

Inclusive Education in Preschool Educational Organizations: An Important Step Toward Equal Opportunities

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Abstract: The article examines the theoretical and practical aspects of introducing inclusive education into the system of preschool educational organizations. It analyzes the importance of early socialization of children with special educational needs, as well as the role of an inclusive environment in shaping a tolerant society. Particular attention is paid to the psychological and pedagogical conditions necessary for successful integration, the professional competencies of teachers, and cooperation with the families of children. It is substantiated that inclusion in a preschool educational organization is an important foundation for ensuring equal starting opportunities at subsequent stages of education.

Keywords: Inclusive education, preschool education, children with special educational needs, special educational needs (SEN), autism spectrum disorders (ASD), socialization, adaptive educational environment, individual educational pathway (IEP), differentiated approach in education, internal differentiation, external differentiation, level-based differentiation, teaching methods.

Introduction: Inclusion is not merely joint education, but rather the transformation of the education system in accordance with the needs of each child. Preschool childhood is considered the most sensitive period for personality development.

The modern education system is undergoing a profound transformation, moving from the paradigm of “standardized teaching” to the paradigm of “education for all.” At the center of this transformation stands the concept of inclusion — a process that is far broader than the simple integration of children with developmental characteristics into mainstream groups. The relevance of this topic is determined not only by changes in legislation, but also by the deep humanitarian need of society to create an environment free from discrimination.

An inclusive preschool educational environment is a specially organized educational environment in which conditions are created for the joint upbringing and education of children with different educational needs, for their socialization, and for their полноценное personal development.

In recent years, the Republic of Uzbekistan has demonstrated a firm transition toward a model of an inclusive society in which the right to receive quality education does not depend on a child’s physical or mental characteristics. Within the framework of implementing the large-scale reforms defined in the “Uzbekistan – 2030” Strategy, inclusive preschool education is moving beyond the experimental stage and becoming a systemic priority at the state level.

The relevance of the topic lies in the fact that starting

from January 1, 2025, the introduction of specialized inclusive groups in state preschool educational organizations has begun in every district and city of the republic. In accordance with the Resolution of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Sh.M. Mirziyoyev “On measures to further improve the system of teaching and upbringing children with special educational needs” (No. PQ-4860) and subsequent normative legal acts, it is envisaged that by 2026 the coverage of children with inclusive education will reach a qualitatively new stage.

Today, the relevance of inclusion in Uzbekistan is determined by three main factors:

1. Demographic challenge: According to the data of the Statistics Agency for 2025–2026, more than 173 thousand children with disabilities under the age of 18 live in the country. Providing them with equal opportunities in early childhood is an important factor in their successful integration into economic and social life in the future.

2. Digital transformation: Beginning with the 2026/2027 academic year, the practice of maintaining a “child development card” is being introduced into the preschool education management information system. This makes it possible to monitor the developmental dynamics of each child, track the progress of children with special educational needs, and ensure continuity between preschool and school education.

3. International obligations: The ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities requires Uzbekistan to create a barrier-free environment. Projects implemented in cooperation with UNICEF are aimed at transforming preschool educational organizations into competence centers and enabling teachers to master universal design for learning methods.

The mission of inclusive education in preschool educational organizations of Uzbekistan is not limited to technically ensuring physical access to buildings, but also envisages the formation of a new social ethic.

In traditional Uzbek society, family and mahalla values occupy an important place. The mission of inclusion is to accept a child with special educational needs as a full member of society and to recognize his or her ability to contribute to overall development.

Engaging a child from an early age in the environment

of peers helps to eliminate stigmatization. When children with autism spectrum disorders (ASD), hearing impairments, or visual impairments play in the same group with typically developing peers, the foundations of tolerance are formed. In this process, the teacher’s task is to act as a facilitator, adapting the environment in such a way that the child’s individual characteristics do not become barriers to communication.

Investments made in inclusive preschool education (through the development of individual educational pathways — IEPs) serve to significantly reduce disability-related costs at subsequent stages. Children who have attended inclusive preschool educational organizations successfully master the school curriculum in 70% of cases and subsequently have the opportunity to receive vocational education.

