

The Specific Characteristics of Communication with Children by Age Groups and Relationship Strategies

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Abstract: This article analyzes the pedagogical and psychological aspects of interaction and relationships between educators and children aged 3–7 in preschool educational institutions. Based on the updated “Ilk Qadam” state curriculum, the study highlights the importance of listening to children’s voices, respecting their opinions, and ensuring their active participation in the educational process. It also describes communication characteristics specific to different preschool age groups (younger, middle, and older), identifies common challenges, and provides practical methodological recommendations for educators. The findings demonstrate that sincere, trust-based, and development-oriented interaction between educators and children plays a crucial role in shaping children’s personal, social, and communicative development.

Keywords: Preschool education, educator-child interaction, communication, socio-emotional development, early childhood, pedagogical approach, child-centered learning, developmental psychology, classroom environment, teaching strategies.

Introduction: Over the past seven to eight years, preschool education has been attracting the attention of specialists and parents not only in our country but also worldwide, and it has been rising to a new qualitative stage in terms of both form and content. In Uzbekistan, the new edition of the “**Ilk qadam**” State Curriculum, adopted in 2022, became an important step in this direction. “The main features of the second edition of the State Curriculum are its variability, flexibility, and its focus on meeting each child’s educational needs while taking into account individual characteristics.”

The implementation of the goals and objectives specified in the program largely depends on the communication and relationships between educators and children in preschool education institutions. The new edition of the curriculum includes additions and changes presented in ten sections. In the third section, special emphasis is placed on a **new format of cooperation between children and educators**, namely:

“listening to the child’s voice,” respecting their opinions, expanding and developing opportunities for children to participate in educational processes; broadening children’s initiative and opportunities when choosing topics for project activities; selecting development centers for individual and small group work; jointly planning educational activities with children throughout the day; and evaluating learning together through developmental communication. This emphasis is certainly not accidental.

The perceptions of preschool-aged children about the whole existence—both the world and people—manifest themselves, on the one hand, in their character, morality, and behavior. On the other hand, these perceptions stem from how a child understands themselves and their attitude toward themselves as a person. In turn, this largely depends on the relationships and communication established with them by their peers and the adults around them: parents, grandparents, other relatives, as well as

educators. This means that a child's communication with others influences their feelings, attitudes toward people, and ultimately their personal development. This corresponds to the essence of the law according to which the components forming a dialectical unity develop through mutual necessity and interaction.

The interaction between an educator and a child in a preschool institution is an integral and fundamental part of the educational process carried out through communication. This interaction, a two-sided relationship, is manifested through the purposeful actions of two individuals (the educator and the child) that occur simultaneously. Although both sides possess their own unique characteristics as individuals and occupy different positions, they influence each other within the framework of a common educational process. Therefore, the relationships between the educator and the child represent a systematic cooperation based on objective laws, which plays an important role in the formation and development of children in preschool institutions. This process is not one-sided; rather, it is characterized by mutual influence and a focus on development, which makes it especially significant.

For this reason, students preparing to enter the field of education should deeply understand the truth that corresponds to the nature of this dialectical law. A specialist who truly understands the principle that "the movement, change, and development of things and phenomena are based on their interconnections, relationships, actions, and reactions" will approach their professional activity consciously, creatively, and with open eyes.

First of all, it should be instilled in students that an educator's communication and relationships with preschool children differ and are coordinated according to the child's physiological, psychological, and emotional stages of development. Considering this differentiation and coordination, we will examine the specific features and complexities of communication and relationships between educators and children aged **3–7 years**, which is the preschool period.

It is known that in our country children are admitted to preschool educational institutions from the age of three. Naturally, it may not be easy for an educator to "find a common language" with a child who has not yet

fully formed a systematic pattern of communication and relationships even with adults in their own family. Gradually, over the course of weeks and months, this critical situation begins to stabilize; however, the general characteristics of this adaptation period may remain until the child reaches the age of four.

