



An Examination of Preschool Teachers' Opinions on "Play-Friendly Schools"

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Abstract: Play, which is the language of learning for children and supports all areas of development, is very valuable in terms of the unique opportunities it offers to children. Therefore, the right of every child to play, no matter where they are in the world, is guaranteed by the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of the Child. In every environment where children are present, especially schools that support all their developmental skills, having the characteristics of a "play-friendly school" with an approach that values play is an important indicator of the value given to children. Based on this, the aim of the current study was to determine the principles of play-friendly schools according to teachers' opinions. For this purpose, the study group consisted of 60 preschool teachers working in the field. In the selection of the study group, the easily accessible sampling method, which is one of the purposeful sampling methods, was used. In the qualitative study, semi-structured interview questions were created by the researchers; the questions prepared based on the literature were rearranged by receiving expert opinions and finalized by testing. The data obtained as a result of the interview were analyzed with content analysis. The research findings were listed under three headings: "whether the school is play-friendly, parents' opinions on whether the school is play-friendly, and teachers' opinions on the features that a play-friendly school should have", and as a result of the analyses based on teachers' opinions, 12 principles that characterize a play-friendly school were determined by the researchers.

Introduction

Play has been extensively examined by many researchers and is defined through various complementary perspectives. According to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, play is defined as "activities that allow children to rest and have fun through artistic and cultural experiences appropriate to their age, in which they can participate freely." Similarly, UNICEF states that "every child has the right to rest, relax, play, and engage in cultural and creative activities." According to Tuğrul (2014), play is the child's language of learning and a space for personal discovery. The Turkish Language Association defines play as an enjoyable activity with certain rules that contributes to the development of skills and intelligence. In summary, play, as a natural learning tool, supports all areas of a child's development and can be structured or unstructured, with or without materials, and is an activity that children willingly participate in (Koçyiğit et al., 2007).

According to Tuğrul (2014), play is an essential tool that has existed since the beginning of human

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existence, starting with life itself and continuing to evolve and differentiate over time. It is one of the most fulfilling sources of diverse interests and needs, allowing children to understand the world, interact with other children, regulate and express their emotions, and develop their symbolic representation skills (National Association for the Education of Young Children [NAEYC], 1995). No external motivation is required for play; it is voluntary, spontaneous, and highly enjoyable. Play is a proven way for children to learn both academic and non-academic skills (Mader, 2020). Resnick identified four key principles—projects, passion, peers, and play (4P) to support creative learning in children, emphasizing that play is one of these essential principles. The purpose of play for children is not solely entertainment; it also provides an environment where they experiment, take risks, and test their limits (Yogman et al., 2018).

Play naturally supports all areas of children's development. In terms of motor development, it is a necessity that promotes children's physical growth and development (Aral et al., 2000). From a cognitive and language development perspective, play helps children explore life and their surroundings, continuously update what they have learned, satisfy their sense of curiosity, focus their attention, and solve problems they encounter. In terms of social-emotional development, play is crucial for children to understand society and social rules and distinguish between right and wrong (MEGEP, 2015; Öztürk, 2010). Moreover, through play, children acquire skills such as conflict resolution, decision-making, leadership, problem-solving, creativity, cooperation, and self-defense. Additionally, it encourages physical activity, supporting their healthy development. Play also helps children build safe and stable relationships with their environment (Yogman et al., 2018).

Preventing a child from playing and not creating an environment suitable for movement is one of the greatest harms that can be done to them; it is a wall placed in front of their learning. Children who do not play enough during childhood are the ones who experience the most adaptation difficulties in their future lives. Similarly, children who are not provided with sufficient opportunities for play and playgrounds in the school environment miss out on their childhood and are deprived of critical opportunities necessary for developing physical, social, and emotional well-being (Kappagoda & Ogilvie, 2012). Article 31 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child recognizes a child's right to age-appropriate play as sacred. Ensuring the realization of this right requires child-centered, safe, supportive, stimulating, and stress-free environments where children can come together to play, explore play in their own creative ways, and use both indoor and outdoor resources freely (Play Scotland, 2020; Tanfield Lea Community Primary School Play Policy, 2020). Although it is well known that the early childhood years are among the most critical years in a child's educational journey and that preschools should be expanded, it has been observed that as preschools have become more widespread in recent years, the focus on academic skills has become more dominant. Consequently, preschool curricula have become increasingly filled with back-to-back academic activities and lessons.

