



## THE IMPORTANCE OF ENHANCING SOCIAL SKILLS OF PRESCHOOLERS

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<p><b>Received:</b> 11<sup>th</sup> February 2021 <b>Accepted:</b> 28<sup>th</sup> February 2021 <b>Published:</b> 16<sup>th</sup> March 2021</p>	<p>This article aims to provide basic information about the significance of improving social skills of children and some basic features, competencies of learning social awareness. Actually, we want our children to be a literate, responsible, non-violent, good character, caring adult. Each of these elements of challenge can be enhanced by thoughtful, sustained and systematic attention to the social and emotional skills of children at a stage as early as preschool. Because this is the stage when almost 85% of the development of brain is complete in this period of 0-6 years and whatever experiences that are gained in this span, shapes the future of the child. Children are like clay and can be molded into any desired shape, so let this desire be not only, of a child who is good in academics but also a good human being or a holistic child. Social emotional skills like (self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills and responsible decision making) helps the children in better adjustments, better transition and better performance not only in schools but throughout their life. Hence, a combination of academic and social emotional learning is the true standard for effective education in the world today and for the foreseeable future. But what kind of competence is required on the part of teachers (for School readiness, Adjustments, Social relationship, Individual development, Self and social awareness, responsible decision making etc.) to bring this kind of learning among preschool children that will help them to improve into a good or successful human being needs to be pondered over</p>

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

Every child born has basically have the talent and creative potential (Surah Al-Isra: 84) and social potential (Surah Al Hujurat: 13), although the types and levels vary from one child to another. The talent and creative potential to develop properly or not really depends how the quality of education provided to children. If the child's talents and creative potential is developed in a way that both the profession for the future will be concerned, but on the contrary if the talent is not nurtured in a way that both the talent can not thrive, even a hidden talent, which can not be realized. If the talent and potential of developing into good then comes the creativity. The good parent does always expect, the talents, the students can develop into an intelligent and creative child. But unfortunately only a small percentage of teachers who understand how to create learning that can make children become creative. Similarly, any parent would and always want their children to grow and develop into smart and creative children. But most of them do not know how to educate children to be creative figure.

Creativity is a valuable treasure for the life of the child (YulianiNurani, 2010:38), because the child's creativity will live more colorful, dynamic, value, without creativity maybe life would be very monotonous and boring. Everything that exists in this life can be beautiful, fun and provide a high optimism if packaged with a touch of creativity. Creativity is very diverse, because it almost any kind of job or hobby that is done by human creativity. Therefore, everything in our lives is very closely related to creativity.

J. B. Watson (1925)[1] said "Give me two infants at the impressionable age. I can make them an Einstein or a Hitler or a Marconi by providing suitable environment". May be he was too optimistic but no one can deny the power of environment, the experiences, the opportunities that we give to a child helps in shaping his future. India is home to more than one billion people, of which 42% are children, defined as persons less than 18 years of age. Nineteen percent of world's children live in India. There are about 43 crore children in the age group of 0-18 years, of which about 16 crore are represented by the young child under 6 years of age. There is consensus that the early years are the most valuable and vulnerable period when there are the greatest risks to survival, healthy growth, development and susceptibility to a vicious cycle of under nutrition and disease/ infections. These early years are also essential for

cumulative lifelong learning & human development through physical, cognitive, emotional, social and linguistic development (Report of the working group on child rights for the 12th five-year plan (2012-2017)[2]. Now if this huge chunk of population (16 crore) is taken care nicely they can be moulded easily to become the future faces of the nation. For this preschool is the initiating point.

### 2.MATERIALS AND METHODS

Preschoolers should be well behaved, well-educated and smart children in future. In this case, firstly, parents and then teachers must be very attentive to the behaviour, education and interests of children. There are some essential tips and methods that are really important to build children's social consciousness and notion. These are followings:

