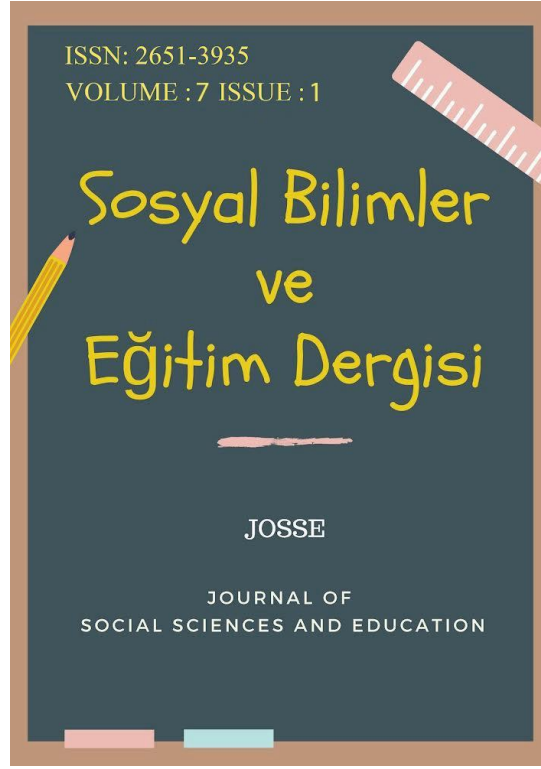


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**Examination of Preschool Citizenship Education in Terms of Program and Teachers' Views\***

*This study is derived from the master's thesis titled " Examination of Preschool Citizenship Education in Terms of Program and Teachers' Views".*

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## **Examination of Preschool Citizenship Education in Terms of Program and Teachers' Views\***

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### **Abstract**

In this study, it was aimed to determine the opinions of preschool teachers about citizenship education and to make evaluations for citizenship education in line with the findings. For this purpose, the research was shaped by a case study, one of the qualitative research methods. In determining the sample, the 'convenience sampling' technique, which is one of the 'purposive sampling' methods, was used. In this study, a semi-structured interview form prepared by the researcher was used. The semi-structured interview form prepared within the scope of the research was applied to 25 preschool teachers working in pre-school education institutions. The analysis of the data obtained in the research was evaluated with content analysis. Findings related to the research are presented in 8 main themes and categories. As a result of the research; It is seen that the knowledge of pre-school teachers about the concept of citizenship education is sufficient. It was stated that social participation, respect, patriotism, love, belonging, sensitivity, cooperation, responsibility, empathy, critical thinking, tolerance, helpfulness skills and values should be given within the scope of citizenship education in the preschool period. Teachers stated that the acquisitions in the pre-school education program are not fully sufficient in terms of citizenship education, but they can be improved because it is a flexible program. It has been concluded that if appropriate activities for citizenship education are planned, taking into account the age levels of children in the pre-school period, children's perspectives on the concept of citizenship can be improved. The practices most recommended by teachers for citizenship education were "field trips". The teachers stated that the concepts related to citizenship education should be embodied with activities because the age groups of children in the pre-school period are small. 44% of pre-school teachers find the readiness of preschool children sufficient in terms of citizenship education. In addition, it has been determined that there are 1 acquisitions in the field of cognitive development related to citizenship education and 8 acquisitions in the field of social and emotional development in the preschool education program.

**Keywords:** Preschool period, citizenship education, preschool teachers, preschool program" ve " curriculum"

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### **Research Article**

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## **Introduction**

Since humans are social beings, the need to adapt to society begins from an early age. In order to achieve this harmony, school is an important tool and prepares oneself for life thanks to the education given at school. Thanks to the education received at school, the individual has a broader knowledge about society. One of the aims of national education is to prepare the individual for the society he lives in and teach him the way to become an active citizen. It achieves this aim mostly through citizenship education.

The social institution that has the greatest impact on the child's personality and behavioral development is the family. Since school is the first social environment that the child encounters in terms of formal education, its impact on the child's cognitive and affective development is important. Teachers, who are important role models especially in the school and classroom environment, play a key role in helping children acquire effective citizenship behaviors. Because the communication a teacher establishes with his student during the day leaves a permanent mark on the individual's life. Therefore, effective citizenship education can only be achieved if teachers have sufficient knowledge and experience about human rights, citizenship, freedoms and democracy and use this knowledge in their daily behaviors (Göz, 2010).

Citizenship education is an educational process that prepares people for life because it considers people and the environment together. Citizenship education helps the individual to know himself and his environment. At the same time, since this education cannot be considered separately from daily life, it is an education that must be continued at every moment of life (İkinci, 2016).

Citizenship education should begin with the individual being curious about himself. Starting citizenship education at an early age makes it easier for children to adapt to social life. Children in the 0-6 age group, which is considered as the pre-school period, begin to get to know life by being curious about themselves and their environment. In order for this discovery process to be systematic and orderly, there is a need for systematic and programmed training. Therefore, citizenship education is very important in the preschool period.

After the family, the first environment the child will encounter in terms of socialization is school and the guide he will encounter is the teacher. Since the child is in school from an early age, his behavior is shaped by his experiences at school. Teachers should see themselves as guides in this regard and should take care to ensure that their words and

actions are consistent. Since teachers' behaviors and attitudes affect children greatly, it is important that they have the necessary knowledge, skills and equipment regarding citizenship education (Göz, 2010).

When we look at pre-school social studies education, unlike Turkey, it is taught from an early age in many countries. In the USA, one of these countries, there is social studies education in pre-school. In the USA, each state has its own social studies curriculum (Aktın and Dilek, 2014). Citizenship education is provided within this program. In the history and social sciences framework program of Massachusetts, a state of the USA, its aim for the preschool period is to develop children's citizenship and identity acquisitions (MHSSCF, 2003; cited in Aktın and Dilek, 2014). In the program, when teaching social science subjects in the preschool period, the child himself is first addressed, and then the environment approach, which expands to his family, school, society, state and country, is adopted (MHSSCF, 2003; cited in Aktın and Dilek, 2014). Citizenship education is included in the preschool curriculum of many states of the USA, such as the state of Massachusetts.