In today's preschools, the increasing emphasis on academic skills has led to a significant reduction in play opportunities for children. In recent years, preschools have shifted away from developmentally appropriate learning practices that promote exploration, play, and social interaction, instead adopting rigid curricula that focus on test preparation and academic skill development (Mader, 2020). A study found that both the physical spaces allocated for play in kindergarten classrooms and the time preschool teachers dedicate to play opportunities have significantly decreased (Bassok et al., 2016). However, successful programs encourage learning through play, where children are actively engaged in meaningful explorations (Yogman et al., 2018). The Turkish Ministry of National Education's Preschool Education Program emphasizes the benefits of play, stating that it helps children understand themselves and their environment, express themselves in the best possible way, develop critical thinking skills, and use play as a language of communication. Furthermore, the program highlights the necessity of using play as a learning method and underscores that learning through play is an inseparable part of early childhood education (MoNE, 2013).

Experts argue that young children should not spend most of their time sitting at desks and completing worksheets but should instead engage in play both during and between lessons. This is because

play is actually the most effective way for preschool-aged children to learn. Observations of children during play reveal that they learn through play; for example, they naturally grasp shapes and colors while drawing masks or building towers. Similarly, while planning imaginary birthday parties by preparing invitations and signs, they begin to develop writing skills. During these activities, they also acquire essential social skills such as collaboration, using polite words, helping others, and sharing. These findings highlight the growing need for play-friendly schools and emphasize the importance of revisiting existing curricula to integrate more play-based learning opportunities (Mader, 2020). When educators, pediatricians, parents, and caregivers are encouraged to play with children, they can create unstructured environments and allocate time for free play. Furthermore, when educators recognize learning through play as a valuable complement to didactic learning, they can become effective advocates for play (Yogman et al., 2018). Play-friendly schools should be environments where everyone can fully enjoy their right to play throughout childhood and adolescence, as stated in Article 31 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Children's Play Charter (Play England, 2009). Play is an integral part of school life. The fundamental vision of child-friendly schools is:

- Raising awareness in families, the environment, and society about the importance of play,
- Being a school where children are respected and valued,
- Providing an environment where children can play free from discrimination and abuse based on gender, economic/social conditions, religion, race or cultural background, while ensuring that every child has equal access to play opportunities (Tibberton Community Primary School, 2020).
- Offering high-quality play opportunities in both indoor and outdoor areas to support children's development (Play England, 2009).

Play-friendly schools are places where children are happy, their mental and physical health is supported, and they are more likely to be open to learning (OPAL Booklet, 2021; Shackell et al., 2011). Schools that create time and space for play provide significant benefits for children's education.

First and foremost, a child who plays is a happy child. Happier children lead to fewer behavioral problems, a more positive attitude towards school, more effective lessons, the development of fundamental skills, less time spent by staff on unnecessary problem-solving, fewer accidents, and happier staff (Heathrow Play Policy, 2017). In this regard, schools must effectively use all their resources (both human and financial) to uphold children's right to play. Play-friendly schools utilize these resources to act in line with the stated key objectives while:

- Schools should be sensitive to providing designated times and spaces for play and increasing the quality and quantity of these spaces (Vastag et al., 2019).
- They should prioritize offering low-cost and open-ended play materials in children's play and avoid commercializing their play (Play Scotland, 2020).
- Schools should take children's opinions into account in both play and playground designs and even collaborate with volunteers or communities by carrying out projects on inspiring play areas (Heathrow Play Policy, 2017).
- They should consider the balance of risk and benefit that may arise during play in both indoor and outdoor spaces (Play England, 2009).
- Schools should develop opportunities that challenge and encourage children's abilities without threatening their survival or well-being (Tibberton Community Primary School, 2020). They should also conduct activities that serve the purpose of encouraging adult participation in play and supporting child-adult collaboration (Heathrow Play Policy, 2017).