I. Communication and Relationships with Early-Age Children (3–4 years)

Specific Characteristics

- At this age, children may not yet be able to fully express their thoughts through speech; some may experience delayed speech development, shyness, or other difficulties in expressing themselves.
- They feel a strong emotional attachment to adults and seek support in movement and various activities.
- Play is the main type of activity. Children are more inclined toward object-manipulative play and individual role-reflection play, and they may show limitations in communicating with peers and educators.

Challenges

- At this age, children cannot focus their attention on one thing for a long time and are easily distracted by other things.
- Egocentrism is at a high level; the child tends to prioritize their personal "self" above everything else. They pay more attention to their own desires, have difficulty understanding others' opinions, and want everything they like to belong to them.
- They are prone to sudden emotional outbursts (for example, suddenly arguing with other children, shouting, or crying).

Strategies for Educators in Building Relationships with Children Aged 3–4

Communication between educators and children of this age should be organized according to the goals of education and upbringing, taking into account their age characteristics as well as their psychological and speech development levels. Based on long-term observations, we believe that the following aspects should be considered when interacting with children of this age:

1. **Establish relationships based on affection and trust.**

Since a 3–4-year-old child may not yet have fully overcome the feeling of separation from their mother, it is important for the educator to be kind, calm, cheerful, and confident toward the child, similar to a mother's care. At the same time, the educator should not overindulge the child but treat them warmly and kindly. Gentle physical contact—such as holding the child's hand or patting their head—can strengthen emotional closeness.

2. **Speak with children in a simple and natural manner, avoiding excessive formality.** At this stage, children's speech abilities are still developing and limited. Therefore, communication should involve short, clear, and easily understandable sentences. Additionally, enriching speech with facial expressions, gestures, and appropriate intonation helps the child understand the message more easily.

3. **Use more visual and expressive means.**

Children at an early age learn concepts and knowledge more easily through visual perception and movement. For this reason, explanations using pictures, toys, and visual materials are particularly effective. Valuable recommendations in this regard are presented in the manual "Developing the Speech of Young Children" by S. Jo'rayev and H. Qodirov. Communication that combines hearing, seeing, and movement is especially effective—for example, storytelling, bringing story characters to life, singing songs, or reciting poems.

4. **Use play as a regular method of communication.**

Play should be organized as a separate activity or learning form, and educators should frequently use it as a means of communication. Through play, the educator not only communicates with children but also achieves educational and moral development goals. Role-playing games, imitation games, and sensory development games are particularly effective. As noted: "In play, all aspects of a child's personality become active: the child moves, speaks, perceives, and thinks." This has been frequently observed in methodological practice.

5. **Encourage children through praise and positive reinforcement.** Since children at this stage are just beginning to learn independent actions, it is extremely important to

recognize and praise even their small achievements. Such encouragement motivates children to become more active and increases their self-confidence.

6. **Be patient and apply an individual approach.**

Children at this age are sensitive and may sometimes be capricious or experience conflicting emotions. Therefore, the educator should be patient and avoid direct criticism. In problematic situations, it is important to explain things gently and calmly. In addition, the educator should consider each child's individuality and choose appropriate communication methods. A skilled educator listens attentively when a child begins to speak and encourages them even if they cannot finish their sentence. Valuable information on this topic can be found in the works of Ra'no Rahimova.

II. Communication and Relationships with Middle-Age Children (4–5 years)

Specific Characteristics

- Speech develops noticeably and rapidly; vocabulary increases quickly. Children enjoy asking questions and begin to develop conversational skills with people close to them.

- Socialization begins: early forms of friendship start to appear, and the desire to communicate naturally and voluntarily with peers and adults increases.

- At this age, with the development of play activity, children move from object-manipulative and individual role-reflective play to **joint role and counter-role play**. This transition creates a new need for communication and introduces new forms of speech participation—expressing opinions and building situations related to their activities. Children begin to comment on their own play actions, regulate the behavior of their partners, plan upcoming actions, and distribute roles.

Challenges

- When expressing themselves, children may sometimes display negative behaviors such as anger or aggression.

- Although they may understand rules, they do not always follow them, which can sometimes cause tension in interpersonal relationships.

Strategies for Educators in Building Relationships with Children in the Middle Age Group

(The approaches used with younger children are further developed.)