Citizenship education has an important place in preparing people in society for life, and therefore citizenship education should have an important place in the pre-school period, which is the first step of adapting to society. Since preschool children are curious about discovering themselves and their environment, the citizenship education received during this period can be permanent. If the basic skills related to active citizenship are taught to children during this period, it will be easier for them to adapt to society in the future, and generations will grow up that acquire the skills of cooperation in society.

When we look at the studies in the literature, most of them are studies that include the subject of citizenship education in the social studies course (Ersoy, 2007., Göz, 2010., Meray et al. 2012., Hablemitoğlu and Özmete, 2012., Yılmaz, 2013) or studies of branch teachers on citizenship education. These are studies that include opinions (Bıçak, 2018., Genç and Dilek, 2018., Güven et al., 2009). There are studies on world citizenship in the preschool period and studies on teaching social studies in preschool (Neslitürk and Ersoy, 2013., Öner, 2018., Aktın, 2014., Güzelyurt et al., 2020., Ceylan, 2014). When we look at the international literature, citizenship and democracy education begins in the pre-school period (Balias et al., 2011, Balake et al., 2003, Turnšek, 2009).

This research aims to examine and evaluate the preschool education program and preschool teachers' views on the concept of citizenship and citizenship education. For this purpose, answers were sought to the following questions:

According to preschool teachers, what is the definition of citizenship and citizenship education?

- According to preschool teachers, what skills/values are imparted to children regarding citizenship education in the preschool period?
- According to preschool teachers, to what extent do they find it sufficient in terms of citizenship education, considering the achievements in the preschool education program?
- According to preschool teachers, what teaching methods are used for citizenship education in the preschool period?
- According to preschool teachers, what kind of practices (activities) are carried out for citizenship education, taking into account the achievements of the preschool education program?
- According to pre-school teachers, what kind of activities or studies are recommended in pre-school education in order to provide citizenship education at an adequate and desired level?
- According to preschool teachers, what are the difficulties they face when implementing citizenship education in the preschool education program?
- According to preschool teachers, what do they think about the readiness of preschool children for citizenship education?

## **Method**

### **Model**

This research aims to determine the opinions of preschool teachers about citizenship education and to make evaluations for citizenship education in line with the findings. To achieve this aim, qualitative research method was applied. Qualitative research offers the opportunity to examine events and situations in a natural environment and can also be defined as research in which the process of emergence of events is monitored in a realistic and holistic way in a qualitative way (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2018). “When doing research on a certain subject, qualitative researchers want to get a much broader perspective than learning how much or how good that subject is” (Büyüköztürk, et al. 2018).

In this research, the case study approach was chosen to be used among qualitative research designs. In addition, in the research, a document review was conducted to examine

the scope of the achievements in the 2013 pre-school education program in terms of citizenship education. Document review is a method of analyzing written materials in terms of research target, situation and phenomenon (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2018).

### **Study Group**

The study group of this research consists of 25 preschool teachers working in kindergartens and kindergartens affiliated with Nevşehir Provincial Directorate of National Education during the 2021-2022 academic year. 'Easily accessible case sampling' technique, one of the 'purposeful sampling' methods, was used to determine the sample. "Here, the researcher chooses the most accessible one until he reaches a group of the size he needs" (Büyüköztürk, et al. 2018).

**Table 1**

*Gender Information About the Working Group*

Gender	n	%
Female	22	88
Male	3	12
Total	25	100

Of the 25 participants, 22 are women and only 3 are men. When we look at the percentage values of these data, the rate of women participating in the study group is 88%, while the rate of men is 12%.

**Table 2**

*Education Level of the Working Group*

Education Level	N	%
Licence	23	92
Postgraduate	2	8
Total	25	100

When the education level of the 25 teachers participating in the research is examined, the following distribution is observed in terms of whether they have an associate degree, bachelor's degree or master's degree: 2 teachers have a master's degree and 23 teachers have a bachelor's degree. Teachers with a bachelor's degree constitute 92% of the research.

**Table 3**

*Professional Seniority Regarding the Work Group*

<b>Professional seniority</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
1 - 5 year	1	4
6 - 10 year	7	28
11 - 15 year	9	36
16 yıl and above	8	32
<b>Total</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>100</b>

It is seen that the professional experience of the participants is "11 - 15 years" at most with 36% and "1 - 5 years" with at least 4%. The maximum professional experience is seen as between 11 and 15 years, and the number of participants in this range is 9. The number of participants with professional experience between 1 and 5 years, which constitutes the lowest rate with 4%, is 1.

**Data Collection Tool**

In this study, the interview method, one of the qualitative data collection tools, was used. A semi-structured interview form prepared by the researcher was used to examine the opinions of preschool teachers working in Nevşehir regarding citizenship education in the preschool period. "Semi-structured interviews combine both fixed-choice answering and the ability to go in-depth in the relevant area. Therefore, this type of interview contains the advantages and disadvantages of other methods" (Büyüköztürk et al., 2018).

While preparing the semi-structured interview form, a draft of the list of questions was first created. The opinions of 5 experts (2 social studies education experts, 2 pre-school education experts, 1 measurement and evaluation expert) were taken to determine the content validity of the prepared draft interview form. Corrections were made to the draft interview form depending on the opinions received from the experts. Then, a pilot application was conducted with 3 preschool teachers to determine whether the questions in the interview form were understood correctly and to increase its validity. The purpose and importance of the study was explained to the teachers participating in the pilot application before the preliminary interviews, and the participant's permission was obtained. No changes were made to the interview form after the feedback received from the pilot application, and the application was a preliminary preparation for the researcher.