In the early childhood period, where learning through play is highly significant, it has been observed that in our country, academic studies are prioritized over play in schools. Additionally, while there are numerous studies related to play in the literature, research specifically addressing "play-friendly schools"

is relatively scarce. Based on these considerations, the study investigates:

- "What are preschool teachers' perspectives on 'play-friendly schools' based on their professional seniority?"
- "What are the principles of play-friendly schools according to preschool teachers' views on play-friendly schools?"

Method

Qualitative research methods are widely used in disciplines such as psychology, sociology, and education for collecting and analyzing verbal and visual data. These methods enable researchers to examine phenomena holistically. As a tool for developing new theoretical frameworks, qualitative research emphasizes an exploratory process aimed at understanding participants' perspectives. It allows researchers to collect data in a natural setting (Creswell, 2013; Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013). Consequently, it serves as an indispensable tool for understanding complex social phenomena.

This study is a basic qualitative research. A descriptive and interpretative research design has been employed, focusing on understanding how individuals involved in a specific phenomenon make sense of their experiences and construct meaning from them (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The study adopts a basic interpretative qualitative research design to explore teachers' perspectives in depth and determine the "principles of a play-friendly school." This approach aims to understand participants' experiences and perceptions while interpreting social phenomena (Merriam & Grenier, 2019). During the data analysis process, qualitative data obtained from teachers were analyzed using the descriptive content analysis method. Descriptive content analysis involves systematically and carefully examining the data, organizing it within predefined themes or categories based on existing literature, and interpreting it accordingly (Ültay et al., 2021). In this method, data are categorized directly, and the information gathered under each category is described and interpreted.

In the study, the data obtained based on teachers' opinions were categorized within predefined themes, and the data gathered under each category were described in detail. This process contributed to identifying the "principles of a play-friendly school" that are in line with the research objectives.

Study Group

The study group consists of a total of 60 preschool teachers working in public independent preschools, kindergarten classes, and private schools in Istanbul during the 2021-2022 academic year. These teachers have varying levels of professional experience, with less than 10 years and more than 10 years in the field. The study group was determined using the convenience sampling method, which is one of the purposeful sampling techniques. Purposeful sampling allows for an in-depth investigation by selecting information-rich cases relevant to the study's objective. It is preferred when one or more specific cases with particular characteristics are to be examined (Büyüköztürk, 2018). Due to time and workforce constraints, the researchers reached 60 preschool teachers in Istanbul who were easily accessible.

Table 1. Frequency and percentage distribution of teachers in the study group by professional experience and school type

Professional Experience	Kindergarten Class	Independent Preschool	Private School	Total
	f	%	f	%
Less than 10 years	13	21.6	12	20
More than 10 years	10	16.6	16	26.6
Total	23	38.3	28	46.6

As seen in Table 1, among the teachers with less than 10 years of professional experience, 13 (21.6%) work in kindergarten classrooms, 12 (20%) in independent preschools, and 5 (8.3%) in private schools. Among the teachers with more than 10 years of professional experience, 10 (16.6%) work in kindergarten

classrooms, 16 (26.6%) in independent preschools, and 4 (6.6%) in private schools. In total, the study included 60 preschool teachers.

Data Collection Tool

The data were collected using a semi-structured interview form prepared by the researchers. Before developing the interview form, a literature review was conducted on the concept of play-friendly schools, and based on this review, three main interview questions were formulated. The prepared questions were evaluated by three experts in early childhood education and two preschool teachers, after which the final version of the form was created. The interview form included the following questions for the participating teachers:

- "Do you think your current school is a play-friendly school? If your answer is yes/no, can you explain why?"
- "Do you think parents consider your school to be a play-friendly school? If your answer is yes/no, can you explain why?"
- "In your opinion, what are the five key characteristics of an ideal play-friendly school?"

The interviews were conducted face-to-face with teachers. However, for teachers who could not be interviewed in person, responses to the interview questions were collected online.

