

## **Investigation of Prospective Primary School Teachers' Views about Pre-School Education <sup>1</sup>**

### **Aday Sınıf Öğretmenlerinin Okul Öncesi Eğitimine İlişkin Görüşlerinin İncelenmesi**

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#### **Abstract**

In previous years, preparation for primary school was under the scope of preschool education. The new system has allocated the preparation and orientation program as a component of the 1st grade curriculum. Continuity between primary school and the preschool education institution is an important factor in the education of the child because the transition from the preschool education institution to primary school is an important process in the child's education and learning life. Finding out the views of prospective primary school teachers, who will be in the same environment as this age group in the future, on preschool education during their undergraduate studies, constitutes the purpose of the study. The views of prospective teachers, who prepared activities and taught at preschool education institutions and observed the setting on site, were received again at the end of this process. Qualitative data were categorized into three main issues: contribution to development areas, general views and quality of teaching service.

**Keywords:** Prospective primary school teachers, pre-school education, transition, preparation for primary education

#### **Öz**

Önceki yıllarda ilköğretime hazırlık okul öncesi eğitime dâhilken yenilenen eğitim sistemiyle birlikte 1. sınıf öğretim programının bir bölümü "uyum ve hazırlık programı" olarak ayrılmıştır. Böylece okul öncesi eğitim 1. sınıfın bir parçası olmuştur. Buna göre, ilkokul 1. sınıf öğretmenlerinin alışık olmadıkları bir yaş grubu (66-72 aylık çocuklar) ve uygulamalarla karşı karşıya geldiklerini söylemek mümkündür. Çocuğun eğitiminde ilkokul ile okul öncesi eğitim kurumu arasındaki devamlılık önemli bir etkenidir çünkü okul öncesi kurumdan ilkokula geçiş çocuğun eğitim ve öğretim yaşantısında önemli bir süreçtir. İleride bu yaş grubuyla aynı ortamda bulunacak sınıf öğretmenliği aday öğretmenlerinin lisans öğrenimleri sırasında okul öncesi eğitime ilişkin görüşlerini öğrenmek araştırmanın amacını oluşturmaktadır. Okul öncesi eğitim kurumlarında etkinlik hazırlayarak öğretim gerçekleştiren ve ortamı yerinde gözlemleyen aday öğretmenlerin bu süreç sonunda okul öncesi eğitime ilişkin görüşleri tekrar alınmıştır. Öğretmen adaylarının görüşleri genel görüş, gelişim alanlarına katkı ve öğretim hizmetinin niteliği olarak kategorilere ayrılmıştır.

**Anahtar sözcükler:** Aday sınıf öğretmenleri, okul öncesi eğitim, geçiş, ilköğretime hazırlık

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## **Introduction**

In accordance with new developments in the education system, children who reach 66 months of age begin primary school (MEB, Changes in Ordinance, Item 15, 2013). The preschool program implemented between 2006 and 2012 had a preparation process for children between 60 and 72 months old. Today changes have been made in the program. With this change, this process, which used to concern preschool teachers, is now among the responsibilities of 1st grade primary school teachers.

There are important transition points in the life of a child. Having the transition carried out in a sound manner is of significance in terms of the integral development of children. The process of children's transition from the preschool to primary school period is the most important factor influencing their development in mental, physical, emotional, and social terms. Preschool education, which constitutes the foundation of this process, aims to develop the skill of learning in children and prepare the child for school life. The preschool period covers participation in activities under the scope of a certain plan, compliance with in-class and out-of-class rules, taking responsibility, speaking by getting permission, learning reading, writing and arithmetic skills, reasoning and developing creativity, and enhancing language development for the first time (Aşıcı et al, 2010; Unutkan-Polat, 2006; Poyraz, 2001).

In this process within the development of the child, it is important to have the child sense the feeling of being aware and investigative (Albrecht&Miller, 2004). Furthermore, Mangır&Aral (1992) also refer to the impact of creativity on the process of learning. The creative individual is able to bring new solutions to problems and synthesize his/her knowledge in a unique manner. Creativity is a characteristic that does not appear on its own; however, it can be developed by using rich surrounding stimuli and materials and also the preparation of required education environments. Acquiring skills such as communication, decision making, curiosity, assertiveness, responsibility, cooperation, research, the correct, effective, and eloquent use of Turkish, and ethical behavior (MEB, 2006) are as important as creative thinking. In this manner, it can be said that the child is prepared for primary school in the most suitable manner in cognitive, emotional, and physical terms (Mangır&Aral, 1992).

In the preschool curriculum, the development of all areas of development of the child has been taken as a basis. Accordingly, an attempt has been made to have the children acquire the objectives related to the areas of development below.

*Preschool Education Objectives for Psycho-Motor Development:* these are education objectives oriented at developing the muscle coordination of children according to their various physical maturity levels.

*Preschool Education Objectives for Social-Emotional Development:* this is related to the child establishing meaningful and positive relations with others and him/herself and contributing positively to his/her environment.

*Preschool Education Objectives for Cognitive Development:* this is associated to

the child acquiring knowledge and using this knowledge in an effective manner. According to Piaget, this knowledge is classified as physical knowledge, social knowledge, logical knowledge, and symbolization skills. The child develops its cognitive structure with all this knowledge.

*Preschool Education Objectives for Language Development:* this is associated to children speaking correct and eloquent Turkish.

A six-seven year old child, who acquires skills addressing these areas of development, is able to make a transition to another stage of his/her life, which is primary education. Yeboah (2002) suggested that for a successful transition to primary school, it is necessary for the child to have emotional, psychological, physical, and mental readiness. The concepts of maturity or readiness are a matter that requires attention at this stage. The most important engagement in the first grade of primary school is learning to read and write. In this respect, when talking about readiness, some authors and researchers discuss reading readiness, which is the most important duty of primary education (Oktay, 1999). The most important skill for readiness for reading is verbal language skill. Before children learn to read and write, they learn to listen and talk. It is necessary to prepare an education environment in which the child can communicate with other children, express his/her own thoughts, and share his/her experiences and expressions (Yazıcı, 2002).