The data collection tool consists of 2 parts. The first section includes demographic information such as teachers' gender, education level, professional seniority, and the university they graduated from. The second section includes the general opinions of preschool teachers regarding citizenship education. In the study, 8 open-ended interview questions were determined and applied to the participants within the scope of examining the views of preschool teachers on citizenship education.

### **Collection of Data and Analysis**

The subject of "Examination of Preschool Citizenship Education in Terms of Program and Teacher Opinions" was discussed in order to reveal the thoughts of pre-school teachers about citizenship education in the pre-school period, to identify the applied methods, techniques and activities, and to determine the suggestions of pre-school teachers regarding citizenship education and the points they have difficulties with. research has started.

Preschool teachers were determined in accordance with the method, purpose, sample and data collection tool of the research. Before the interview, the preschool teachers who made up the study group were contacted and the necessary information was provided about the purpose and scope of the research. Preschool teachers who participated in the research voluntarily were included.

The semi-structured interview form prepared within the scope of the research was applied to 25 preschool teachers working in preschool education institutions in Nevşehir. A semi-structured interview form was delivered to teachers face to face or online. Semi-structured interview forms were filled out by volunteer preschool teachers. The duration of filling out the interview forms was kept flexible and took approximately 15-20 minutes. The forms were delivered face to face to some of the pre-school teachers. A common available time slot has been determined with the teachers we provide face to face. After the interview was timed to coincide with the children's dismissal time from school, the teachers filled out the form and completed the interview process in approximately 15-20 minutes. The time period of the preschool teachers to whom we delivered the form online has been more flexible.

In the study, content analysis was used to analyze the opinions of preschool teachers about citizenship education. Content analysis is "a technique that allows working indirectly on determining human behavior and nature" (Büyüköztürk et al., 2018, p. 259). In content analysis, certain concepts related to a subject are revealed and the data is categorized and



analyzed. For this reason, the data collected through content analysis is defined and the facts that may exist in the data are tried to be brought to light (Büyüköztürk, et al., 2018).

In the content analysis, similar data were numbered according to the answers given by the participants in the study and codes were made within the scope of certain concepts and themes. The codes obtained from the data collected within the scope of the research were placed in the themes previously determined as a result of the literature review and tabulated with frequency and percentage values.

In the data analysis, firstly, the answers given by the preschool teachers were transcribed. The opinions of the 25 transcribed participants were re-read and temporary codes were created and listed. Later, similar codes were combined to create common themes. The codes were organized and defined according to these co-created themes. After the created themes were tabulated, expert opinion was taken and the missing parts of the themes were arranged accordingly. This organized information was tabulated and explained appropriately. The research process and data analysis were supervised by the consultant.

In order to increase the validity of the research, quotes were made from the opinions of the preschool teachers who participated in the interview. Since the opinions of the preschool teachers participating in the research would be revealed, their names were not used directly. While the teachers' opinions were conveyed, direct quotations were made by giving numbers such as 'T 1', 'T 2', 'T 3', ... 'T 25' to the relevant teachers.

In order to ensure the reliability of the research, the feasibility of the research was tried to be determined with the help of the researcher and 5 experts in parts such as data collection tool and data analysis. The data took its final form by making necessary corrections in line with expert opinions.

### **Ethical Committee Approval**

This study was prepared as a master's thesis on "Examination of Preschool Citizenship Education in Terms of Program and Teachers' Views" at Nevşehir Hacı Bektaş Veli University, Institute of Social Sciences, with the ethics committee decision numbered 2021.10.391.

## Findings

The chapter includes themes, codes, opinions of preschool teachers, findings and comments. Participating teachers' views on citizenship education in the preschool period are presented in eight themes.

**Table 4**

*Themes*

Sıra	
1	Definition of Citizenship Education
2	Skills and Values
3	Citizenship Education in the Content of Pre-School Education Program
4	Methods and Techniques Used for Citizenship Education
5	Activities Implemented for Citizenship Education
6	Activity and Application Recommendations
7	Situations Where Application Is Difficult
8	Readiness

### Findings on Preschool Teachers' Definitions of Citizenship Education

In this section, in order to determine what teachers' definitions of citizenship education are, the question "What is the definition of citizenship education in your opinion?" The question was posed. The themes, frequencies and percentages related to this question are given in Table 2.

**Table 5**

*Teacher Opinions on the Definition of Citizenship Education*

Theme 1. Citizenship Education Definition	f	%
Awareness of duties and responsibilities	9	35
Teaching legal rights and rules	5	20
Ensuring the socialization of the individual	4	15
Formation of identity and culture consciousness	4	15
Bringing patriotism to life	4	15
Total	26	100

Teachers' answers to the question "What is the definition of citizenship education in your opinion?" vary. Of the teachers participating in the research, 35% said "awareness of duties and responsibilities", 20% said "teaching legal rights and rules", 15% said "ensuring

the socialization of the individual", 15% said "formation of identity and cultural awareness", other % said. 15 of them were defined as "gaining the love of the country".

When we look at the frequency values, it can be seen that the most frequently answered answer is "awareness of duties and responsibilities" (f = 9). Some teachers' opinions regarding the definition of citizenship education are as follows:

“In my opinion, citizenship education is the process of creating social awareness and adapting to social life” (T 1). “It is the teaching of citizens to know their duties and responsibilities towards each other and the state and to fulfill them” (T 2).

“Citizenship education is a concept that informs people living on the same piece of land and belonging to the same state, what should be done for this homeland, our rights, freedoms and duties” (T 7).

“Citizenship education creates environmental, history and cultural awareness in accordance with the values of the environment, culture and social structure. "To provide education in order to raise societies that are respectful and sensitive to the rights of themselves and others, and that love and appreciate the homeland, nation and flag" (T 16).

"To raise individuals who understand and embrace Turkish culture, respect human rights, are sensitive to the environment they live in, and behave loyally to the state" (T 21).

“I think it is education that plans to teach the people of a country information about their homeland, nation, state, and their basic rights and duties while living in this country” (T 22).

“Citizenship education is an education that helps society learn its own duties and responsibilities, in the light of Ataturk's principles and reforms” (T 25).