Data Analysis

Content analysis, one of the research methods, allows for the objective and systematic examination of visual or auditory materials, as well as texts. It is widely used in social sciences and education. This method, which has broad applications across different disciplines, enables an in-depth examination and interpretation of data (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008; Neuendorf & Kumar, 2016; Zülfiyar, 2022). In this study, content analysis was used to analyze the collected data. The goal of content analysis is to identify connections and concepts that help explain the gathered data. Through this method, the data are examined in detail, and similar inputs are grouped under specific concepts and themes. These findings are then interpreted and structured in a way that makes them understandable to the reader (Karataş, 2015).

In the study, direct quotations from teachers' responses were included to support the discovered themes. Additionally, to maintain the confidentiality of the participating teachers' identities, the forms were coded as Ö1, Ö2, etc. In the initial phase of the analysis, recordings from face-to-face interviews were transcribed, and responses obtained from online forms were organized to create the dataset.

Findings

Under this section, themes, categories, and codes were generated for each question based on teachers' views within the framework of the play-friendly school concept. The findings were then presented in line with the identified themes and supported by direct quotations from teachers' responses.

Do you think the school you currently work at is a play-friendly school? If your answer is yes, please explain why.

Two themes were identified in response to this interview question. The themes and categories derived from teachers' views are presented in Figure 1.

Play-Friendly Schools and Teachers

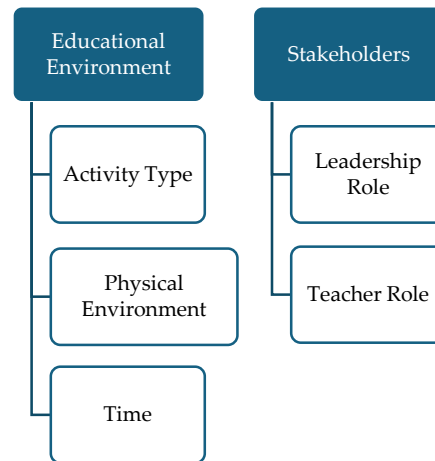


Figure 1. The themes and categories derived from teachers' views

As seen in Figure 1, the data obtained from teacher opinions revealed two main themes: "Educational Environment" and "Stakeholders." Under the theme of the educational environment, three categories were identified: type of activity, physical conditions, and time. Under the theme of stakeholders, two categories emerged: the role of the administrator and the role of the teacher. The frequency values related to the themes, categories, and codes for the first question are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Frequency distribution of themes, categories, and codes based on teacher opinions

Educational Environment					
Activity Type		Physical Conditions		Time	
Code	F	Code	f	Code	f
Play-Based	11	Garden availability	7	Allocating sufficient time	2
Entertaining	5	Classroom environment	3		
		Material variety	2		
TOTAL	16	TOTAL	12	TOTAL	2
STAKEHOLDERS					
Administrator role			Teacher role		
Code	f		Code	f	
Perspective on play	2		Supportive attitude towards play	5	
TOTAL	2		TOTAL	5	

The interviews with the teachers, aimed to understand their views on whether the schools they work in are play-friendly schools or not. As seen in Table 2, teachers' views on the subject focus on the quality of the educational environment and the stakeholders' perspectives on the subject. When the frequency distributions are analysed, it is seen that teachers mentioned that they are play-friendly schools, especially because they adopt a play-based approach at school and have an effective garden environment. Some of the teachers' views on this issue are presented below.

T6: '... because our school is based on play-based learning.'

T52: 'Our school always gives importance to learning by having fun.'

T13: 'The physical conditions in my school always support play with both material, classroom and garden facilities'.

The frequency and percentage distributions of the answers given by 60 teachers in the study group according to their professional seniority about whether the school they work in is play-friendly or not are

shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Frequency and percentage distribution of opinions on whether the school is play-friendly or not according to professional seniority

Professional seniority	Play-friendly		Not play-friendly		Partially play-friendly	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
Less than 10 years	18	30	12	20		
More than 10 years	19	31.6	10	16.6	1	1.6
Total	37	61.6	22	36,6	1	1.6

As seen in Table 3, 37 of the teachers in the study group, i.e. 61.6%, thought that the schools they worked in were play-friendly, while 22 of them, i.e. 36.6%, stated that the schools they worked in were not play-friendly schools. Only one teacher thinks that their school is partially play-friendly.