1. Establish sincere and warm relationships with children.

The educator should demonstrate a genuine desire to get closer to the child, understand their inner world, and listen to them sincerely. Eye contact, attentive and kind looks, smiling, and respectful acceptance of children's feelings are very important in communication.

2. Use age-appropriate communication methods. The words and sentence structures used by the educator should correspond to the children's level of understanding. Communication should be clear, simple, and appropriate for their age. Activities such as discussions, storytelling, and role-playing games can help make communication more engaging.

3. Listen carefully to children and participate in their activities.

The educator should actively listen to children, respond to their ideas, and ask questions. It is important not to interrupt the child but to allow them to fully express their thoughts.

4. Provide timely emotional support. Children's actions should be encouraged so that they feel confident. Positive expressions such as "You did that very well" or "I am proud of you" help strengthen their self-confidence. When children display negative behavior, it is better to respond with explanation rather than criticism.

5. Demonstrate positive personal example. The educator's behavior, communication style, and moral conduct serve as a model for children. Qualities such as sincerity, honesty, respect, and kindness should be demonstrated in practice. As noted: "The speech characteristics of preschool children largely depend on the educator's speech. Since the educator is constantly in the center of children's attention, their speech becomes a model of cultured speech for them."

6. Apply an individual approach to each child. It is necessary to consider each child's interests, needs, and temperament. Through attention, patience,

and kindness, every child should feel valued and important.

III. Communication and Relationships with Older Preschool Children (5–6 years)

Specific Characteristics

- Logical thinking begins to develop; question-and-answer interactions acquire deeper meaning and content.
- Children better understand logical consistency in communication.
- In preschool institutions and in their neighborhoods, they strive to cooperate with educators, classmates, and peers.

Challenges

- Children's desire for independence increases; sometimes this may manifest as resistance or disobedience.
- They begin to compare themselves with peers, which may occasionally lead to feelings of insecurity or competition.

Communication and relationships between educators and **5–6-year-old children** should correspond to their stage of personal development and become more complex and purposeful. At this stage, children begin to develop independence, logical thinking, the ability to express their opinions, and an understanding of their role within a group.

Strategies for Educators in Building Relationships with Older Preschool Children (5–6 years)

1. Establish communication based on mutual respect and trust.

Children aged 5–6 begin to feel that they are "grown up," therefore it is important to address them with age-appropriate respect and attentiveness to their opinions. While monitoring the child's behavior, the educator should also demonstrate trust by giving responsible tasks. This helps develop social trust and responsibility. At this age, the formation of active personal speech becomes especially significant: children begin to use language practically in communication with others, and speech gradually becomes a tool for thinking and an important factor in their psychological development.

2. **Use purposeful and educationally oriented games.** Games should not only be entertaining but also serve as tools for developing moral, intellectual, and social competencies. Through role-playing activities (such as playing doctor, teacher, or shopkeeper), dramatization, and group construction games, children acquire qualities such as teamwork, responsibility, leadership, and cooperation.

3. **Explain and teach moral norms.** By the age of 5–6, children begin to understand concepts such as good and bad, as well as fairness. The educator should reinforce this knowledge and explain, through examples, how to behave correctly in different situations. Behavioral rules should be explained consistently and through real-life examples (for instance: waiting for one's turn, respecting others, and helping friends).

4. **Encourage creativity and independent thinking.** Educators should motivate children to ask questions, propose new ideas, and support their opinions with reasoning. Activities such as drawing, creating stories, and participating in project work help develop their creative and intellectual abilities.

5. **Encourage and guide rather than criticize.** Children of this age are still emotionally sensitive and may take criticism very seriously. Instead of criticizing a child's actions, the educator should show them the correct way to behave and apply a constructive approach. Recognizing positive aspects of their actions and strengthening them is important for their development.

6. **Develop social skills through group work.** Children aged 5–6 are ready to work in groups, although this skill is not yet fully developed. Educators should teach them to listen to each other, exchange ideas, and help one another. Methodological recommendations by Dilnoza Komilova on collective storytelling activities can be useful in this regard. Through group discussions, role distribution, and collaborative tasks, children develop teamwork, communication skills, and a sense of shared responsibility.

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