When we look at the opinions of preschool teachers, it is seen that there is no single definition of citizenship education. Teachers participating in the research think that citizenship education is given primarily for the purpose of "awareness of duties and responsibilities". Later, it was seen that the teachers who defined citizenship education expressed their opinions about the "teaching of legal rights and rules" situation that they focused on.

### **Teacher Opinions on the Skills and Values Gained in Children within the Scope of Citizenship Education in the Preschool Period**

“What skills/values are imparted to children within the scope of citizenship education in the pre-school period?” Findings regarding the answers obtained by asking the question are given.

**Table 6***Skills and Values Acquired within the Scope of Citizenship Education*

<b>Theme 2. Skills and Values</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>
Social participation	11	21
Respect	9	17
Patriotism	7	13
Love	5	10
Belong to	5	10
Sensitivity	4	8
Partnership	3	6
Responsibility	2	4
Empathy	2	4
Critical thinking	2	4
Tolerance	1	2
Helpfulness	1	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>100</b>

The skills and values gained by children within the scope of citizenship education are seen. When we look at the answers given by the teachers, the skill "Social participation" is included at most with a rate of 21%. Then 17% "Respect", 13% "Patriotism", 10% "Love", 10% "Belonging", 8% "Sensitivity", 6% "Cooperation", 4% "Responsibility", 4% "Empathy" Findings were obtained regarding the values of 4% "Critical thinking", 2% "Tolerance", 2% "Helpfulness".

When we look at the frequency values, teachers responded the most to the "Social participation" (f=11) skill. It is seen that the values that the teachers participating in the research give the least importance are "Tolerance" (f=1) and "Helpfulness" (f=1). Preschool teachers' opinions about the skills and values acquired by children within the scope of citizenship education are listed below:

“In pre-school, skills such as empathy, social participation and cooperation are taught, while values such as respect, love and tolerance are taught” (T 1).

“In pre-school citizenship education, we should teach the name of the country we live in, the name of the land we live in, how these lands were acquired, the need to work hard to ensure our sense of belonging, unity and solidarity, whatever profession we do, it is important to do it in the best way, to develop a sense of responsibility and to include values for these.” (T 7).

“Values such as love for Atatürk, love for the homeland and flag, respect for the rights of others, respect for differences, and being sensitive to the environment can be taught. Within

the scope of values education, patriotism, cooperation, cooperation, etc. values can be given. Topics such as democracy, voting, human rights may be included” (T 16).

"Pre-school education includes skills and values related to raising individuals who are sensitive to the environment they live in, respectful to people, have developed social participation skills, and have adopted Turkish culture" (T 21).

“Within the scope of pre-school citizenship education; "Love of the homeland, love of the flag, knowing Atatürk, devotion to Atatürk's thoughts and principles, love for Atatürk, skills and values for using Turkish correctly and beautifully are gained" (T 22).

“Children are provided with group studies, that is, they work collaboratively, on how to behave in society. Self-respect is gained, and then respect for society and the environment is gained” (T 25).

When we look at the answers of the teachers participating in the research regarding the skills and values that should be taught within the scope of citizenship education in the preschool period, it is seen that they think that social participation skills, respect and patriotism values should be given first. It seems that the answers given by the teachers comply with the framework of their answers regarding the definitions of citizenship education.

### **Findings Regarding the Evaluation of the Adequacy of the Acquisitions in the Preschool Education Program in Terms of Citizenship Education**

In order to evaluate the adequacy of the achievements in the pre-school education program in terms of citizenship education, the question "Considering the achievements in the pre-school education program, to what extent do you find them sufficient in terms of citizenship education?" The question was directed to the teachers who participated in the research. The theme, frequency numbers and percentages related to this question are included.

**Table 7**

*Teachers' Opinions on Citizenship Education in the Preschool Education Program Content*

<b>Theme 3. Citizenship Education in Preschool Education Program Content</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>
Partially Sufficient	15	60
Sufficient	7	28
Insufficient	3	12
Total	25	100

When the findings are examined, 60%, or more than half, of the participants think that pre-school achievements are "partially sufficient" in terms of citizenship education. It is seen that 28% answered "sufficient" and the remaining 12% answered "insufficient". When we look at the frequency distributions, we see that the "partially adequate" (f=15) response is repeated the most, while the "inadequate" (f=3) response is the least frequently repeated. Teacher opinions are as follows:

**Partially sufficient:** "There are achievements related to what they have learned about the rules in social life and that support self-confidence. In this respect, I think it is partially sufficient. It can take part in gains in citizenship awareness" (T 4).

"When we look at the achievements in pre-school, I see them as partially sufficient within the scope of citizenship education. It needs to be developed further. Acquisitions related to citizenship can be directly included" (T 19).

"I find it partially sufficient. When the achievements are examined, it is seen that some of the achievements are related to citizenship education, but the number of these achievements can be increased (T 25).

**Adequate:** "I find the achievements sufficient within the scope of citizenship education. In the field of social development, there are achievements related to citizenship education" (T 1).

"This age group is very important because the child's personality structure is formed in this period and the basic rules are acquired in this period. The gains are sufficient. "There are achievements aimed at taking responsibility, noticing the events in the environment, and revealing social awareness" (T 20).

"In my opinion, the achievements in the pre-school education program are very appropriate, clear, understandable and sufficient for the pre-school student's knowledge and skill level" (T 22).

**Insufficient:** "I do not find the achievements regarding citizenship education in the program sufficient. I think additions can be made" (T 7).

"I do not think that the achievements in citizenship education are sufficient. When we look at the number of achievements in the program, it seems that additions regarding citizenship education should be made" (T 10).

### **Findings on the Methods and Techniques Used for Citizenship Education in the Preschool Period**

This section contains findings regarding the methods and techniques used by preschool teachers participating in the research for citizenship education. Regarding this scope, the participants were asked: "Which teaching methods do you use for citizenship education in the pre-school period?" From where?" The question was asked and the answers were received.