Do you think their students' parents' think that your school is a play-friendly school? If yes, can you explain why?

Two themes were identified for this interview question. The themes and categories of the findings obtained from teacher opinions are given in Figure 2.

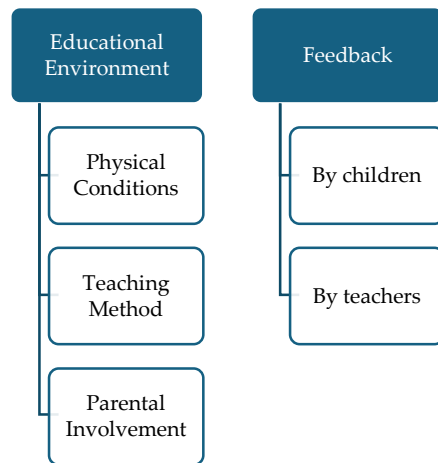


Figure 2. Themes and categories obtained from teachers' opinions

As can be seen in Figure 2, two themes, namely 'Educational environment' and 'Feedback', were obtained from the data obtained from teachers' opinions. Under the theme of educational environment, there are three categories: physical conditions, teaching method and family involvement; and under the theme of feedback, there are two categories: by the child and by the teacher. The frequency values of the themes, categories and codes related to the second question directed to the study group are given in Table 4.

Table 4. Frequency distributions of themes, categories and codes related to teacher opinions

Educational Environment					
Physical Conditions		Teaching Method		Parental Involvement	
Code	F	Code	f	Code	f
Play Materials	2	Play-based learning	5	Play participation	3
Garden usage	2			Plays at home	4
TOTAL	4	TOTAL	5	TOTAL	7
FEEDBACK					
By children			By Teachers		

Play-Friendly Schools and Teachers

Code	f	Code	f
Positive attitude towards school	8	Play plans	2
Relationships with friends	4	Seminars and training sessions	3
Verbal sharing	5	Informational brochures	4
TOTAL	15	TOTAL	9

The interview with the teachers, aimed to understand the opinions of the parents about whether the schools were play-friendly schools or not. As seen in Table 4, teachers' opinions about parents' thoughts focus on the quality of the educational environment and the feedback received and given. When the frequency distributions are analysed, it is seen that the teachers think that the schools their children attend are play-friendly schools, especially because of the positive feedback they receive from their children. Some of the teachers' opinions regarding these thoughts are presented below.

T23: 'I hear statements like these from my parents at the meetings - My child tells me about the games he/she plays every day when he/she comes home with great pleasure.'

T19: Parents want to be informed about what we do at school every week, and I send them bulletins on a weekly basis. The bulletin includes the games we play or the activities we do.

T37: I write and send many game ideas to spend quality time with children on weekends.

Table 5. Frequency and percentage distribution of teachers' parents' opinions about the school

Professional seniority	Play-friendly		Not play-friendly	
	f	%	f.	%
Less than 10 years	23	38.3	7	11.6
More than 10 years	19	31.6	11	18.3
TOTAL	42	70	18	30

Table 5 shows the frequency and percentage distributions of the answers given by the 60 teachers in the study group about their parents' opinions about the school they work in according to their professional seniority.

Which characteristics do you think an ideal play-friendly school has?

Two themes were identified for the last interview question. The themes and categories of the findings obtained from teachers' opinions are given in Figure 3.