The qualification of teachers, who are influential in the preparation and development of the education environment, directly influences the development of students. The qualification of the teacher has an important role in the functioning and success of education systems and the development of students (Aydın et al., 2008). There is a need for the use of new approaches in the teaching of the primary education curriculum that includes themes fit for thinking, creativity, problem solving, applying to synthesizing, producing alternatives, and approaching events critically (Demir&Çamlı, 2011). First grade primary school teachers, who are the implementers of these approaches, need to have field knowledge and competent personal characteristics. However, adequate in-service training has not been provided for 1<sup>st</sup> grade teachers to be able to implement the preparation and orientation program. In previous years, preparation for primary school was under the scope of preschool education. The new system has allocated the preparation and orientation program as a component of the 1<sup>st</sup> grade curriculum. Thus, preschool education has become a part of the 1<sup>st</sup> grade. Accordingly, it is possible to say that 1<sup>st</sup> grade primary school teachers are encountering an age group (66-72 months) and practices which they are not familiar with. Continuity between primary school and the preschool education institution is an important factor in the education of the child because the transition from the preschool education institution to primary school is an important process in the child's education and learning life. Finding out the views of prospective primary school teachers, who will be in the same environment as this age group in the future, on preschool education during their undergraduate stud-

ies, constitutes the purpose of the study. In line with this purpose, views of prospective primary school teachers on preschool education were received. The views of prospective teachers, who prepared activities and taught at preschool education institutions and observed the setting on site, were received again at the end of this process. The answers to the following questions were sought in this study:

1. What are the pre-views of prospective primary school teachers on preschool education?
2. What are the post-views of prospective primary school teachers on preschool education?

## **Method**

### ***Model of the Study***

The qualitative research model has been adopted in this study. The qualitative data was formed with the views of 40 prospective primary school teachers (PST) selected with the random sampling method among prospective teachers studying in the 4<sup>th</sup> year at the Balıkesir University, Educational Faculty of Necatibey during the 2012-2013 academic year. In this sampling model, the possibility of each individual participating in the study is equal and independent of each other (Akgün et al, 2009) The pre- and post-views of prospective teachers on preschool education were received through a semi-structured interview form prepared by researchers in the study. The qualitative data obtained in the study were analyzed through descriptive analysis. Consistency was observed between categories and sub categories determined by the researchers.

For the purpose of obtaining information on whether or not the views of the study group on preschool education changed, prospective primary school teachers taught at preschool education institutions under the scope of the “teaching practice” course. According to this, the researchers determined the duties of the study group as contacting schools, preparing lesson plans, preparing suitable materials, and teaching. The prospective teachers prepared the lesson plans, materials, and activities they would employ in lessons by receiving the views of preschool and primary school teaching experts in addition to those of the researchers.

The pre- and post-views of prospective teachers on preschool education were received through a semi-structured interview form prepared by researchers in the study. In order to test the validity of the interview form, as prior to the study, 23 primary school teachers’ opinions were received. For the scope validity of the interview form, opinions were received from primary and preschool education programs. Items were arranged in line with the experts’ opinions and in compliance with the aim of the study. The reliability of the interview form was examined by calculating the consistency percentage of the researchers’ scoring system. The answers given to the questions included in the interview form were analyzed after being transformed into categories suitable for the qualitative research processes. Interobserver reliability of the form was

calculated by using the formula below (Kırcaali-İftar&Tekin, 1997).

“the consensus / [consensus+ difference of opinion] X 100”

Three achievement levels were specified in the evaluation as poor (1 score), acceptable (2 scores) and exemplary (3 scores). Consistency percentages were obtained for the reliability of categories (contribution to areas of development, general view and the quality of the service of teaching). Consistency percentages were calculated and the results for contribution to areas of development were 98%, while the general view was 89% and the quality of the service of teaching was 94%. These values indicated reasonable consistency among the observers. A high inter-observer reliability of 80 % was found, thus the categories could be used in the study (Kırcaali-Iftar&Tekin, 1997).

With pre- and post-analysis of the data obtained from pilot study, it was concluded that themes reached by the main study overlapped. These themes are based on the main study. A comparison of pre- and post-views with the themes shows stability, therefore categories and sub-categories were constructed.

## **Results**

### ***Themes developed for pre-views about Preschool Education***

The data obtained in the study were analyzed and categories were determined. Together with sub categories forming these categories, it was determined that the data were collected under three main titles. These titles are contribution to areas of development with 58 percent, general view with 21 percent, and the quality of the service of teaching. It can be observed that all prospective teachers expressed a positive view regarding the necessity, importance, and benefits of preschool education. This is a favorable finding. Furthermore, it has been determined that prospective teachers have knowledge on areas of development with their sub dimensions and the quality of the service of teaching and that they can develop interpretations. For the purpose of increasing the validity of the study, the results are supported with the pre-views of prospective teachers. In Table 1 main titles are examined in detail.

**Table 1.** The pre-teaching views of prospective primary school teachers on preschool education\*

Themes	Categories	Sub Categories	Frequency (f)	Percent (%)
General view	Positive	Necessary	23	61
		Important	9	24
		Beneficial	6	15
	<b>General Total</b>		<b>38</b>	<b>100</b>
Contribution to Areas of Development	Social-emotional development	Socializing	17	16
		Communication	14	12
		Adaptation	10	9
		Sharing	8	7
		Self confidence	7	6
		Assertiveness	6	5
		Cooperation	2	2
		<b>Total</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>57</b>
	Self care skills	Hygiene education	2	2
		Toilet training	1	1
		<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>
	Cognitive Development	Creative thinking	5	4
		Research skills	4	4
		Critical thinking	4	4
		Independent thinking	3	2
	<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>14</b>	
	Psychomotor development	Hand skills	21	19
		Hand-eye coordination	-	-
		<b>Total</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>19</b>
	Language development	Correct speaking in Turkish	3	2
		Expressing him/herself verbally	2	2
<b>Total</b>		<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	
Moral development	Not lying	2	2	
	Being honest	1	1	
	<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	
<b>General Total</b>		<b>112</b>	<b>100</b>	
Quality of the Service of Teaching	Teacher characteristics	Personal Characteristics	6	15
		Field knowledge	2	5
		Professional knowledge	2	5
		<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>25</b>
	Class Environment	Material	6	15
		Physical setting	4	10
		<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>25</b>
	Orientation	Preparation for primary education	20	50
<b>General</b>		<b>40</b>	<b>100</b>	

\*General total presents percentage and frequency distribution of each themes.