**Table 8**

*Opinions on the Methods and Techniques Used for Citizenship Education*

<b>Theme 4. Methods and techniques used for citizenship education</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>
Show and Don't Do	6	19
Drama	6	19
Lecture (Presentation)	4	13
Collaborative Learning	4	13
Question answer	4	13
Brainstorming	3	10
Case study	2	6
Educational Games	2	6
Total	31	100

The methods and techniques used by teachers are included. 19% of the participants said "Show and don't do", 19% said "Drama method", 13% said "Lecture method", 13% said "Collaborative learning method", 13% said "Question and answer method", % It is seen that 10 of them answered "Brainstorming", 6% answered "Case study method", and 6% answered "Educational games". When we look at the frequency values, the teachers mostly gave answers to the methods and techniques of "Show and make others do" (f=6) and "Drama" (f=6). The least use of methods and techniques by the participants in the research is seen as "Case study" (f=2) and "Educational games" (f=2). Some teachers' answers are as follows:

“The methods and techniques I use in preschool are cooperation, large group and small group activities, drama method, etc. My purpose in using these methods and techniques is to make it easier for children to adapt to social life. Because citizenship education has an important place in social life” (T 1).

“I use question and answer, narrative method, drama, demonstration and demonstration methods. The concept of citizenship is an abstract concept, the more we concretize it for children, the easier it will be for children to understand it” (T 7).

“The active participation of children is ensured by using the technique of showing and making them do and explaining by doing and experiencing. Teaching them the right to choose

and be elected is useful in dealing with the problems they will encounter in their future lives” (T 20).

“We generally use the presentation method. First we chat, then we support this method with visual materials, poems and songs. Sometimes we use the demonstration method. Children perform what they have learned. Presentation and expression methods are practical and easy to apply, primarily in terms of reaching more students and in terms of time” (T 22). “The most frequent method I use regarding the concept of citizenship in pre-school is the question and answer method. "Question and answer attract children's attention and make it easier to focus their attention" (T 25).

### **Findings Regarding Activities for Citizenship Education in Preschool Education**

In this section, "What kind of practices (activities) are carried out for citizenship education, taking into account the achievements of the pre-school education program?" There are findings regarding the question.

**Table 9**

#### *Opinions on Activities Implemented for Citizenship Education*

<b>Theme 5. Activities implemented for Citizenship Education</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>
Election and voting	9	23
Events for certain days and weeks	6	15
Drama	5	12
Turkish events	5	12
Learning My Rights events	4	10
Rules to be followed in society	3	8
Ataturk events	3	8
Who Am I events	3	8
Art events	2	5
Total	40	100

There are answers given by preschool teachers regarding the activities they implement for citizenship education. 23% of the participants said "Election and voting", 15% said "Certain days and weeks events", 12% said "Drama", 12% said "Turkish activities", 10% said "I am learning my rights events" It was observed that 8% answered "Rules to be followed in society", 8% answered "Ataturk events", 8% answered "Who am I events", and 5% answered "Art events". When we look at the frequency values, the activity most practiced by the participants is "Election and voting" (f=9). According to these answers, teachers see citizenship education as aimed at realizing the importance of elections and voting. It is seen in



the table that the least answer given is "Art activities" (f = 2). Some teacher opinions regarding the findings are as follows:

“Some special days have meanings related to citizenship education; While celebrating Republic Day, Çanakkale victory, April 23, July 15, Democracy victory, we organize art activities, drama, and story reading for our officials regarding our responsibilities as citizens. Activities related to certain days and weeks” (T 7).

“I include events for certain days and weeks, activities related to Atatürk's principles and reforms, promotion of identity cards, voting, who am I activities, values education, human rights and democracy week” (T 16). “On certain days and weeks, our national holidays are celebrated with shows. Before national holidays, songs, poems and anthems are learned, and videos and presentations appropriate to the level are made. During the domestic goods week, Turkishness is emphasized again and the values of our homeland are included” (T 22).

“Activities to comply with classroom rules are activities to get to know oneself. Story studies aimed at respecting the rights of others” (T 23). “Activities for self-knowledge (examination of identity card), decision-making by voting in the classroom, activities for love of homeland and nation are carried out” (T 24).

### **Activity and Practice Suggestions for Providing Citizenship Education at the Adequate and Desired Level in the Preschool Period**

This section includes activity and practice suggestions for preschool teachers participating in the research to provide citizenship education adequately and at the desired level. Regarding this scope, "What kind of activities or practices would you recommend in order to provide citizenship education at an adequate and desired level in pre-school education?" The question was asked and the findings were included.

**Table 10**

#### *Activity and Practice Suggestions for Citizenship Education*

<b>Theme 6. Activity and Application Suggestions</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>
Field Trips	6	21
Group Studies	5	18
Activities for Social and Environmental Awareness	4	14
Story events	4	14
Family Participation	3	11
Computer Aided Education	3	11
Increasing the number of achievements in the program	2	7
Eba Events	1	4
Total	28	100

When the findings are examined, there are suggestions of preschool teachers regarding activities and practices. 21% of the participants said "Field Trips", 18% said "Group Works", 14% said "Activities for Community and Environmental Awareness", 14% said "Story events", 11% said "Family Participation". It was observed that 11% answered "Computer Aided Education", 7% answered "Increasing the number of achievements in the program", and 4% answered "Eba Activities". When we look at the frequency distribution, we see that the most recommended activity is "Field trips" (f=6), while the least recommended is "EBA activities" (f=1). The opinions of some teachers who participated in the research are as follows:

"I recommend that pre-school education be compulsory for the 4-6 age group and appropriate achievements at this age level should be added to the program. "Achievements related to citizenship education can be added both for other development areas and for gaining social awareness" (T 10).

"The videos and pictures on EBA can be edited to help pre-school children gain citizenship awareness" (T 14).