Psychological and pedagogical technologies in inclusive education are based on the principles of humanistic pedagogy, individualization, and differentiation of education. Their main goal is to create favorable conditions for the development of each child while taking into account his or her psychophysiological characteristics.

The main principles include the following:

individual approach (taking into account the child’s pace of development and capabilities);

variability of educational pathways;

accessibility and convenience of the educational environment;

social integration and adaptation;

cooperation between teachers, psychologists, and parents.

In the context of Uzbekistan, these principles are being implemented within the framework of state policy aimed at humanizing education and creating a barrier-free educational environment.

In the process of modernizing the education system and actively introducing an inclusive approach, differentiated educational technology acquires particular importance as an effective means of ensuring accessibility and quality of education for all participants in the educational process. In an inclusive educational environment, where children with diverse educational needs study together, this technology is one of the main mechanisms for implementing the principles of

humanization, individualization, and variability of education.

Differentiated education is a form of organizing the educational process in which the individual characteristics of children are taken into account: the level of intellectual development, the pace of mastering material, cognitive interests, as well as special educational needs. Within the framework of inclusive education, this approach is especially relevant, since it serves to ensure equal access to education for children with special educational needs, autism spectrum disorders, developmental delays, and other characteristics.

The theoretical basis of differentiated educational technology is formed by learner-centered and activity-based approaches. At the center of the educational process is the child as an active subject with unique abilities and needs.

Differentiation implies not only adapting the content of educational material, but also changing teaching methods, forms, and pace in accordance with the individual characteristics of the learners.

In the practice of inclusive education, several types of differentiation are distinguished. First of all, this is internal differentiation, which is implemented within one group. In this case, the teacher offers tasks of varying levels of complexity and changes the volume and form of presenting the material.

External differentiation, in turn, involves organizing children into different groups taking into account their level of preparedness and developmental characteristics. In addition, level-based differentiation is also of great importance, where educational outcomes are planned on the basis of minimum, basic, and advanced levels of mastering the curriculum.

The implementation of differentiated educational technology in an inclusive environment requires the use of various pedagogical methods and techniques. These include adapting tasks, using visual and multimedia tools, organizing work in small groups, applying play-based and problem-based teaching methods, and introducing individual educational pathways. The use of visual support is particularly important when working with children with autism spectrum disorders. In addition, the use of corrective-developmental exercises for children with special educational needs is also

considered effective.

Pedagogical cooperation occupies a special place in the implementation of differentiated education. This process includes interaction among the teacher, psychologist, defectologist, and parents. A comprehensive approach makes it possible to identify difficulties arising in the educational process in a timely manner, adapt educational strategies, and ensure positive dynamics in the child's development. Creating a favorable psychological environment is also of particular importance as one of the important conditions of effectiveness, since it contributes to the development in children of a sense of acceptance, confidence, and motivation to learn.

Despite its clear advantages, the introduction of differentiated educational technology in inclusive practice is accompanied by a number of difficulties. These include insufficient teacher preparedness, limited educational and methodological resources, and the considerable amount of time required to develop differentiated assignments and individual educational programs. For this reason, improving the qualifications of teaching staff and developing methodological recommendations for the implementation of this technology are of urgent importance.

Differentiated educational technology is an integral component of inclusive education, ensuring that the individual characteristics of learners are taken into account and creating conditions for their successful development. Its application serves to improve the quality of education, enhance children's social adaptation, and foster an inclusive culture in society.

Teaching methods in inclusive preschool education constitute a set of ways of organizing pedagogical interaction that ensure the active involvement of all children in the educational process while taking into account their individual abilities and needs. Their selection depends on a number of factors: the age characteristics of preschool children, their level of development, the nature of their educational needs, and the specific features of the educational environment.

The theoretical basis for the use of teaching methods in inclusive practice is formed by the principles of learner-centered, activity-based, and competency-based approaches. At the center of the educational process is

the child as an active subject of activity, possessing unique experience, abilities, and developmental pace. This requires a flexible combination of various methods and their application in accordance with the individual characteristics of children.