It was concluded that even though prospective teachers do not have extensive knowledge of preschool education, they have knowledge on areas of development and basic skills constituting these areas. If the areas of development in Table 1 are observed, it is evident that the social-emotional area of development has the highest

frequency. A percentage of 57% of prospective teachers emphasized the importance of this area. They have especially stated that children receiving preschool education are more social, can establish better communication, are conformist, are open to sharing, are self-confident and assertive, and can cooperate. This can be perceived to be an expected result. After line-drawing work in order to have 1st grade students acquire the skill of holding a pencil, reading-writing activities are initiated. This process requires 2 months of work. In this context, the development of hand skills, the skill of holding a pencil is important. As they take their first reading-writing lesson, prospective teachers are aware of the circumstance and as it can be observed in Table 1, it is evident that this is reflected onto their views. The idea that preschool education increased creativity, developed independent and critical thinking, and acquired research skills in children was dominant among 14% of prospective teachers.

Another finding of the study is that, even though emphasis has been given to the importance of moral development in the preschool curriculum, when the areas of development in the curriculum are examined, it has been determined that there are no moral skills. Despite this, prospective teachers have expressed views on not lying and being honest. Accordingly, when data were being categorized there was a need to form the area of moral development.

In Table 1, there are the sub category views of PST23 and PST16 socializing, PST29 communication, PST26 and PST15 self-confidence, PST27 assertiveness, PST23 sharing, and PST29 cooperation. Hygiene and toilet training can be encountered in the views of PST31 and PST35. PST30 and PST31 refer to creative thinking, PST15 refers to critical thinking, and PST30 refers to independent thinking. Among 21 prospective teachers emphasizing hand skills, the views of PST37 and PST38 describe this subcategory. PST28, PST33, and PST20 have specified the importance of language development as expressing him/herself verbally. PST16 and PST15 have explained the moral development of the child as not lying and being honest.

**PST23.** *It is said that children receiving preschool education grow up to be more social and sharing individuals.*

**PST29.** *I think that their friendships are different and that children that have received preschool education have better communication with their peers and work better in cooperation with their peers.*

**PST16.** *Many characteristics such as honesty and not lying become more permanent if they are acquired at earlier ages.*

**PST15.** *Preschool education equips children with self confidence.*

**PST27.** *In preschool education children begin to do some things independently of their families. They get used to addressing their own needs and attempt to stand up on their own.*

**PST37.** *Hand skills of children are developed in preschool education through*

*activities such as play dough and cut and paste games.*

**PST28.** *The child being able to express him/herself verbally, in other words, the fact that his/her ideas are important, should be acquired by the child at this age.*

**PST31.** *Preschool education is important in terms of having children acquire manners and sanitation habits*

It was revealed that a large percentage of prospective teachers expressed positive views regarding preschool education. It can be observed that more than half of prospective teachers with such views consider that preschool education is necessary, 9 consider it to be important, and 6 consider it to be beneficial. Under the general view title, PST13, PST14, and PST19 have expressed views exemplifying the situation. The fact that they are taking the “early childhood education” course in the primary school teaching program and the fact that they have an idea on this matter can be indicated to be a reason for this situation.

**PST13.** *I believe that all children should receive preschool education. Even though education begins in the family, it is arguable to what extent this is effective. When the child grows until the age of 6 depending on the family, it is difficult for the child to get used to school.*

**PST14.** *Preschool education is definitely necessary. If education is quality, then the future of the child is influenced to that extent. It is important that the critical period is spent with educated persons.*

**PST19.** *I think that preschool education is necessary. Children experience eight percent of their learning during this period. I think that the foundation should be laid strongly in this period.*

The thing that is striking here is that 50 percent of prospective teachers gave emphasis to orientation. This can be due to the observations on 1<sup>st</sup> grade students by prospective teachers under the scope of the “teaching practice” course in their curriculum. In this way, prospective teachers have inferred that students receiving preschool education adapt to school more easily. In the same manner, as prospective teachers have ideas about the classroom environment and the characteristics of teachers, they have emphasized the importance of these matters with equal percentages.

PST27, PST32, and PST40 expressed views on the characteristics of preschool teachers and suggested the improvement of teacher qualifications. Among prospective teachers expressing views on the classroom environment, PST23 and PST25 pointed out the physical condition of material and the classroom. PST14, PST8, and PST2 mentioned the impact of preschool education on adapting to school.



**PST40.** *It is important that teachers are made competent in terms of professional and field knowledge.*

**PST25.** *In the preschool classroom, there should be colors, toys, and materials that will develop the child, and desks and chairs relevant to the height of the child.*

**PST14.** *The period for adaptation to school shortens.*

**PST8.** *A child newly beginning primary school adapts to school faster. S/he can make a friend group without being dependent on his/her parents.*

**PST2.** *The child does not experience school adaptation problems.*

### ***Themes developed for post-views about Preschool Education***

In the study, when the post-practice views of prospective teachers were examined, it was revealed that they also accumulated under three titles. These titles are general views, areas of development, and the quality of the service of teaching. When pre- and post-views on preschool education were compared, it was determined that no striking change was encountered regarding general views and contributions to areas of development. There is a striking increase regarding the quality of the service of teaching. The reason for this increase could be considered to be that prospective teachers comprehended the importance of the quality of the service of teaching. As prospective teachers were actually present in preschool education institutions and observed or performed practices on site, they expressed ideas on how teaching should be. To increase the validity of the study, the results are supported with the post-views of prospective teachers.