"I would like to organize a travel event. However, there is no suitable travel area for children in our city. We take our soldiers to Jakem once a year to get to know them and their practices. More can be done. Children can be taken to national struggle museums" (T 22).

"Last year, I had American, Afghan and Syrian students in my class. In order to gain respect for different cultures, I wanted my students to explain the different cultural characteristics of that country by introducing their local clothes and food. My American student's family came to class wearing the traditional clothes of their country. Activities can be organized for these issues" (T 20).

"I recommend that children carry out activities that include problems in life by doing and experiencing so that they can be beneficial to both themselves and society. This could be a field trip. Maybe take it to a museum. It is important for the child to be aware of the purpose for which the activity is performed" (T 25).

### **Opinions on Difficulties in Implementing Citizenship Education in the Preschool Period**

This section contains the opinions of the preschool teachers who participated in the research about the situations in which they had difficulties. Regarding this scope, "What are the points that you have difficulty in implementing citizenship education in the pre-school education program?" The question was asked and the findings were included.

**Table 11**

*Situations Where There Are Difficulties in Implementing Citizenship Education*

<b>Theme 7. Situations that cause difficulties in application</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>
Small age group	7	27
I don't have any difficulties.	6	23
Difficulty concretizing abstract expressions	5	19
Inadequacy of physical conditions	4	15
Having difficulty choosing an activity	2	8
Crowded class	2	8
Total	26	100

There are cases where teachers have difficulties in citizenship education. 27% of the participants said "Young age group", 19% said "Difficulty in concretizing abstract expressions", 15% said "Inadequate physical conditions", 8% said "Difficulty in choosing an activity", 8% said "Crowded class" They stated that they had problems due to such situations. 23% of the participants answered that there was no difficulty. Teachers' opinions are as follows:

“This is where I have difficulty, as there are few activities for citizenship education in the pre-school period. Sample activities related to citizenship education can be increased” (T 6).

“As the age group is young, it can sometimes be difficult to gain the desired abstract concepts. "This difficulty can be reduced if the necessary materials and activities are provided." (Ö 13).

“I don't have any difficulty because I give examples and concretize the concepts in a way that children can understand. “I include concepts related to citizenship education in story activities and drama method” (T 20).

“It is very difficult to explain abstract concepts by getting down to the child's level. Additionally, videos and pictures on social platforms are not suitable for our students. This is a separate problem” (T 22).

When the answers given by the participants are examined, it is seen that they had difficulties due to the young age group in pre-school. They also said that since abstract expressions are frequently included within the scope of citizenship education, they had difficulty in concretizing these expressions. When some of the teachers' opinions are examined, various sample activities can be created within the scope of citizenship education for the preschool period and the concepts can be concretized through activities.

### **Findings on Preschool Children's Readiness for Citizenship Education**

This section includes the opinions of the preschool teachers who participated in the research regarding their readiness for children's citizenship education. Regarding this scope, "What do you think about the readiness of preschool children for citizenship education?" The question was asked and the findings were included.

**Table 12**

*Children's Readiness for Citizenship Education*

<b>Theme 8. Readiness</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>
Sufficient	11	44
Partially Sufficient	7	28
Insufficient	7	28
Total	25	100

When the findings are examined, there are opinions about children's readiness for citizenship education. While 44% of the participants find the readiness levels of the children "Adequate", 28% find them "Partly adequate" and the remaining 28% find them "Inadequate". When we look at the frequency distributions, we see that the answer "Adequate" (f = 11) is repeated the most. Teacher opinions are as follows:

**Sufficient** : "I think children are ready for citizenship education. I think that if the necessary materials are provided, it will be beneficial for children to prepare for the future life" (T 1).

"I think it is necessary because the foundation of citizenship awareness will be laid and students will be able to understand it if they come down to their level" (T 6).

"Every child and their experiences are different. The issue of readiness is a family-related situation. If the family raises them consciously, their children will be ready to start kindergarten. Then, teachers help children develop in this regard by having them do activities related to citizenship education as the basis of this readiness" (T 20).

"Since the society in Turkey knows its own culture and traditions, it raises its children in a love of homeland, therefore the readiness of the children is good" (T 23).

**Partially Sufficient** : "Children do not have full knowledge about citizenship education. I think it will be beneficial if the necessary training is provided" (T 18).

"I observe that children are poorly prepared for citizenship education. These levels of children can become sufficient thanks to the activities carried out by the teacher" (T 2).

**Insufficient :** “I have not seen an infrastructure for citizenship education in children in the preschool period” (T 7). “Unfortunately, children's attention spans are decreasing with each passing year. For this reason, their readiness for citizenship education is insufficient” (T 9).

“I think that children are not sent to the family environment with sufficient knowledge and skills on this issue. "The fact that they think this is unnecessary in the preschool period makes everything even more difficult" (T 10). “I think that children's general readiness levels have been poor in recent years” (T 24).

### **Results and Discussion**

This research aimed to determine the opinions of preschool teachers about the concept of citizenship and citizenship education in the preschool period. This section contains the results and discussion section based on the findings.

In the research, "What is the definition of citizenship education in your opinion?" When the opinions of preschool teachers regarding the question were examined, it was seen that they made different definitions regarding citizenship education and that these definitions overlapped with the literature review, and it was concluded that the knowledge of preschool teachers about the concept of citizenship education was sufficient. Teachers define citizenship education as awareness of duties and responsibilities, teaching legal rights and rules, ensuring the socialization of the individual, formation of identity and cultural awareness, and gaining love of the homeland.

The research conducted by Göz (2010) is about democracy and citizenship education in primary education. This research shows that teachers' levels of citizenship knowledge and behavior are generally at high levels. Bıçak and Ereş (2018) also revealed that teachers are conscious about citizenship and that citizenship education is important in developing social values. In a study, it is seen that ideas such as being patriotic, embracing social values, and knowing their rights and responsibilities come to the fore in teachers' definitions of citizenship (Güven, Tertemiz, Bulut, 2009).

