze the situation and conclude: the first path can be taken, but only after extinguishing the fire first.

**Research Methods Used in the Study:**

To determine the importance of a developmental play environment in shaping the intellectual and personal qualities of preschool children, the following research methods were applied:

**Literature analysis** — recent scientific articles, methodological manuals, and pedagogical recommendations were studied;

**Experimental activities** — the implementation of developmental play environments in preschool institutions and their influence on children's development were observed;

**Statistical analysis** — collected data was analyzed to identify correlations between the developmental play environment and the development of intellectual and personal qualities in children.

## **RESULTS**

The research findings demonstrate the following:

A developmental play environment significantly enhances children's critical thinking and creative

abilities;

Through play, children develop social interaction skills and form personal qualities such as mutual respect, patience, and cooperation;

When a structured play environment is provided, children's independent decision-making and problem-solving abilities improve;

The active participation of educators increases the effectiveness of the play environment by guiding children's activities in a purposeful way;

Parental involvement in play activities strengthens children's self-awareness and self-confidence.

As Professor V.A. Yasvin states: "The priority in a personality-developing educational environment is the formation of the child as an individual, the perfection of the person, and the establishment of a civic position."

Based on this view, it can be concluded that children's play in a developmental play environment within a preschool institution is a natural and free form of activity—a core element in developing thinking and personality. What do children enjoy the most? Playing. Whether independently, with parents, or peers, using toys or any object of interest, they derive great joy from play.

Through play activities, children explore the world: they learn about the properties and characteristics of surrounding objects, absorb social roles, build relationships with peers and adults, acquire essential skills, and demonstrate their abilities. This is evident in conversations with children, during Q&A sessions, where they eagerly and expressively describe the unique features of events and phenomena around them and actively engage in inquiry by asking "why" questions.

Curious children's brains are constantly striving to learn something new. This fact must not be overlooked. On the contrary, it should be maximally leveraged to promote intellectual development and the formation of personal qualities in young and pre-primary aged children.

Thus, we conclude that a developmental play environment, which plays an important role in a child's development, must be organized in line with educational objectives. While creating such an environment, it is essential to take into account each group's characteristics—such as age, gender composition, individual traits like activity level, temperament, interests, and parenting styles. Only under these conditions can the play become truly developmental, fostering in the child a sense of comfort, joy, inner peace, and fulfillment. As a result, the child gains self-confidence, age-appropriate skills, as well as a degree of independence and initiative.

Discussion

The results of this article show that the developmental play environment is a crucial factor in shaping the personal qualities of preschool children. When properly organized, such an environment harmonizes children's cognitive, emotional, and social development. Moreover, the play environment increases children's motivation, encouraging them to engage in active, independent, and creative activities. The active involvement of educators, along with collaboration with parents, further enhances the effectiveness of this process.

To ensure the successful implementation of play environments, preschool institutions must employ innovative pedagogical approaches, modern play materials, and digital or online game formats. In this regard, increasing the number of psychological and pedagogical studies and deepening the exploration of how play activities impact both individuals and groups is of great importance.

## CONCLUSION

A well-structured developmental play environment supports not only the educational process but also contributes to the psychological and pedagogical development of children. One of its essential components is the interaction between adults and children, which takes place through various communicative means such as speech, facial expressions, and gestures. Furthermore, this interaction includes guiding children's play, which demands special attention from educators during the organization of the play environment.

As confirmed during experimental observations, the developmental play environment yields positive results in shaping intellectual and personal qualities in preschool children. Therefore, it is vital to deepen the study of how to more effectively utilize developmental play environments in preschool children's activities.

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