In the structure of teaching methods in inclusive preschool education, verbal, visual, and practical methods are traditionally distinguished. Verbal methods (explanation, storytelling, conversation) are applied taking into account children's peculiarities of information perception, often accompanied by visual support, simplification of speech constructions, and repetition of key elements. Visual methods (demonstration, illustration, modeling) are important for forming ideas about the surrounding world and are especially effective for children who experience difficulties in perception or speech development. Practical methods (play exercises, productive activity, modeling of situations) serve to consolidate knowledge and skills in real or activity.

In the practice of inclusive preschool education, play methods are of particular importance, since play is the leading activity at this age stage. Play technologies help to develop children's communication skills, form social roles, develop the emotional sphere, and increase cognitive activity. In inclusive conditions, play also acts as a means of integrating children with different abilities, creating favorable conditions for their interaction and communication.

Among effective methods, problem-based play and heuristic methods should also be mentioned. They are aimed at developing children's thinking, independence, and creative activity and presuppose the creation of problem situations by the teacher. Such situations encourage the child to search for solutions, put forward hypotheses, and actively participate in the educational process.

In an inclusive environment, developmental-corrective teaching methods are widely used. They are aimed at eliminating or compensating for developmental difficulties and include speech therapy exercises, psychogymnastics, sensorimotor games, as well as elements of art therapy and music therapy. These methods ensure the development of speech, cognitive, and emotional-volitional processes and contribute to the harmonious development of the child as a

personality.

The method of individualization of education occupies a special place and is implemented through the development of individual educational pathways. Individualization makes it possible to take into account the child's developmental level, strengths, and difficulties, while ensuring optimal conditions for education and upbringing. Within the framework of this method, the teacher adapts the content of education, the pace and forms of work, and also determines the ways of assessing the child's achievements.

The use of information and communication technologies is of particular importance as an important component. They expand educational opportunities and make education more visual, understandable, and motivating. Interactive tools, multimedia resources, and digital applications make it possible to take into account various channels of information perception and help to master educational material more effectively.

The effectiveness of teaching methods in inclusive preschool education largely depends on the level of teachers' professional training, their readiness for innovative activity, and the proper organization of cooperation among specialists. Collaboration among the educator, psychologist, speech therapist, defectologist, and parents ensures a comprehensive approach to the child's development and increases the effectiveness of the educational process.

Despite the positive dynamics in the development of inclusive education, a number of problems remain in practice. They are related to the lack of sufficient methodological support, limited resources, and the need to improve the qualifications of teaching staff. In this regard, the development and implementation of modern methodological approaches aimed at improving the system of inclusive preschool education remain urgent tasks.

Teaching methods in inclusive preschool education constitute a flexible and variable system of pedagogical tools aimed at ensuring equal educational opportunities for all children. Their effective use contributes to the development of children's cognitive activity, strengthens social adaptation, and fosters the basic competencies necessary for successful life in modern society.

Today, Uzbekistan has set itself the large-scale goal of

forming a human-centered education system by 2030. Within this approach, it is precisely the preschool stage of education that acquires special importance as the “entry point.” Without ensuring successful initial education for inclusive children in preschool educational organizations, it is difficult to create equal opportunities at later stages — in higher education or in the labor market.

In conclusion, the mission of inclusion in Uzbekistan is to build a society of equal opportunities in which every child, regardless of his or her initial conditions, feels protected, needed, and valued.

Summarizing the results of this article, it can be emphasized that the system of inclusive preschool education is one of the important directions of modern pedagogy, aimed at ensuring the right of all children to education, taking into account their individual characteristics, and supporting their comprehensive development. The methods examined in the study — verbal, visual, practical, play-based, problem-heuristic, corrective-developmental, and individualization methods — produce the highest effectiveness when applied in harmony within the process of inclusive education.

In addition, the use of information and communication technologies serves to make the educational process more effective, interesting, and convenient. Teachers’ professional competence, readiness for innovative approaches, and cooperation among specialists and parents are decisive factors in improving the quality of inclusive education.

In general, inclusive preschool education fulfills not only an educational function, but also the task of shaping the ideas of social integration, equality, and tolerance. Therefore, by developing this system, opportunities are created to educate the younger generation as socially active individuals who think independently and are adapted to society.

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