When data were examined in terms of contribution to areas of development and changes of prospective teachers in the subcategories of social-emotional development area, an increase can be observed in socialization (pre 16%-post 26%) and a decrease can be observed in communication (pre 12%-post 8%), adaptation (pre 9%-post 6%) and sharing (pre 7%-post 4%). While assertiveness and cooperation remained fixed in terms of pre- and post-views, in the self-confidence sub category it is striking that there are no post-views. Contrary to this, in views related to the cognitive area, an apparent increase could be observed. It can be observed that research skill (pre 4%-post 17%) and creative thinking skill (pre 4%-post 9%), which are among sub categories, have contributed to this increase. For the critical thinking skill, a similarity could be observed between the pre- and post-view. It was revealed that the skill of independent thinking was not expressed in post-views. By equipping the student with the skill of research in preschool education, the will to learn and curiosity will be constantly supported. When students are attempting to find an answer to a question they are curious about, they collect data on the matter concerned, establish a cause-effect relationship, and make a comment on the matter. Thus, they find the opportunity to make sense of what they have learned again. Within the period they were in preschool education in-

stitutions, as prospective teachers actually were in the learning environment, they were able to perceive the impact of the skill of research on the learning process.

Another favorable point is that they have comprehended the importance of hand-eye coordination. The percentage of hand skills in pre-views was 19 and it became 13 percent in post-views. Hand-eye coordination was not present in pre-views, but in post-views it appeared to be 6 percent. Likewise, it was determined that language and moral development sub categories were present in pre-views and not present in post-views. The lesson plans and materials prepared by prospective teachers, the prospective teachers teaching in accordance with the classroom setting, and the feedback they received from children in the preschool group and their observations based on the school environment can be indicated as reasons for this case. When self care skills were examined, no difference was encountered between pre- and post-views.

**Table 2.** Post-teaching views of prospective primary schoolteachers on preschool education\*

Themes	Categories	Sub Categories	Frequency (f)	Percent (%)
General view	Positive	Necessary	21	53
		Important	11	28
		Beneficial	8	19
	<b>General Total</b>		<b>40</b>	<b>100</b>
Contribution to Areas of Development	Social-emotional development	Socializing	31	26
		Communication	9	8
		Adaptation	7	6
		Assertiveness	6	5
		Sharing	5	4
		Cooperation	2	2
		Self Confidence	-	0
		<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>51</b>
	Self care skills	Hygiene training	1	0.5
		Toilet training	1	0.5
		<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
	Cognitive Development	Research skill	20	17
		Creative thinking	11	9
		Critical thinking	3	3
		<b>Total</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>29</b>
	Psychomotor development	Hand skill	15	13
		Hand-eye coordination	7	6
		<b>Total</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>19</b>
	Language development	Correct use of Turkish	0	0
		Expressing him/herself verbally	0	0
		<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
	Moral development	Not lying	0	0
		Being honest	0	0
<b>Total</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	
<b>General Total</b>		<b>118</b>	<b>100</b>	
Quality of the Service of Teaching	Teacher characteristics	Personal characteristics	14	18
		Professional knowledge	5	6
		Field knowledge	19	24
		<b>Total</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>18</b>
	Materials	Covering visual design elements	17	21
	In-class activities	Teaching with games	16	20
		Student participation	3	4
		Teaching with drama	2	2,5
		Teaching with puppets	2	2,5
		<b>Total</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>29</b>
	Orientation	Preparation for Primary Education	6	8
	Classroom environment	Physical setting	9	10
	School environment	Lesson plan	2	2,667
		Clothing	2	2,667
		School facility	2	2,667
		<b>Total</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>General</b>		<b>80</b>	<b>100</b>	

\*General total is presenting percentage and frequency distribution of each themes.

There are opinions of PST23, PST6 and PST5 on the contribution of pre-school education to the social-emotional development area. Hygiene and toilet

training can be encountered in the views of PST1 and PST2. PST27, PST4, and PST13 refer to creative thinking, critical thinking, and research skills. PST19 emphasized hand skills, PST8 pointed out hand-eye coordination, and the views of PST36 described these sub categories.

**PST6.** *Together with preschool education, children get acquainted with school, adapting to school becomes easier, and they become more social and assertive individuals. All the good characteristics the child acquires in this period continue to exist.*

**PST1.** *Teaching is not limited to guidance but is provided together with eating, sleeping, play, personal hygiene, and toilet training.*

**PST27.** *In my observations, the investigative personality of children surprised me. They ask about everything and want to know everything.*

**PST8.** *By making some materials themselves, they strengthen their finger muscles.*

**PST19.** *Actual activities in the 5-6 year-old age group are oriented at hand skills.*

**PST36.** *Activities requiring hand-eye coordination prepare children for the 1<sup>st</sup> grade.*

When the general views of prospective teachers on preschool education after teaching were examined, it was observed that these views were similar to pre-views. A percentage of 53% of prospective teachers stated the necessity of preschool education, 28% expressed views on its importance, and 19% expressed views on its benefits.

According to Table 2, it is striking that there is an increase in the number of prospective teachers expressing views on the importance and benefits of preschool education. Prospective teachers have observed the impact of teaching they performed at preschool education institutions on children and this statement was reflected positively onto their views. It was determined that all prospective teachers expressed positive views on the necessity, importance, and benefits of preschool education. However, as this was reflected clearly in the views of PST8 and also PST32 and PST35, the views of PST29 were also presented.

