



PRACTICAL POSSIBILITIES OF DEVELOPING CREATIVE IMAGINATION (ON THE EXAMPLE OF PRESCHOOL-AGE CHILDREN)

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ABSTRACT. *This study explores the practical possibilities of developing creative imagination in preschool children. The research analyses the role of play activities, visual arts, fairy tales, and role-playing games in shaping children's creative thinking. It also highlights the importance of teachers and educators, as well as the use of innovative methods and modern pedagogical technologies in this process. The results of the study aim to propose effective approaches for fostering creative imagination in preschool educational institutions.*


Keywords: *creative imagination, preschool education, child development, play activity, visual arts, pedagogical technologies, innovative methods, creativity, education, psychological development.*

INTRODUCTION

In the era of rapid globalisation and the swift development of information technologies, one of the most important tasks facing society is to nurture a well-rounded, independent-thinking, and creative individual. In particular, the preschool period — considered the earliest stage of childhood — plays a decisive role in the intellectual, emotional, and social development of the individual. For this reason, the task of forming and developing creative imagination in children during this very period is regarded as one of the most pressing pedagogical and psychological challenges.

Creative imagination reflects a person's capacity to create something new, to interpret existing knowledge and experience in a novel way. The development of creative imagination in preschool-age children is a crucial factor in shaping their perception of the surrounding world, broadening the scope of their thinking, fostering independent thought, and developing the ability to find unconventional solutions to problem situations. From this perspective, developing creative imagination is an essential condition not only for the individual development of children but also for raising a well-rounded generation capable of contributing to the progress of society in the future.

Today, special attention is paid to developing children's creative abilities within the preschool education system. Contemporary pedagogical approaches are aimed at supporting children's free thinking, independent activity, and creativity. In particular, broad opportunities are being created through play activities, visual arts, music lessons, fairy tales, dramatisation, and role-playing games to develop children's creative imagination. At the same time, the professional competence of teachers and educators, and their ability to apply innovative methods, directly affects the effectiveness of this process.



The relevance of this topic lies in the fact that identifying effective ways to develop creative imagination in preschool-age children and introducing them into practice is one of the priority directions of today's education system. Children who possess creative thinking will grow into individuals capable of independently solving various problems, advancing innovative ideas, and making original decisions in the future.

The aim of the research is to study the practical possibilities of developing creative imagination in preschool-age children and to identify effective methods and tools. To achieve this aim, the pedagogical conditions, methods, and techniques that serve to develop children's creative activity are analysed, and their practical effectiveness is examined.

The object of the research is the creative imagination process of preschool-age children, while the subject is the pedagogical and psychological possibilities of developing this process. The study employs methods such as observation, conversation, analysis, and pedagogical experimentation.

The scientific and practical significance of this work lies in the development of effective approaches aimed at fostering creative imagination in children at preschool educational institutions and in the formulation of recommendations for their implementation in practice. The results may serve as an important methodological guide for teachers, educators, and parents.

MAIN BODY

The preschool age is considered one of the most important stages in the formation of a child's personality. It is precisely during this period that the child's psychological processes — including perception, thinking, speech, memory, and in particular imagination — develop actively. Imagination manifests itself as a person's ability to create images not existing in real life, to reprocess existing representations, and to form new ideas. Creative imagination, in contrast to ordinary imagination, serves to create novelty and to advance unconventional thoughts.

The development of creative imagination in preschool-age children is inseparably connected with their daily activities. As a child explores the surrounding environment, he or she expands his or her representations, and this process creates the foundation for the formation of creative imagination. For example, activities such as creating various images from ordinary objects, imagining fairy-tale characters in one's own way, and inventing various situations develop creative imagination in children.

One of the most effective tools for developing creative imagination in children is play activity. Play is the leading activity of a preschool-age child; through it, a child not only rests but also expresses his or her inner world. Role-playing games, dramatic games, construction games, and plot-based games enrich children's imagination. For example, through role-playing games such as 'doctor and patient', 'teacher and student', 'shopkeeper and customer', a child masters various social roles and creates new images. This has a positive effect on the development of creative imagination.



Visual activity also occupies an important place in developing creative imagination. Through drawing, clay modelling, and appliqué work, a child brings his or her representations into visual form. In this process the child chooses colours, modifies shapes, and creates new images. Visual activity develops not only children's aesthetic sense but also their capacity for independent thought. Most importantly, this type of activity grants the child freedom — that is, the child creates according to his or her own wishes — and this is the primary condition of the creative process.

Fairy tales and literary works are also of great importance in developing creative imagination in children. In the process of listening to fairy tales and retelling them, the child visualises events in his or her imagination and depicts characters in his or her own way. Furthermore, activities such as inventing new events based on a fairy tale or giving the story a different ending develop children's creative thinking. In particular, folk fairy tales and stories rich in fantasy elements foster broad imagination and free thinking in children.

Music also has its own distinctive role in developing creative imagination. Music lessons enrich children's emotional state, develop their sense of rhythm, and through this they learn to express their representations through movement and images. For example, performing movements to match music, dancing, or composing a story based on music develops children's creative thinking.