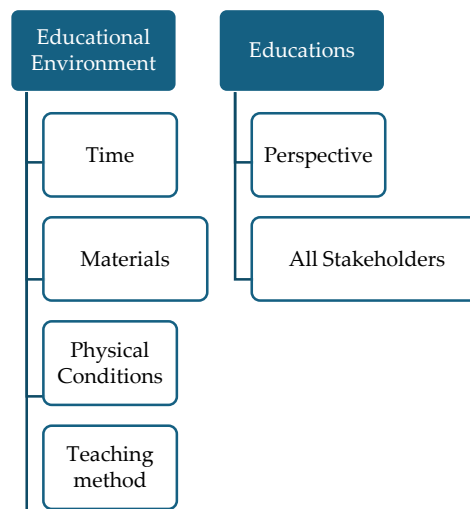


Figure 3. Themes and categories obtained from teachers' opinions

As can be seen in Figure 3, two themes, namely 'Educational environment' and 'Trainings', were obtained from the data obtained from teachers' opinions. There are four categories under the theme of educational environment: time, materials, physical conditions and teaching method, and two categories under the theme of educational environment are all stakeholders and perspective. The frequency values of the themes, categories and codes related to the last question asked of the study group are given in Table 5.

Table 6. Frequency distribution of themes, categories and codes of teachers' views on school-friendly play features

Educational environment							
Time		Materials		Physical Conditions		Teaching Method	
Code	F	Code	f	Code	f	Code	f
Long time	6	Quality	7	Garden	10	Play-based	16
Child decision	4	Cognitive intelligence	1	Nature	3		
				Organic food	1		
				Animal-friendly	2		
TOTAL	10	TOTAL	8	TOTAL	16	TOTAL	16
Educations							
All Stakeholders				Perspective			
Code		f		Code		f	
Seminars and trainings		4		Play-friendly		3	
Periodic planning		3					
Total		7		Total		3	

The interviews with the teachers, aimed to understand their thoughts on the characteristics that play-friendly schools should have. As seen in Table 6, teachers' views on the characteristics of play-friendly schools focus on the quality of the educational environment and the pieces of training to be provided. When the frequency distributions are analysed, it is seen that the most important characteristics of play-friendly schools are play-based education and training methods, effective open physical spaces, unrestricted time allocated for play, and children's decisions should be prioritised. Some of the teachers' opinions regarding these thoughts are presented below.

T5: Activities should be game-based educational activities; acquisitions should be gained through play.

T22: ...Children should be brought together with qualified play materials and nature.

T51: All staff in the school should receive practical training on this subject.

T33: Parent seminars should be organised regularly,

T15: Teachers who believe in the game should be trained.

Conclusion and Discussion

The candidate criteria items for play-friendly school, which were created as a result of the feedback received from preschool teachers and the related literature review, were sent to 60 teachers again to get their feedback on whether they were play-friendly school criteria or not, and the teachers were asked to indicate whether these items were appropriate or not, and if they were not appropriate, they were asked to state the reasons why. As a result of the feedback received from the teachers, play-friendly school principles were determined.

1. Play is the most fundamental right of all children in this school.
2. The pedagogical value of play is unquestionably accepted in this school.
3. Teachers and staff endeavour to increase the diversity of play types everywhere and under all conditions.

4. In this school, play and play environments are created to contribute to the holistic development of children based on the necessity of play for physical, emotional, social, spiritual and intellectual development.

5. In this school, education is carried out through play-based activities.

6. In this school, outdoor play environments and outdoor space arrangements are made for play experiences where children can exhibit their creativity in increasing opportunities.

7. Garden games are organised every day, regardless of the weather conditions.

8. In this school, 'Play Friendly Staff Trainings' are held regularly to train staff who believe in the power of play.

9. Children are offered quality play opportunities (Based on children's willingness to take risks, challenging environments are provided for them to discover and develop their talents by balancing risks and benefits).