When we look at the general objectives of the Basic Law of National Education (1973), we see that there are statements regarding citizenship education. Teachers' definition of citizenship education is similar to these general aims. Citizenship education was also emphasized in the Basic Law of National Education No. 1739. In this Law, “It is committed to Ataturk's principles and reforms and to Ataturk's Nationalism expressed in the Constitution;

Adopts, protects and develops the national, moral, humane, spiritual and cultural values of the Turkish Nation; who loves his family, his homeland, his nation and always tries to glorify it; "It emphasizes the necessity of citizenship education in raising good citizens who know their duties and responsibilities towards the Republic of Turkey, which is a democratic, secular and social state of law based on human rights and the basic principles at the beginning of the Constitution, and who have put these into practice." The Basic Law of National Education No. 1739 makes special emphasis on citizenship education. "It strives to provide students with the democratic awareness that citizens must have in order to realize and maintain a strong, stable, free and democratic social order, the knowledge, understanding and behavior of dormitory management, a sense of responsibility and respect for spiritual values in all kinds of educational activities" (MEB Basic Law (1973) , cited in Merey, Karatekin, Kuş, 2012).

“What skills/values are imparted to children within the scope of citizenship education in the pre-school period?” Teacher opinions regarding the question were examined. It was concluded that teachers include social participation, respect, patriotism, love, belonging, sensitivity, cooperation, responsibility, empathy, critical thinking, tolerance and helpfulness skills and values in pre-school. When we start from the concepts mentioned in the Basic Law of National Education, it can be seen that the main purpose is to raise students who are citizens of the Republic of Turkey who respect human rights, are aware of their rights and responsibilities, can work in cooperation, have democratic skills and values, and have a developed love of the Republic and awareness of democracy (Doğan, 2001, Act. Merey, Karatekin, Kuş, 2012). Hablemitoğlu and Özmete (2012), who conducted a study on effective citizenship education, consider it necessary to teach basic behaviors such as justice, equality, human rights, respect and responsibility, which are necessary for individuals to think about citizenship values and adapt to social life, through direct or indirect methods.

When Eren's (2018) study is examined, it is seen that he is working on values education in pre-school. In this study, it is seen that the basic principles of pre-school include teaching values such as "solidarity, sharing, cooperation, love, respect, responsibility, cooperation and tolerance." When Çatalbaş's (2018) study is examined, it is seen that some values such as respect, love, helpfulness, etc. should be given within the scope of character education.

While pre-school teachers were discussing the skills and values related to citizenship education, it was observed that they thought that social participation skills, respect and patriotism values should be given first. It seems that the answers given by the teachers comply with the framework of their answers regarding the definitions of citizenship education.

Teachers emphasized the social participation skill the most. The reason for this is that citizenship education is intertwined with the rules and cultures of society. Citizenship education is a process that develops within society. When we look at the teachers' answers, we see that they always emphasize the same expressions.

“Considering the achievements in the pre-school education program, to what extent do you find it sufficient in terms of citizenship education?” When we look at the answers given by pre-school teachers regarding the question, 15 teachers, more than half of them, found it partially sufficient, 7 teachers found it sufficient and 3 teachers found it inadequate. Some of the teachers who answered partially adequate stated that they had gains regarding social rules and self-confidence. However, they think that the number of achievements in citizenship awareness should be increased. Since pre-school teachers who answered partially adequate constituted more than half of the participants in the research, it was concluded that the gains in the pre-school education program could be increased in terms of citizenship education, but were not fully sufficient. However, when we examine the statements in the report of the Council of Europe (2010) "Council of Europe Charter on Democratic Citizenship Education and Human Rights Education", it recommends that member countries should include democratic citizenship and human rights education in programs starting from pre-school education. So, considering this recommendation, citizenship education should be sufficient in the pre-school education program. In the literature, there is a study by Ceylan (2014) about world citizenship with preschool teachers. According to this study, it appears that teaching world citizenship is not at a sufficient level in the curriculum content.

“What teaching methods and techniques do you use for citizenship education in the pre-school period? From where?” When the answers of the preschool teachers who participated in the research regarding the question were examined, it was concluded that they used methods and techniques based on doing and experiencing and active learning. Teachers stated that they most frequently use demonstration and drama methods. Later, it was seen that they used narrative, collaboration, question and answer, brainstorming, case study, and educational game methods and techniques. These methods are aimed at attracting children's attention and gathering their attention. Because preschool children have short attention spans, they may have problems focusing on long-term activities. In addition, teachers prefer to explain abstract expressions by making them concrete while applying methods and techniques. Considering the age group of the preschool period, it is seen that teachers use methods and techniques appropriate to the children's levels.

In the literature review, there are studies that yield results parallel to the research. Ceylan (2014) stated in his study that the methods and techniques applied by preschool teachers within the scope of world citizenship take into account the basis of learning by doing and experiencing. Som and Karataş (2015) emphasized that the teaching methods applied for citizenship education should be active, developing cooperation skills, critical thinking and child-centered.

In his study, Ersoy (2007) included the practices of social studies teachers regarding citizenship education. In Ersoy's (2007) study, it is seen that teachers frequently use the drama method for citizenship education, as well as practices such as case studies, observation, narration, question and answer, and demonstration. Bıçak (2018) stated in his study that teachers most frequently use the question and answer technique. In other words, although the age group levels of the children are different, the methods and techniques applied by teachers in terms of citizenship education are similar. These findings lead to the conclusion that most of the teachers support the views on using the method of active, active learning, that is, by experiencing by doing, within the scope of citizenship education for children.

“What kind of practices (activities) are carried out for citizenship education, taking into account the achievements in the pre-school education program?” When we look at the answers of preschool teachers to the question, it turns out that they mostly include election and voting activities. It is seen that teachers associate citizenship education with elections and the processes experienced in elections. Then, activities including certain days and weeks activities, drama, Turkish, learning my rights, rules to be followed in society, Atatürk activities, who am I activities and art activities are stated. In Öner's (2018) study, preschool teachers stated that they implemented citizenship-related activities. It seems that these activities are parallel to the results of the research. According to the results obtained in the study conducted by Neslitürk and Ersoy (2013), they stated that pre-school teacher candidates can teach children's rights in the preschool period through appropriate activities. According to the findings, it has been concluded that children's perspectives on the concept of citizenship can improve if appropriate activities for citizenship education are planned, taking into account the age levels of preschool children.