Contemporary pedagogical approaches recommend the use of interactive methods for developing creative imagination in children. Such methods include 'brainstorming', 'clustering', 'role-playing', and 'creating problem situations'. These methods encourage children's independent thinking and prompt them to participate actively. For example, asking children questions such as 'What would you do if you were a magician?' broadens their scope of imagination.

The role of teachers and educators in developing creative imagination is invaluable. They must create a free environment for children, support their ideas, and encourage them without criticism. If a child can freely express his or her thoughts, he or she feels confident, and this further strengthens the creative process. It is also important for the teacher to take into account the individual characteristics of each child and to work with each one separately.

The family also plays a great role in developing creative imagination. Parents playing games together with children, reading books, and engaging in various creative activities has a positive effect on children's development. Being attentive to children's questions and supporting their interests is particularly important.

It is necessary to create special conditions in preschool educational institutions for developing creative imagination. These include organising creative corners, providing various didactic materials, and giving children the opportunity for free choice. For example, various colours, paper, construction sets, and puppet theatre materials support children's creative activity.

Furthermore, the use of information technologies also creates new opportunities for developing creative imagination. Children acquire new knowledge in an engaging form.



through interactive games and multimedia programmes. However, it is important to use these tools in moderation, since excessive technology use can diminish children's capacity for independent imagination.

Table 1
Practical possibilities of developing creative imagination

Activity Type	Methods Used	Aspects Developed	Practical Outcome
Play Activity	Role-playing, plot-based games	Imagination, social role understanding, creativity	Child creates new images, thinks independently
Visual Activity	Drawing, appliqué, clay modelling	Aesthetic sense, fantasy, expanded imagination	Child expresses imagination in visual form
Fairy Tales & Stories	Storytelling, dramatisation	Speech, figurative thinking, imagination	Child modifies events and creates new content
Musical Activity	Singing, dancing, rhythmic movement	Emotional development, sense of rhythm	Child expresses images and feelings through music
Construction Activity	Building and assembly games	Logical thinking, imagination, problem-solving	Child creates new shapes and models
Interactive Methods	Brainstorming, clustering, problem situations	Independent thinking, rapid decision-making	Child proposes unconventional ideas
Information Technologies	Multimedia games, interactive software	Interest, innovative thinking	Child develops creatively through modern tools
Family Activities	Joint play, reading together	Emotional closeness, support	Child feels free and becomes creatively active

Pedagogical Approach	Encouragement, creating a free environment	Confidence, independence, creative activity	Child expresses ideas freely
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CONCLUSION

The issue of developing creative imagination in preschool-age children is one of the most important and pressing directions of the contemporary education system. It is precisely during this period that the foundation is laid for the formation of the child's personality, the development of his or her thinking, imagination, and creative potential. Creative imagination occupies an important place not only in a person's aesthetic and artistic activity but also in everyday life — in solving problems, advancing new ideas, and making innovative decisions.

The analyses carried out within this study showed that developing creative imagination in preschool-age children is a multifaceted and complex process shaped by various factors. Above all, the child's interaction with the surrounding environment, his or her active participation, and free thinking form the basis of this process. For this reason, creating a comfortable and stimulating environment for the child's creative activity is of paramount importance.

The research results demonstrated that play activity is one of the most effective tools for developing creative imagination. In particular, through role-playing and plot-based games, children master various social situations, create new images, and enrich their imagination. At the same time, visual activity — that is, drawing, clay modelling, and appliqué work — broadens children's fantasy and allows them to express their inner world.


Fairy tales, stories, and dramatisation activities also occupy an important place in developing creative imagination. Through such activities, children visualise events, modify them, and create new content. This develops not only their imagination but also their speech, emotional world, and social skills. Musical activity enriches children's emotional sphere and encourages them to think in images.

Contemporary pedagogical technologies and interactive methods are creating new opportunities for developing creative imagination. Methods such as 'brainstorming', 'clustering', and 'problem situations' activate children's independent thinking and encourage them to engage in creative inquiry. At the same time, the rational use of information and communication technologies increases children's interest and makes the process of acquiring knowledge even more effective.

The role of teachers and educators is particularly emphasised here. They must create a comfortable psychological environment for children, support their ideas, and encourage their creative initiatives. The teacher's professional competence, ability to apply innovative approaches, and individual attention to each child are important factors in the successful development of creative imagination.

The family environment is also of great significance in this process. Parents engaging in creative activities together with children, supporting their interests, and creating space for





free thinking has a positive effect on children's creative development. In an environment where a child feels free and confident, his or her creative potential is manifested more fully.

In general, developing creative imagination in preschool-age children is a continuous, systematic, and purposeful process carried out on the basis of a harmonious combination of play, education, and upbringing. In this process, cooperation between teachers, parents, and educational institutions plays an important role.

In conclusion, it can be said that by widely introducing effective methods and tools aimed at developing creative imagination in children, using contemporary pedagogical approaches, and creating a conducive creative environment, it is possible to nurture well-rounded, independently thinking, and creative individuals. This will serve as an important factor in raising the intellectual potential of society and ensuring its sustainable development in the future.

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