



## ANALYSIS OF EXISTING METHODS FOR DEVELOPING PROFESSIONAL SKILLS OF PRESCHOOL TEACHERS

*Sulaymanova Maxbuba Alimjonovna*

*Researcher, Namangan State University, Uzbekistan*

### ABOUT ARTICLE

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**Abstract:** This article includes a study of existing approaches aimed at developing the professional skills of educators working in preschool educational institutions. The article analyzes various teaching and upbringing methods aimed at improving the quality of preschool education. Particular attention is paid to the effectiveness and application of various methodologies, including traditional and innovative approaches. The results of the research make it possible to determine the main factors of successful development of the professional skills of preschool educators and make recommendations for their further improvement. The obtained information can be useful for practicing teachers, administrators of preschool educational institutions, as well as researchers in the field of education and pedagogy.

### INTRODUCTION

The professional development of preschool teachers is critical to ensuring high-quality early childhood education. Given the formative nature of early years in a child's life, the role of preschool teachers cannot be understated. Consequently, various methods have been developed and implemented to enhance the skills of preschool educators. This article provides an analysis of existing methods for developing the professional skills of preschool teachers, focusing on their effectiveness, benefits, and potential areas for improvement.[1] With the recognition that early childhood is a formative period for cognitive, social, and emotional development, there has been a concerted effort globally to enhance the competencies of preschool educators. This article delves into the existing methods used to develop the professional skills of preschool teachers, examining their efficacy and areas for improvement.

One of the foundational methods for developing the professional skills of preschool teachers is through formal education and certification programs. These programs, typically offered by universities and

colleges, provide comprehensive training in child development, pedagogy, classroom management, and curriculum design. In many countries, obtaining a degree in early childhood education (ECE) is a prerequisite for becoming a preschool teacher.[2]

In-service training programs are among the most widely used methods for professional development. These programs are typically organized by educational institutions, governmental bodies, or non-profit organizations and are designed to provide ongoing training to teachers who are already working in the field. In-service training often includes workshops, seminars, and short courses focusing on specific areas such as child development, classroom management, and new educational technologies.

In the realm of early childhood education, the role of preschool teachers is paramount. Their ability to foster a nurturing, stimulating, and educational environment for young children lays the foundation for lifelong learning. However, the development of professional skills among preschool teachers is a multifaceted challenge that requires continuous attention and innovative approaches. This article examines existing methods for developing these essential skills, analyzing their effectiveness and identifying areas for improvement.[3]

Traditional professional development (PD) programs for preschool teachers typically include workshops, seminars, and conferences. These programs are often structured around specific educational themes or pedagogical techniques, providing teachers with theoretical knowledge and practical applications.

**Workshops and Seminars:** These are usually short-term and focus on specific topics such as classroom management, early literacy, or developmental psychology. They offer direct interaction with experts and peers, fostering a collaborative learning environment.

**Conferences:** Large-scale events that bring together educators from various regions to share research findings, best practices, and innovations in early childhood education.

**Mentoring and Coaching:** Mentoring and coaching involve more experienced educators providing guidance and support to less experienced teachers. This method is particularly effective for personalized professional development, as it allows for direct feedback and hands-on learning. Mentoring pairs less experienced teachers with veteran educators. This relationship provides support, guidance, and practical advice, fostering professional growth through shared experiences. Effective mentoring can significantly enhance teaching practices and professional confidence.

**Benefits:**

**Personalized Support:** Mentors can provide specific advice tailored to the individual needs of the teacher.

**Encourages Reflective Practice:** Regular interaction with a mentor encourages teachers to reflect on their teaching practices and make continuous improvements.

**PLCs are groups of educators who meet regularly to share expertise, collaborate on problem-solving, and improve teaching practices. This collaborative approach fosters a culture of continuous improvement and collective responsibility.[4]** PLCs are groups of educators who meet regularly to share expertise and work collaboratively to improve teaching skills and the academic performance of students. These communities provide a platform for teachers to discuss challenges, share strategies, and develop new teaching methodologies.