Aktın, Karakaya, Türk, Aslan (2015) observed that activities aimed at teaching different cultures in the preschool period were carried out and children had the opportunity to practice different cultural roles. In the study conducted by Ersoy and Daysal (2011), Turkish elders were introduced to children in early childhood. In this study, he prepared and implemented activities related to Atatürk. It has been observed that children internalize



activities related to Atatürk. The study shows that preschool children are ready for activities related to Atatürk. When we look at the activities implemented within the scope of citizenship education in the research findings, it can be concluded that they are suitable for children.

Considering the study conducted by Sapsağlam (2016), he examined the preschool program on certain days and weeks related to national concepts. When we look at certain days and weeks within the scope of citizenship education in the 2013 education program, we see that the titles of Republic Day, National Sovereignty and Children's Day, Atatürk Week, Human Rights and Democracy Week are included. Preschool teachers who participated in the research stated that they included activities for citizenship education on certain days and weeks.

It is understood from the literature review conducted within the scope of citizenship education and the findings in the research that it has been determined that it is important to benefit from certain days and weeks before school. Certain days and weeks can raise awareness about citizenship education.

“What kind of activities or practices would you recommend in order to provide citizenship education at an adequate and desired level in pre-school education?” When we look at the answers of preschool teachers to the question, the most recommended practices were "field trips". Later, it was concluded that they suggested practices for group work, activities for social and environmental awareness, story activities, family participation, computer-assisted education, increasing the number of achievements in the program and eba activities.

In his study, Aktın (2017) gave museum education to pre-school children and organized a trip to the museum within the scope of a field trip. He stated that the children were interested and careful about the museum trip. In other words, it has been concluded that organizing field trips before school allows children to learn actively. Ceylan (2014) stated in his study that educational technologies (computer, internet, slides) and travel-observation applications should be used within the scope of world citizenship in pre-school years.

“What are the points that you have difficulty in implementing citizenship education in the pre-school education program?” When we look at the answers given by pre-school teachers to the question, they stated that the point where they had the most difficulty was the "young age group". 23% of the teachers stated that there was no difficulty. Later, it is seen that they gave answers regarding the difficult situations such as difficulty in concretizing abstract expressions, inadequacy of physical conditions, difficulty in choosing activities, and crowded class. In their study, Erkuş and Yazar (2013) stated that pre-school teachers had

difficulties in values education due to reasons such as the large number of students and the lack of sufficient awareness of families.

When we look at the teachers' answers, it is concluded that since the age groups of preschool children are young, it is necessary to concretize the concepts related to citizenship education with activities appropriate to their level. It turns out that if activities for citizenship education are chosen appropriately for the age group of children, children will understand the concepts. Additionally, teachers mentioned that activities for citizenship education were limited. Increasing the activities related to citizenship education in the program is considered important in terms of guiding teachers.

“What do you think about the readiness of preschool children for citizenship education?” Regarding the question, 11 of the pre-school teachers find the readiness of the children sufficient, 7 of them find it partially sufficient, and the other 7 find it inadequate. Some of the teachers emphasized that citizenship education should start from the family. They also stated that they found the readiness of the children sufficient since the foundation of citizenship awareness will be laid in the preschool period.

When we look at the findings of the research, 44% of the teachers concluded that their children's readiness for citizenship education was sufficient. If teachers, schools and families act in cooperation for citizenship education, it is expected that children's readiness levels will increase further. In his study, Yılmaz (2013) stated that it is important for students' families to participate in citizenship education and that the targeted behaviors will be acquired at a high level, and that children's interests may increase. Erkuş and Yazar (2013) stated in their study that if families are not sufficiently conscious of values education, they affect the readiness of their children. According to the findings of the research, it has been concluded that if the family displays a conscious attitude towards citizenship education and raises its children within the framework of this attitude, the children will be sufficiently ready to start pre-school education.

“What is the scope of the achievements and indicators in the pre-school education program in terms of citizenship education?” When we look at the results of the research on the question, the gains associated with citizenship education are found in the "cognitive development area" and "social and emotional development area". It was concluded that the pre-school education program included 1 achievement in the field of cognitive development and 8 achievements in the field of social emotional development related to citizenship education.

### **Recommendations**

This section includes suggestions based on the research results:

- Since the preschool period forms the basis of life, studies on citizenship education in this period have an important place in preparing children for their future lives.
- According to the results obtained from the research; The achievements and activities for citizenship education in the pre-school education programs of the Ministry of National Education should be enriched and developed.
- Children's need to know themselves, their environment and the society they live in emerges from early childhood. In line with this need, it is necessary to start citizenship education at an early age, as it will facilitate children's perception of their environment.
- Most of the responsibility in studies on citizenship education falls on teachers and administrators. In this context, it is considered important that administrators and teachers have the necessary knowledge, skills and competencies to create a democratic school and classroom culture.
- According to the results of the research, teachers state that the class size is crowded. In this regard, class sizes can be reduced so that students can participate more actively in activities.
- If they are experts and academicians within the scope of citizenship education, they can provide theoretical and practical in-service training to preschool teachers.
- Since education starts from the family, family participation activities can be organized for parents within the scope of citizenship education.
- Researchers can contribute to the field within the scope of action research by developing activity plans for citizenship education to be implemented in the preschool period.

### **Ethical Committee Approval**

This study was prepared as a master's thesis on "Examination of Preschool Citizenship Education in Terms of Program and Teachers' Views" at Nevşehir Hacı Bektaş Veli University, Institute of Social Sciences, with the ethics committee decision numbered 2021.10.391.

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