1. Take time to talk about feelings, including your own, every day. Spend time reflecting on what happened during the day and how it made you feel. Ex. "This morning I got stuck in traffic on the way to work which made me frustrated."
2. Teach your child how to ask for help. This helps your child learn that it's okay to ask for help.
3. Identify feelings. You can use characters from books or movies to point out feelings. The movie "Inside Out" or reading the book Llama Llama Mad at Mama by Anna Dewdney may be fun ways you could help your child spot emotions.
4. Teach your child appropriate ways to manage feelings. Some families create a safe place in the home, like a corner of a room with pillows or a stuffed animal, for children to calm down during a tantrum. You could teach your child to pause and take three big breaths when strong feelings rise.
5. Create routines. Children feel safe when they know what to expect. Develop a consistent routine throughout the day. Some families may choose to create a visual schedule that shows the order things happen. For example, a morning routine can be displayed using a picture of a toothbrush, a plate of food, and clothing.
6. Let your child problem solve. If your child's block tower keeps falling or he or she gets into an argument with a peer on the playground, resist stepping in and fix the problem. Pause to give your child space to continue in a challenging task or to work out social issues. Step in if he or she asks for help or if things do not go well.
7. Set a good example. Your child looks up to you to model acceptable behavior. Be sure to display the traits you want your child to have. Apologizing when you make a mistake, speaking kindly about others, saying please and thank you, or not yelling when you are angry teaches your child how to behave and relate with others.
8. Make time for play. Arrange time for your child to play with other similar aged children. Encourage pretend play, using puppets or stuffed animals, as a way to act out emotions or teach appropriate behavior.

Preschool education is a term used in common parlance to denote a variety of early childhood care and education (ECCE) programs that provide opportunities for the quality care and education of the children between the age of two and six years. It is viewed in a very broad perspective and encompasses all aspects related to children's development and education. In India, the term is used interchangeably with early childhood education (ECE) and Pre-primary education and covers within its ambit a variety of Nursery and Kindergarten school as well as government sponsored programmes like Balwadis and Anganwadis.(Sharma, 2006)[3] The teacher during preschool has to be sensitive to individual difference and pace of development of children when helping children grow and learn. Thus it is important to know the Characteristics of the preschoolers which are as follows:

Physically, the three-year old is independent in most routine activities like brushing teeth, taking bath, toilet management and eating. The child's large muscles have increased in strength and coordination, but lack agility. The ability to co-ordinate small muscles as well as eye and hand coordination increases. Three-year old is a talkative child as long abilities increase during this period. The child's conversation is a collective monologue and the child may not express his\her thoughts in continuity with ongoing conversation but will speak his\her thoughts irrespective of the topic of conversation. The child is verbal enough to express basic needs and ideas and is extremely fond of listening to stories, songs and music.

However, the attention span is limited and children in this age group prefer to engage in a variety of activities for a brief period of time. The child enjoys participation in activities and assisting in small chores, constantly seeking adult attention approval, guidance and interaction. The child likes to play with peers but may not interact actively and generally indulges in second plan. At four, the child is more capable of managing himself and independently satisfying his physical needs. The child needs little assistance in eating, bowel control, moving, climbing etc. The child uses proper long to interact with others, ask questions and make known feelings, needs, and ideas. In fact, the four-year old can be very attention seeking may show off given the opportunities and may be aggressive and loud in making his presence felt. The child has developed a definite personality and can make his own decisions in daily chores. The child's gross motor movement is well coordinated. The child has better control over fiber muscle movement and can hold chalks/crayons, blocks, pencils etc... to draw the paint and use scissors for cutting. The four-year old child enjoys Peer Company. The child is rapidly learning to play cooperatively with playmates of his age. The child uses realistic props, using tools, utensils and enjoys dramatic play. This signifies development of larger attention span and broader interests. Generally, five-year old child has good physical control. He can throw, jump, catch, skip, and use scissors

and crayons with precision. The child is ready to begin learning since he can also remember and understand the sequence of things, numbers and alphabets. The child command over language is comprehensive and is used to express feelings, ideas and complying with requests. Attention span has increased considerably and so has eye hand as well as fine muscle co-ordination. Thus, the five-year old is independent, dependable and self-assured. He likes to get constant approval and assurance from others. The child enjoys playing with same sex and age children. Play is sustained, cooperative and complex and may last from one day to another. (Position Paper ECCE, 2006)[4] Thus looking at the above characteristics of the preschoolers, it is very important to understand the development of children. Thus the teachers recruited in the preschools should be qualified to understand the psychology and development of the children. Only females are considered for preschools as the children feel comfortable with a motherly figure in this age. In regard with educational qualification, the teachers should have either of these, diploma in ECCE/CD, B.Sc. in home science or Masters in any subject. The preschools aim to bring all development among children. This kind of development is possible when each and every aspect of a child is considered i.e. socially, mentally, emotionally, physically etc. In today's world, a combination of academic and social emotional learning is the true standard for effective education and for the foreseeable future, where Teachers play the most important role. Thus it is necessary to know about the role they play in the life of Preschoolers for their socio-emotional learning and development.