**PST32.** *The education provided prior to school is very important for primary education. I clearly understood this. Before I used to think that there was no need for this. However, preschool is necessary.*

**PST29.** *Teaching lessons with games will ensure that the child has fun and likes the school and being a student*

**PST35.** *I believe that preschool education is important in developing a posi*

*tive attitude towards school.*

When the subcategories of the quality of the service of teaching in Table 2 were examined, it was concluded that more subcategories were asserted compared to pre-views. It was determined that it had similarity with the pre-views of the teacher characteristics subcategory. However, fewer views were expressed for classroom environment and orientation. Contrary to this, it was determined that new categories such as material, in-class activities and school environment appeared in the post-views. Prospective teachers that taught did not have extensive and detailed knowledge on preschool education prior to the implementation. As a matter of fact, at the end of the processes they spent with experts of the field and researchers they obtained preliminary knowledge on the education provided and teaching. In addition to this, at the end of the teaching process they spent in the setting, their knowledge and experience was reinforced.

When views were examined, PST1 mentioned that the preschool teacher needed to assume the mother character, PST25 mentioned that the preschool teacher assumed more responsibility; PST36 mentioned that the preschool teacher needed to establish more effective communication with children, and PST32 mentioned that preschool teachers needed to attend more to children. Furthermore, PST21 stated that teachers need to be persons that are patient and have attentive personal characteristics and can establish effective communication and PST11 reflected the situation especially with the statements of “*This job should be performed by persons that have received good education, are patient, respect the existence of the child, support them, and teach basic knowledge and ethical rules.*”.

**PST1.** *The teacher completely assumes the mother character.*

**PST25.** *Preschool teachers have been burdened with much more responsibility.*

**PST36.** *I noticed that preschool teaching is a much more difficult profession than it seems. It is necessary to go down to their level, in order to communicate with children. And this is not an easy issue.*

**PST32.** *It is not a suitable profession for me, because they have to attend to all needs of the child.*

**PST21.** *Preschool teaching is more of a duty requiring patience and talent. It is necessary to have good communication with small children. It is necessary to show empathy with them. It is expected that teachers be more careful and hardworking.*

PST12 and PST5 expressed views on professional knowledge of preschool teachers such as drawing attention, motivating, and classroom management being

at an adequate level. In views of PST6, PST8, and PST12 on the use of writing free, colorful, concrete, and interesting materials have been provided. Views on the necessity of teaching using games were expressed by 16 prospective teachers and 2 prospective teachers pointed out teaching with drama and puppets. Views on expecting the effective participation of the student in the education process were expressed by 3 prospective teachers. PST9 and PST19 pointed out the importance of the primary school preparation process. With regard to the classroom environment category, PST9, PST12, and PST1 stated the requirement to arrange the classroom environment like the home setting. As a result, of the observations of prospective teachers, 6 views were expressed on the school environment and 2 (PST10 and PST16) pointed out the school means.

**PST5.** *Games were emphasized more and entertainment was emphasized more than knowledge.*

**PST6.** *The materials were prepared in a manner with no writing, with many colors and vibrancy, and in a manner that will draw the attention of the 3-6 age groups.*

**PST12.** *The materials used during lessons are more visually based. It is necessary for them to be like this. The more visual elements are used, the easier children learn.*

**PST19.** *As far as I could observe, play was emphasized more in the 3-year-old age group. The teacher conducted speaking activities.*

**PST1.** *I noticed that it was more like a home setting rather than a classroom setting.*

**PST10.** *I saw that the lesson plans of preschool were different and clothing was much more comfortable compared to us.*

**PST16.** *I noticed that economic status at school influenced student development greatly. The school I went to was relatively rich in terms of physical means. This enables children to have knowledge on everything*

## **Discussion**

The 1<sup>st</sup> grade of primary school is one of the cornerstones in the life of the child. This is because it is the first time the child is away from the mother and enters a setting with peers and adults. In this setting, the child will acquire the skills of reading, writing, and arithmetic, which constitute the foundation of education life. The complete acquisition of these skills depends on ensuring the adaptation of the child to school and making the child willing to acquire these skills. When it is considered that getting prepared for primary education is important for the child, the requirement for preschool education becomes evident. As a result of the study, it was revealed that prospective primary school teachers expressed common

views on the importance and necessity of preschool education.

In Dereli's (2012) study preschool teachers and primary school teachers stated that preschool education is important for the preparation of the child for primary school. However, while preschool teachers expressed that preschool education is important because it supports the mental development of children, language development, self care skills, emotional development and social development, first grade primary school teachers stated that it is important because it develops manners and daily living skills.

In the study of Gürkan (2013), it was suggested that when the effects of preschool education on social development were examined, children that have undergone such a process demonstrated positive developments such as taking initiative, self confidence, independence, being interested in the surroundings, and curiosity.

When the results were examined, it was determined that prospective teachers most often expressed views contributing to areas of development in preschool education. It was observed that there was no difference between pre and post general views (benefit, importance, necessity) of prospective teachers. An important finding of the study is that there were no negative views on the benefits, importance, and necessity of preschool education.

Prospective teachers expressing views on the quality of the service of teaching have especially enriched their views on preschool education with new categories such as materials, in-class activities, and school environment. In this context, it is a favorable finding that they have started to look at the matter with a wider perspective. When the views were examined, it was striking that the material characteristics and their use in preschool were underlined. It was expressed that the material should be free of writing, colorful, concrete, visual, and interesting. Furthermore, their views on the need to resort to variety in material use are of importance in terms of its addressing different areas of development. This will have a positive impact on the integral development of children. Prospective teacher views on in-class activities are more focused on teaching with games. In addition to this, teaching through drama and puppets were pointed out. Another point that needs to be emphasized is the appearance of views on student participation in the results obtained in the study.

It was found that prospective teachers who expressed pre-views on personal characteristics, professional and field knowledge, expressed nothing about field knowledge after the teaching they performed. As opposed to this, a considerable increase was determined in post-views on personal characteristics. Prospective teachers, who had the opportunity to observe preschool and 1<sup>st</sup> grade primary school teachers, compared both teacher groups and stated that preschool teachers assumed more responsibility, needed to be more patient, demonstrate an approach to children like their mothers, and needed to be more attentive and

tolerant. In addition to this, it was emphasized that preschool teachers had to be more competent in professional terms. However, as prospective teachers did not have the adequate knowledge and competency required for preschool education, the fact that they did express views on the field knowledge of preschool teachers was a case that was expected.