10. In this school, 'Play Friendly Parent Events' are organised regularly to explain the power of play to parents.

11. The school management advocates for play, advocating for children's play needs in the wider community.

12. Play-friendly teachers work in this school.

In this study, play-friendly school principles were tried to be determined by analysing teachers' views on play-friendly schools and 12 principles were determined in line with the findings obtained. When the literature was examined, there were studies related to playgrounds in schools, but no study related to play-friendly school principles was found. In the study conducted by Tuğrul et al. (2019), children's favourite activities, the time allocated for free play, the role of the teacher during play, the opportunities of open playgrounds, risk factors, accidents during play, and parents' opinions on children's play at school were obtained, and as a result of the study, they stated that children liked to play with natural and direct materials in the garden at school, and that their play time in the classroom was sufficient. In addition, the parents stated that they wanted the play time at school to be reduced and more literacy-oriented activities to be carried out, and the administrators stated that they did not want to play games that require movement and noisy games in the school. Yücel (2005) conducted a study on the design of children's playgrounds and concluded that the reliability and maintenance of children's playgrounds are two important factors for the sustainability of playgrounds. In the study conducted by Kubanç (2014), it was stated that there were no playrooms in areas designed taking into account the developmental level and needs of preschool children, and as a result of the study conducted by Ulutaş and Şimşek (2014), it was stated that children mostly went to children's playgrounds with their mothers, it was aimed to support children's movement development, but a significant difference was found in meeting basic needs and safety in the playgrounds visited. Ünal (2009) mentioned the types and importance of children's playgrounds in his study. In the study of Baran et al. (2007), data were obtained, and suggestions were made for creating environmental conditions suitable for the physical characteristics of children in pre-school buildings.

Çetken and Sevimli-Çelik (2018) concluded that preschool teachers are aware of the importance of outdoor playgrounds, but Kaçan et al. (2017) found that half of the schools have gardens and half of them are poorly maintained. In the same direction, Çelik (2012) obtained data in his study that outdoor areas are not used effectively enough in educational institutions, the existing areas are not suitable for the nature of

the game, and these areas are neglected in a physical arrangement. Uslu and Shakouri (2012) concluded that there are playgrounds and sensory gardens for disabled children in hospitals and treatment centres. In a study conducted by Demir-Öztürk et al. (2020), it was emphasised that outdoor playgrounds in preschool education institutions support the development of children and that these areas should be diversified. In addition, according to the opinions of teachers and school administrators, playgrounds contribute to children's energy release, socialisation and learning. Similarly, in a study conducted by Yılmaz (2018), the views of fourth-grade primary school students on their right to play in schools were examined, and it was concluded that meeting students' need to play has positive effects on their happiness and academic achievement.

Tepebağ and Aktaş Arnas (2017) applied the opinions of preschool teachers about whether the school garden is used for educational purposes and found that teachers think that the school garden is not considered as a learning environment, and that it is used for energy expenditure, supporting development, air change, collecting materials, playing games, and learning by living. Özkubat (2013) conducted a study on the organisation and equipment of preschool education environments and mentioned the qualities that should be found in preschool education environments and equipment. Turgut and Yılmaz (2010) conducted a study titled 'Creating ecologically based children's playgrounds', and with this study, it was tried to evaluate the potential of nature elements such as plants, insects, water, butterflies, birds, etc., to be play tools in child development, taking into account the perception abilities of different age groups. In the study conducted by Walther (2019), the critical importance of a play-based classroom environment in the academic development of preschool children was emphasised. Play-friendly school principles aim to enrich educational environments with play-based approaches to support students' physical, social and cognitive development. In this context, it is of great importance that the physical structures of schools provide areas where children can play. It shows that integrating play-friendly school principles into educational environments plays a critical role in terms of students' overall development and school experiences.

Recommendations

A needs analysis can be conducted by taking the opinions of 'administrators, parents, academicians who are experts in the field, and children' about what a play-friendly school is and what is known about this subject.

- According to the 'play-friendly school principles' derived from this research, it can be analysed whether schools are play-friendly schools or not, and the necessary steps for schools to become play-friendly can be determined in line with the results.
- Training on 'play-friendly schools' can be given to administrators, parents and teachers.
- 'Play outside' projects such as the 'school is out' activity carried out by the Ministry of National Education can be implemented.
- Each school can distribute a play guide to parents about the games they can play at home and outside.
- Like the 'child-friendly hospitals' practice implemented in our country, the 'play-friendly school' practice can be implemented and made widespread throughout the country, and schools that meet these criteria can be supported to receive this label, and these schools can be developed with different practices.

Declarations

Authors' Declarations

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