Social Emotional Learning (SEL) Social Emotional Learning (SEL) is defined as the process of acquiring a set of social and emotional skills- self-awareness, self- management, social awareness, relationship skills and responsible decision making within the context of a safe, supportive environment that encourages social, emotional and cognitive development and provide opportunities for practicing social-emotional skills (Cherness, Extein, Goleman, & Weissberg, 2006)[7]. SEL is a process for learning life skills, including how to deal with oneself, others and relationships, and work in an effective manner. In dealing with oneself, SEL helps in recognizing our emotions and learning how to manage those feelings. In dealing with others, SEL helps with developing sympathy and empathy for others, and maintaining positive relationships. SEL also focuses on dealing with a variety of situations in a constructive and ethical manner. These competencies provide the foundation for maintaining high-quality social relationships and for responding to the challenges of life. The teachers other than parents are the only people who can enhance the SEL among preschoolers, but they need certain competencies to achieve so.

### 3.ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Preschools focus on preschools, kindergartens, and practical schools that educate young children. A curriculum has been developed to provide a rich learning experience for children in preschools. The goal is to maximize children's motor, socio-emotional, linguistic and cognitive development and to enable them to acquire self-care skills and be ready for primary school [8]. One of the main principles of preschool education is to mobilize imagination and creativity in these children. Also, we have got some basic competencies required in preschool teachers for socio-emotional development of preschoolers:

1. Emotionally balanced
2. Knows vernacular medium
3. Sound Knowledge of Psychology and Child development
4. Knowledge of all the Principles of Early Learning and its effective implementation
5. Understands the individual needs of the children
6. Be able to deal with all sorts of emotions (anger, sadness, happy) and help them in self and social awareness
7. Develops relationship with and among children
8. Teaching children to problem solve and decision making
9. Make rules in the form of observable behaviour
10. Find out ways to motivate children
11. Use different modalities for learning
12. Integrate play with learning
13. Involve parents in learning
14. Circle play & circle song.

These competencies are efficient and fruitful for the development of children's social consciousness and making good relationship with people in future. Also, now we can give information about some basic types of competencies that are really important for enhancing social attitude of children.

1. Emotionally balanced:

A teacher should know how to handle her emotions first, and then only she will be able to deal with young kids. In order to reach to their level and understand their psychology she should be stress free and happy. She should be able to shut herself off from her environmental disturbances so that she could give the young and tender children the love, care and affection they deserve. She should be able to develop trust and belongingness in them (belongingness to school and to her) and this is possible only when they feel like home at schools. The teacher in the preschools is a role model to children[9-12]. Thus a teacher should be very careful about the way she acts with the kids and should actually be a motherly figure to them.

2. Knows vernacular medium:

The language at home is the birth language of kid. The transition from this L1 language to medium of instructions at school (L2) is not easy for the kids. So the teacher needs to use L1 along with L2 and then slowly bring them to L2. This transition might take a long time but in this way it will become a smooth one for them.

### 3. Sound Knowledge of Psychology and Child development:

The preschool teacher should be all updated with child developmental theories and their applications. What Jean Piaget, J.B.Watson, Lev Vygotsky, Maria Montessori, Froebel, Eric Erikson, Albert Bandura, John Bowlby, Howard Gardner, Lucy Sprague Mitchell etc have said and given should be followed. As well as about the characteristics of children at the early childhood stage. They should try and understand the psychology of the child, his/her needs, family background, culture from which s/he comes, learning style, his/her individual needs and how can a teacher give them a homely environment, lots of love, care and belongingness.

4. Knowledge of all the Principles of Early Learning and its effective implementation: 1. Learning begins from birth: From infancy children are mentally and physically active. They learn through all their senses and stimulations.

2. Children construct knowledge: They construct their own knowledge while they actively engage in their environment and through repeated interactions with people and materials. This simply means that children touch, taste, shake things etc. to find out what happens and learn about things in their environment.

3. Children's curiosity and desire to learn: Children are curious and eager to learn. They have an inherent need to make sense of their experiences and learn about the world around them.

4. Children learn through play: Play is central to the child's well-being and development children's spontaneous play provides opportunities for exploration, experimentation, manipulation and problem solving that are essential for constructing knowledge. Play contributes to the development of representational thought.

5. Child development and learning are characterized by individual variation: No two children are same.

6. Children's learning reflects a recurring spiral that begins in awareness, and moves to exploration, to inquiry, and finally, to application.