Prospective primary school teachers became experienced on how preschool education is conducted with applications regarding the preschool teaching they performed under the scope of the “teaching practice” course. It is considered that this experience will contribute positively to them effectively implementing the “orientation and preparation activities” in the 1st grade curriculum and showing empathy with the development level of the 66-month age group.

Based on the results of this study, it is recommended that the undergraduate courses in the primary school curriculum should be revised and that undergraduate courses on “early childhood education” and courses with practical content regarding the education and teaching of 66-72-month-old children should be added.

## **Özet**

### **Giriş**

Eğitim sistemindeki yeni gelişmelerle birlikte 66 ayını dolduran çocuklar ilkokula başlamaktadır. 2006-2012 yılları arasında uygulanan okul öncesi eğitimi programında 60-72 aylık çocuklar için ilköğretime hazırlık süreci yer alırken günümüzde bu programda değişikliklere gidilmiştir. Bu durumda okul öncesi öğretmenlerini ilgilendiren bu süreç artık ilköğretim 1. sınıf öğretmenlerinin sorumlulukları arasında yer almaktadır. Çocuğun hayatında önemli geçiş noktaları vardır. Bu geçişin sağlıklı bir şekilde yapılabilmesi öğrencilerin bütünsel gelişimi açısından önem taşımaktadır. Çocukların okul öncesi dönemdeki yaşamlarından ilkokula geçiş süreci, daha sonraki yıllarda zihinsel, fiziksel, duygusal ve sosyal yönlerden gelişmelerini etkileyen en önemli faktördür. Bu sürecin temelini oluşturan okul öncesi eğitim, çocukta öğrenme becerisini geliştirmeyi ve çocuğu okul yaşamına hazırlamayı amaçlamaktadır. Okul öncesi dönem ilk kez belli bir plan dâhilinde etkinliklere katılmayı, sınıf içi-dışı kurallara uymayı, sorumluluk almayı, izin alarak konuşmayı, okuma yazma, aritmetik becerilerini öğrenmeyi, akıl yürütme ve yaratıcılığın geliştirilmesini, dil gelişiminin zenginleştirilmesini içermektedir (Aşıcı ve diğ., 2010; Unutkan-Polat, 2006:10; Poyraz, 2001).

Çocuğun gelişimindeki bu süreçte, çocuğa farkındalık ve araştırmacılık duygusunun hissettirilmesi önem taşımaktadır (Albrecht&Miller 2004). Ayrıca Mangır ve Aral (1992) tarafından yaratıcılığın öğrenme süreci üzerindeki etkisine de değinilmektedir. Yaratıcı birey, problemlere yeni çözümler getirebilmekte ve bilgilerini özgün bir şekilde sentezleyebilmektedir. Yaratıcılık



kendiliğinden ortaya çıkan bir özellik değildir ve zengin çevre uyarıcıları ve materyaller kullanılarak ve gerekli eğitim ortamı hazırlanarak geliştirilebilir. Yaratıcı düşünme kadar iletişim, karar verme, merak, girişimcilik, sorumluluk, işbirliği, araştırma, Türkçeyi doğru, etkili ve güzel kullanma, etik davranma gibi becerilerin kazandırılması da önem taşımaktadır (okul öncesi program kitabı). Böylece çocuğun ilköğretime bilişsel, duyuşsal ve fiziksel açıdan en uygun şekilde hazırlandığı söylenebilir (Mangır&Aral,1992).

Okul öncesi öğretim programında çocuğun tüm gelişim alanlarının geliştirilmesi esas alınmaktadır. Buna göre, aşağıda yer alan gelişim alanları ile ilgili hedeflerin kazandırılmasına çalışılmaktadır.

*Psiko-Motor Gelişim ile İlgili Okul Öncesi Eğitim Hedefleri:* Çocukların değişik fiziksel olgunluk derecelerine göre, kas koordinasyonunu geliştirmeye yönelik eğitim hedefleridir.

*Sosyal-Duygusal Gelişimle İlgili Okul Öncesi Eğitim Hedefleri:* Çocuğun başkalarıyla ve kendisiyle anlamlı ve olumlu ilişkiler kurabilmesi ve çevresine olumlu bir şekilde katkıda bulunmasıyla ilgili hedeflerdir.

*Bilişsel Gelişimle İlgili Okul Öncesi Eğitim Hedefleri:* Çocuğun bilgi edinebilmesi ve bu bilgiyi etkin bir şekilde kullanılmasıyla ilişkilidir. Piaget'e göre bu bilgi fiziksel bilgi, sosyal bilgi, mantıksal bilgi ve simgeleme yeteneği olarak sınıflandırılır. Çocuk bilişsel yapısını bütün bu bilgileri kullanarak geliştirir.

*Dil Gelişimiyle İlgili Okul Öncesi Eğitim Hedefleri:* Çocukların Türkçeyi doğru ve güzel konuşmaları ile ilgili hedeflerdir.

Bu gelişim alanlarına hitap eden becerileri kazanan altı-yedi yaş grubundaki bir çocuk, hayatındaki bir diğer önemli aşama olan ilköğretime kolaylıkla geçiş yapabilmektedir. Yeboah (2002) ilköğretime başarılı bir geçiş için çocuğun duygusal, psikolojik, fiziksel ve zihinsel hazırbulunuşluluğa ulaşması gerektiğini belirtmiştir. Olgunluk ya da hazırlıklı olma kavramı da bu aşamada dikkat edilmesi gereken bir konudur. İlköğretim birinci sınıftaki en önemli uğraş okuma ve yazmanın öğrenilmesidir. Bu açıdan hazırlıklı olmaktan söz edildiğinde, bazı yazar ve araştırmacılar, ilköğretimin bu en önemli görevi olan okuma hazırlığını ele alırlar (Oktay, 1999). Okumaya hazırlık için en önemli beceri sözel dil becerisidir. Çocuklar okuma yazmaya başlamadan önce dinlemeyi ve konuşmayı öğrenmektedirler. Çocuğun diğer çocuklarla iletişime geçebileceği, kendi duygu ve düşüncelerini ifade edebileceği, deneyimleri ve izlenimlerini paylaşabileceği uygun eğitim ortamlarının hazırlanması gerekmektedir (Yazıcı, 2002).

