



*Review article*

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## **Child development, social activity and learning**

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### **Abstract**

In Turkey, the children experience a ruthless hustle starting from the initial years in education. The lives of the children are transformed into a race as a result of the extensive assignments given due to crowded classrooms and the load of the private courses in the following years. Providing a healthy physical, psychological and cognitive development for the children, who are exposed to such a course load, is only possible through the application of various activities that would reveal the talents in verbal and numerical fields applied in the schools. Until then, qualified individuals with mental health, self-esteem can be raised. More proper the education and training of the children, the stronger the future of the country. Thus, education and instruction of the children are very important. Through activities, a teacher who is actively involved in providing experiences and guidance, could lead them to higher level of achievements. Naturally, activities are very important in the education of children. However, the teachers who would train the children and implement those activities are much more important. Thus, teacher training and training the students through activities should be considered as a whole and the curricula should be developed accordingly. Furthermore, while designing the activities, the emotional, psychological, physical and aesthetic developmental characteristics of the child should be considered, the activity should be considered as a part of the curriculum and the units should be considered to render the activities an integral part of the curriculum, and the education and instruction should be conducted to develop both the skills and comprehension of the children.

**Keywords:** Child development, preschool education, learning.

## 1. Introduction

Under Turkish conditions, the educational life of children is spent in a commotion starting from the initial years. In the early hours of the morning, they start a significant race in service shuttles to reach their schools. On the other hand, as a result of courses instructed in crowded classes, heavy assignments and personal tutoring in future years, the lives of the children turn into a relentless race. It is only possible to provide a healthy physical, mental and mental development for the children, who are exposed to such an instructional burden, through the discovery of the talents in verbal and numerical fields that are applied in Turkish schools and their artistic abilities. Only then, qualified individuals with positive mental health and self-confidence could be trained.

It is necessary to guide the children towards different activities in order to protect their physical, psychological and cognitive health and to remove the monotony as the children run the abovementioned marathon. In painting courses, the children should be allowed to draw freely, they could sing rhymes and songs that are integrated with games where they can join in with all their bodies and could attempt to play instruments and tap out rhythms using the instruments they construct at home with empty boxes, bottles, etc. The pressures on children can be alleviated with regular artistic activities (painting, vocal and instrumental choirs, games, rhythmic dances, folk dances, etc.). In the contemporary education approach, the individual should be considered as a whole with the physical, psychomotor, affective and cognitive structures and should be provided a balanced education in every field (Küçükkaraca and Akçay, 2017).

National Education Basic Law emphasizes that children should be educated based on their knowledge levels, skills and abilities. However, Turkish children are trapped within the two main areas of competence - numerical and verbal - at every stage in the education system. Since individual talent reflects "what an individual can do", recognition of individual talents in all skill areas would reveal the capacities of individuals. A limited numerical-verbal ability approach does not reveal the holistic qualities of individuals (Selçuk, 1996; 2000).

The development of all aspects of the student, that is, all personality traits to the fullest extent, is the main objective of the education and instruction provided at school. This can be accomplished partly in courses. Furthermore, the student needs to gain "experience" through certain activities. These experiences would improve the individual in various aspects by penetrating the areas that the courses cannot (Binbaşıoğlu, 1983). Experience is the residue of the interactions of the individual at a certain level (Senemoğlu, 1998). Activities that cannot be conducted in the primary school often can improve this dimension of the child if conducted.

However, everyone who develops and implements these activities should know the child and her or his developmental characteristics. It is a must for a good educational process to assist in the child's own efforts and to accept the fact that every child is different from the others in order for the child's balanced development. Thus, educational programs should be adaptable and flexible.

Although the general traits of each age group are always an important instrument for the teacher, it is also important to know how the children can be reconciled in these age groups. Furthermore, composers Satis Coleman and Carl Orff attempted to define musical activities for children in their respective research. Since natural development stems from the need to strike the objects to one another, the abovementioned educators designed instruments that children could beat or pick (Nye, 1967). Musical activities are especially important for the development and learning of young children.

Children need to use, experiment and learn voices produced by different types of material. Children's melodic concepts are different from adults and should not be assessed according to adult standards. The preschool child is primarily interested in sounds, wondering which object makes which sound. Music should be a part of the child's life. If music would be a language for children, they need to use it. Previous studies reported that teachers, who conduct rhythm work with children, should not only aim to make the children to keep the accurate beat, but these work should provide the child the freedom to produce her or his physical response to the rhythmic effect (Nye, 1967).

In addition to other requirements, the child needs to feel secure, to take part in a group, to participate in an activity, to face challenges and be successful. The activity program contributes to the development of the child, along with the organization of the program and the scrutinized activity instruction methods. A well-designed activity program can enable the child to understand the joy and meaning of life, and to live in the classroom, in society, and in the world (Tutak and Güder, 2014), can render the national and world history meaningful. It can develop interest for disciplines such as science, art, social sciences, health and religion and develop knowledge in these fields. It can improve creativity, ideas about different types of activities and develop positive behavior.

The growth, development and learning of the child are based on learning principles. These principles help organize the activities. Learning is a process that changes the behavior of the individual (Aydoğdu and Tutak, 2017). In this process, the individual recognizes the meaning and value of her or his goals. The principles that cause children to change their behavior by participation in activities can be listed as follows: \* Preparation and maturation \*

Feeling safe and secure \* Determination of individual differences \* Motivation \* Environment \* Problem solving \* Whole-piece-whole \* Continuity \* Evaluation (Nye, 1967). The child's experiences help the child to learn the required skills and their meanings (İç and Tutak, 2018). More complex tasks should be conducted by the teacher and planned to minimize failure of the child. Children should be mentally, physically and socially ready to learn something new.

Learning becomes effective when the child feels safe and comfortable. Temperature, lighting, proper intervals between work and leisure make the children feel physically safe and good. The "ego" of the learning individual needs to participate in the learning process. The best productivity is achieved by demonstrating individual differences when the child is learning. Because the experiences and learning level of each child are different. Learning conditions can lead to different outcomes for different children. Teachers should learn the reasons for poor learning responses. Superior individual responses should be nourished and supported. Even when these good responses render the differences between individuals insurmountable, they are prone to reveal individual differences since they could be adapted to different learning stages in different activities. The teacher should make plans considering the diversity of children and the multidimensional use of activities (Türkdoğan et al., 2010). Children learn best when they are well motivated (Saraç, 1986). Motivation is the process of increasing strength to reach certain goals (Fidan, 1995). Regardless of the topic, a discussion environment can be established with the participation of teachers and students to understand why students have to try (Sönmez, 1994). Because, if children recognize the meaning and purpose of the things they do, they own the activity. Satisfaction and joy achieved in the activities motivate learning. Achievement is a motivating factor and a good instruction provides motivation.

## **2. Conclusion and Suggestions**

Our children are the future. Therefore, their education, development and learning should in fact be the most important topic. The more adequate the education of our children, better they are educated, stronger is our future. Therefore, the education and learning of our children are very important. With the help of activities, a teacher, who actively guides the children and provides experiences, can improve their achievements (Tutak et al., 2010). Of course, activities are very important in the education of the children. However, the teachers who will educate the children and implement those activities are much more important (Tutak and Güler, 2012). Thus, teacher training and educating children with activities should be approached in a holistic manner and curricula should be designed accordingly. Furthermore, while designing the activities, emotional, mental, physical and aesthetic developmental characteristics of the child

should be considered, the activity should be considered as a part of the curriculum and the units should include the activities so that they could become a significant part of the curriculum and the education and instruction should be conducted to enable the acquisition of both ability and comprehension.

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