7. Children need to experience success more than failure to form a positive self-concept: The experiences should be planned in accordance with the maturational level of the children, such that they are challenging yet achievable, so as to promote self-confidence.

8. Children develop holistically and benefit from integrated experiences and education: All the domains of development i.e. physical, motor, cognitive, language, socio-personal, emotional and creative and aesthetic appreciation are interrelated and take place simultaneously.

## 4. DISCUSSIONS

According to SetoMulyadi (2007: 10), parents should be able to invite children to play and talk and argue, introducing a variety of books, and dialogue. Form of creative play activities as a strategy to develop the cognitive and affective aspects of children at the level of science of initiatives undertaken by several things:

- a. Introduce children to books of interest, then recite at least one book for every day. But do not force the child, but rather try to build interest
- b. As a standard practice in the use of memory, try to get the child back on the contents of the book.
- c. Teach children to recognize mathematics through concrete objects, such as counting the steps, knowing the amount of moon, sun and environment (SetoMulyadi, <http://www.psiologiums.net / modules.com>).
- d. Encourage children to understand about the values, behavior and his own feelings and understand and appreciate the feelings of friends, parents and others.
- e. The third stage, age 6 years and older for preschoolers called the future of science industry (SetoMulyadi, <http://www.psiologiums.net / modules.com>).

Play activities are also influenced by the times and technology. Game tools that exist today are not limited to just the traditional plaything but as technological developments are so rapid that it is a tool used games children also becoming more sophisticated. Tools of modern game is currently very nature of electronic, mechanical and automatic, such as computers, video games etc... In these games the child lived only using the buttons only, so it is very practical. Game model above has a positive and negative side. The positive side is the concentration of the children trained to move, reacted quickly and train in a coordinated manner to control. While the downside is a child too often in front of the screen so it is less socially in society, in the game are not taught problem solving because there is mechanization, not something that happens in everyday life.

Playing activity, not only to develop creativity, but also important to social activities. Playing require children to communicate and interact with other children. There are four advantages for children on social playing activities:

- a. Social play helps children to develop their organizing ability and problem solving. Children will think about what to do in their playing goals. For example, children who plays camp will think how to set up a tent using various tools that have been provided.
- b. Social play helps them recognize themselves. Playing gives opportunity for children to be themselves and design their better life.
- c. Social play enhances children's social competence on:
  - 1) Social interaction: interaction with peers, adult and resolve conflict
  - 2) Cooperation: the interaction of mutual help and sharing
  - 3) Caring: understanding and accepting individual differences.

### 5.CONCLUSION

Thus in the end we should not forget that the preschool teacher has a great responsibility of moulding and shaping the children's future as it is the most influential stage. The young child's development proceeds rapidly in the early years: the basis of language is laid at this time; attitudes and social relationships are shaped; and the mind is at its most receptive (Rao, 2002). Knowing the importance of early years and their social and emotional development along with academics, the preschool education and the role of teachers becomes very important and unavoidable. The Preschool teachers when dealing with preschoolers have to be Emotionally balanced, should Know vernacular medium, should have the Sound Knowledge of Psychology, theories of learning and Child development, Knowledge of all the Principles of Early Learning and its effective implementation, Understands the individual needs of the children, their cultural context during teaching and learning process, help the children in understanding their emotions (anger, sadness, happy, jealousy, empathy etc.) and in self and social awareness, Develops relationship with and among children, teach them how to deal with conflicts and resolve them, help them take decisions, Make rules in the form of observable behaviour, act as a mother and a role model, motivate them, Use different modalities for learning like Circle play & circle songs, Integrate art and play with learning, Involve parents in learning etc.... The thoughts and ideas reaped in this age remains throughout their life and as it is said "We sow what we reap". Thus if the teacher sows the best, the best will come out in future in the form of a literate, responsible, non-violent, good character, caring adult.

In conclusion, preschool education improves children's creativity in a positive way. The recommendations developed based on the results obtained are given below.

- The effectiveness of the curriculum was assessed with children attending preschools and kindergartens in Uzbekistan. Therefore, it can be applied to children receiving education in various regions.
- Studies can be conducted to determine the attitudes, beliefs, interests, ideas and practices of preschool teachers about the creativity.
- No control group was used in this study. Control group-designs can be planned in future studies.
- In this study, no persistence study was conducted. Persistence studies can be conducted in order to understand whether the creativity skills acquired in the preschool period are maintained in the subsequent ages.

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