Eğitim ortamının hazırlanmasında ve geliştirilmesinde etkin olan öğretmenlerin niteliği de öğrencilerin gelişimini doğrudan etkilemektedir. Öğretmenin niteliği eğitim sistemlerinin işleyişi ve başarıya ulaşmasında, öğrencilerin gelişiminde oldukça önemli rol oynamaktadır (Aydın ve diğ., 2008).

Düşünmek, yaratıcılık, problem çözmek, sentezlemeye gitmek, alternatifler üretmek ve olaylara eleştirel yaklaşmak için elverişli temalar içeren ilköğretim programının öğretiminde yeni yaklaşımların kullanılmasına ihtiyaç vardır (Demir&Çamlı, 2011). Bu yaklaşımların uygulayıcısı olan 1. sınıf öğretmenlerinin meslekî bilgi, alan bilgisi ve kişisel özellikler bakımından donanımlı olması beklenmektedir. Ancak 1. sınıf öğretmenlerinin uyum ve hazırlık programının uygulanması için öğretmenlere yeterli düzeyde hizmet içi eğitim verilmemiştir. Önceki yıllarda ilköğretime hazırlık okul öncesi eğitime dâhilken yeni sistemle 1. sınıf öğretim programının bir bölümü uyum ve hazırlığa ayrılmıştır. Böylece okul öncesi eğitim 1. sınıfın bir parçası olmuştur. Buna göre, ilkokul 1. sınıf öğretmenlerinin alışık olmadıkları bir yaş grubu (66-72 aylık çocuklar) ve uygulamalarla karşı karşıya geldiklerini söylemek mümkündür. Çocuğun eğitiminde ilkokul ile okul öncesi eğitim kurumu arasındaki devamlılık önemli bir etkidir çünkü okul öncesi kurumdan ilkokula geçiş çocuğun eğitim ve öğretim yaşantısında önemli bir süreçtir. İleride bu yaş grubuyla aynı ortamda bulunacak sınıf öğretmenliği aday öğretmenlerinin lisans öğrenimleri sırasında okul öncesi eğitime ilişkin görüşlerini öğrenmek araştırmanın amacını oluşturmaktadır. Bu amaç doğrultusunda aday sınıf öğretmenlerinin okul öncesi eğitime yönelik görüşleri alınmıştır. Okul öncesi eğitim kurumlarında etkinlik hazırlayarak öğretim gerçekleştiren ve ortamı yerinde gözlemleyen aday öğretmenlerin bu süreç sonunda okul öncesi eğitime ilişkin görüşleri tekrar alınmıştır. Bu çalışmada aşağıda yer alan sorulara yanıt aranmıştır:

### *Araştırma Problemi*

Aday sınıf öğretmenlerinin okul öncesi eğitime yönelik görüşleri nasıldır?

### *Alt Problemler*

1. Aday sınıf öğretmenlerinin okul öncesi eğitime yönelik ön görüşleri nasıldır?
2. Aday sınıf öğretmenlerinin okul öncesi eğitime yönelik son görüşleri nasıldır?

## **Yöntem**

### *Araştırmanın modeli*

Bu çalışmada nitel araştırma modeli benimsenmiştir. Nitel veriler Balıkesir Üniversitesi Necatibey Eğitim Fakültesi 2012-2013 eğitim-öğretim yılında 4. sınıfta öğrenim gören aday sınıf öğretmenlerinden basit seçkisiz örnekleme yöntemi ile seçilen 40 aday sınıf öğretmenin görüşleri ile oluşturulmuştur (Kırcaali, İftar, G. & Tekin, E, 1997). Bu örnekleme yönteminde her bireyin çalışmaya katılma olasılığı eşit ve birbirinden bağımsızdır (Akgün ve diğ., 2009).

Çalışmada araştırmacılar tarafından hazırlanan yarı yapılandırılmış görüşme formu ile öğretmen adaylarının okul öncesi eğitime ilişkin öğretim öncesi ve sonrası görüşleri alınmıştır. Çalışmadan elde edilen nitel veriler betimsel analiz yoluyla incelenmiştir.

### ***Bulgular, Tartışma ve Sonuç***

Çalışmadan elde edilen veriler analiz edilerek ön görüşlere ait kategoriler belirlenmiştir. Tablo 1 incelendiğinde var olan kategorilerin üç ana başlıkta toplandığı ortaya çıkmıştır. Bu başlıklar 58'lik yüzdeyle gelişim alanlarına katkı, 42'lik yüzdeyle genel görüş ve öğretim hizmetinin niteliğidir. Aday sınıf öğretmenlerinin tamamının okul öncesinin gerekliliği, önemli ve faydalı olduğu konusunda olumlu görüş bildirdiği görülmektedir. Bu sevindirici bir bulgudur. Ayrıca öğretmen adaylarının alt boyutları ile birlikte gelişim alanları ve öğretim hizmeti niteliğine ilişkin bilgi sahibi oldukları ve yorum geliştirebildikleri tespit edilmiştir.

Çalışmada öğretmen adaylarının uygulama sonrası görüşleri incelendiğinde bu görüşlerin üç ana başlık altında toplandığı ortaya çıkmıştır. Bu başlıklar genel görüş, gelişim alanlarına katkı ve öğretim hizmetinin niteliğidir. Tablo 2'de adı geçen başlıklar, kategoriler, alt kategoriler ve bunlara ait frekans dağılımı verilmektedir. Çalışmanın geçerliliğini arttırmak amacıyla bulgular öğretmen adaylarının son görüşleri ile desteklenmektedir.