**Benefits:**

**Collaboration and Support:** Teachers benefit from the collective knowledge and experience of their peers.

**Sustained Professional Growth:** Ongoing meetings and discussions support long-term professional development.

**Online Training and Webinars:** With the advancement of technology, online training programs and webinars have become increasingly popular. These platforms offer flexibility and accessibility, allowing teachers to engage in professional development at their own pace and convenience. The digital age has brought about a proliferation of online courses and webinars. These platforms offer flexibility, allowing teachers to learn at their own pace and on their own schedules.[5] They also provide access to a vast array of resources and experts from around the world.

**Benefits:**

**Flexibility:** Teachers can access training materials and sessions at any time, making it easier to fit professional development into their schedules.

**Wide Range of Resources:** A plethora of online courses and webinars are available on various topics, providing teachers with a diverse range of learning opportunities.

**Formal Education and Advanced Degrees**

Pursuing advanced degrees or formal education programs, such as a master's degree in early childhood education, provides an in-depth and comprehensive approach to professional development. These programs typically cover advanced theories and practices in education, research methodologies, and specialized areas of interest. Various educational technology tools, such as online forums, digital libraries, and interactive platforms, support continuous learning and skill development. These tools facilitate the exchange of ideas and resources, enhancing the collaborative learning experience.

**Benefits:**

**In-depth Knowledge:** Provides a thorough understanding of educational theories and practices.

**Career Advancement:** Often required for higher-level positions and can lead to better job opportunities and higher salaries.

**Reflective Journals and Portfolios:** Encouraging teachers to engage in reflective practice helps them to critically evaluate their teaching methods and outcomes. Reflective journals and portfolios allow teachers to document their experiences, reflect on their professional growth, and set future goals. Encouraging teachers to engage in reflective practice and self-directed learning empowers them to take ownership of their professional development.[6] Techniques such as journaling, peer observations, and action research projects are commonly used.

**Action Research:** Action research involves teachers systematically investigating their own practice to improve their teaching and their students' learning. This method promotes a culture of continuous improvement and professional inquiry.[7]

**Effectiveness:** Studies show that the most effective professional development methods are those that are ongoing, collaborative, and closely tied to teachers' daily work. Methods that incorporate active learning and provide continuous support tend to be more successful in improving teaching practices.[8]

**Challenges:** Common obstacles include limited funding, time constraints, and varying levels of administrative support. Additionally, the diverse contexts of preschool education necessitate tailored approaches, as a one-size-fits-all model is often inadequate.[9]

**Overall Analysis:**

Effective professional development for preschool teachers requires a multi-faceted approach that blends formal, informal, and technology-based methods. It should be:

**Continuous:** Lifelong learning is essential for staying current with evolving research and best practices.

Context-Specific: Training should address the specific needs of the teachers, their students, and the learning environment.

Collaborative: Encouraging collaboration and peer learning fosters a culture of continuous improvement.

Evaluated: Assessing the effectiveness of professional development programs ensures that they are meeting their goals and contributing to teacher growth.

By investing in high-quality professional development, we empower preschool teachers to continually enhance their skills and provide the best possible learning experiences for young children.

Conclusion. The development of professional skills for preschool teachers is multifaceted, involving a range of methods each with its own strengths and challenges. In-service training, mentoring, PLCs, online training, and formal education all play crucial roles in enhancing the capabilities of early childhood educators. A combination of these methods, tailored to the specific needs and contexts of teachers, is likely to be the most effective approach. Continuous evaluation and adaptation of these methods are essential to ensure they meet the evolving demands of early childhood education and effectively support the professional growth of preschool teachers. Formal education and certification provide a solid foundation, while CPD, mentorship, collaborative learning communities, and technology-enhanced learning offer ongoing support and enrichment. Each method has its strengths and challenges, and the most effective professional development programs often combine several approaches to create a comprehensive support system for educators. As the field of early childhood education continues to evolve, so too must the strategies for developing the professional skills of those who are instrumental in shaping young minds.

Developing the professional skills of preschool teachers is a complex and ongoing process that benefits from a multifaceted approach. Traditional PD programs, mentorship and coaching, online learning, collaborative communities, in-service training, and reflective practice all offer valuable methods for enhancing teacher competence. However, the most effective professional development strategies are those that are personalized, sustainable, and adaptable to the evolving needs of educators and the children they serve. By combining various methods and continuously assessing their impact, we can ensure that preschool teachers are well-equipped to provide high-quality early childhood education.

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