İlköğretim 1. sınıf, çocuğun hayatındaki dönüm noktalarından biridir. Çünkü çocuk ilk defa aileden uzaklaşarak yaşatlarının ve yetişkinlerin bulunduğu bir ortama girecektir. Bu ortamda öğretim hayatının temelini oluşturan okuma yazma ve aritmetik beceriler kazanacaktır. Bu becerilerin tam olarak kazandırılması, çocuğun okula uyumunu sağlamak ve onu bu becerileri almaya istekli hale getirmeye bağlıdır. İlköğretime hazır hale gelmenin çocuk için önemli düşünüldüğünde, okul öncesi eğitimin gerekliliği ortaya çıkmaktadır. Araştırma sonucunda aday sınıf öğretmenlerinin okul öncesi öğretimin önemine ve gerekliliğine yönelik ortak görüş bildirdikleri ortaya çıkmıştır.

Dereli'nin (2012) çalışmasında da okul öncesi öğretmenleri ve ilköğretim öğretmenleri tarafından okul öncesi eğitimin çocuğun ilköğretime hazırlanmasında önemli olduğu belirtilmiştir. Ancak okul öncesi öğretmenleri okul öncesi eğitimin çocukların zihinsel gelişimini, dil gelişimini, öz bakım becerilerini, duygusal ve sosyal gelişimlerini desteklediği için önemli olduğunu ifade ederken; ilköğretim birinci sınıf öğretmenleri görgü kurallarını ve günlük yaşam becerilerini geliştirdiği için önemli olduğunu belirtmişlerdir.

Gürkan (2013) çalışmasında okul öncesi eğitimin sosyal gelişim üzerindeki etkileri incelendiğinde böyle bir süreçten geçen çocuğun inisiyatif kullanma, kendine güven, bağımsızlık, çevreye ilgi gösterme ve merak gibi olumlu gelişmeler sergilediğini ifade etmiştir.

Bulgular incelendiğinde öğretmen adaylarının okul öncesi eğitimin en çok gelişim alanlarına katkı sağladığı yönünde görüş bildirdikleri tespit edilmiştir.

Öğretmen adaylarının okul öncesi eğitime ilişkin genel görüşleri ile (fayda, önem, gereklilik) öğretim öncesi ve sonrasındaki görüşlerinde değişiklik olmadığı görülmüştür. Çalışmanın önemli bir bulgusu, okul öncesi eğitimin faydası, önemi ve gerekliliği konusunda olumsuz hiçbir görüşe rastlanmamış olmasıdır.

Öğretim hizmetinin niteliği konusunda görüş bildiren öğretmen adayları özellikle materyal, sınıf içi etkinlikler, okul ortamı gibi yeni kategorilerle okul öncesi eğitime yönelik görüşlerini zenginleştirmişlerdir. Bu bağlamda daha geniş bir perspektiften bakmaya başlamaları sevindirici bir bulgudur. Görüşler incelendiğinde okul öncesinde yer alan materyal özellikleri ve kullanımlarının vurgulandığı göze çarpmaktadır. Materyallerin yazısız, renkli, somut, görsel, dikkat çekici olması gerektiği belirtilmiştir. Ayrıca materyal kullanımında çeşitliliğe gidilmesi gerektiği yönündeki görüşleri farklı gelişim alanlarına hitap etmesi açısından önem taşımaktadır. Bu durum çocukların bütünsel gelişimlerini olumlu yönde etkileyecektir. Sınıf içi etkinliklere yönelik öğretmen adayı görüşleri daha çok oyunla öğretimin gerçekleşmesi üzerine odaklanmaktadır. Bunun yanı sıra drama ve kukla ile öğretime dikkat çekilmiştir. Üzerinde durulması gereken bir diğer nokta öğrenci katılımına yönelik görüşlerin çalışmadan elde edilen sonuçlarda ortaya çıkmasıdır.

Öğretmen özellikleri konusunda kişisel özellikler, meslek ve alan bilgisi hakkında ön görüş bildiren öğretmen adaylarının, gerçekleştirdikleri öğretim sonrasında alan bilgisi hakkında görüş bildirmedikleri bulgusuna ulaşılmıştır. Buna karşın kişisel özelliklerin belirtilmesinde son görüşlerde dikkate değer bir artış tespit edilmiştir. Okul öncesi ve 1. sınıf öğretmenlerini gözlemleme imkânına sahip olan aday öğretmenler her iki öğretmen grubunu kıyaslayarak okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin daha fazla sorumluluk almaları, daha çok sabır göstermeleri, çocuklara anneleri gibi yaklaşım sergilemeleri, daha ilgili ve hoşgörülü olmaları gerektiğini ifade etmişlerdir. Bunun yanı sıra okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin mesleki açıdan da daha donanımlı olmaları gerektiği vurgulanmıştır. Ancak öğretmen adayları okul öncesi eğitimin gerektirdiği yeterli bilgi ve donanıma sahip olmadıkları için okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin alan bilgilerine ilişkin görüş bildirmemeleri beklenen bir durumdur.

Aday sınıf öğretmenleri “öğretmenlik uygulaması” dersi kapsamında gerçekleştirdikleri okul öncesi eğitimine ilişkin uygulamaları ile okul öncesi eğitimin nasıl gerçekleştirildiği konusunda tecrübe sahibi olmuşlardır. Bu tecrübenin onlara 1. sınıf programında yer alan “uyum ve hazırlık çalışmaları”nın etkili bir şekilde uygulanması ve 66 aylık öğrenci grubunun gelişim seviyesine inebilme konusunda olumlu yönde katkı sağlayacağı düşünülmektedir.

Bu çalışmanın sonuçlarından yola çıkarak Sınıf Öğretmenliği Programın-

da yer alan lisans derslerinin gözden geçirilmesi ve “Erken çocukluk eğitimi” dersinin yanı sıra 66-72 aylık çocukların eğitim ve öğretimi üzerine uygulama içerikli lisans derslerinin eklenmesi önerilebilir.

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