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Design of Individual Educational Trajectories for Preschool Children as a Factor in their Social and Personality Development

Abstract

The article reports the results of introducing individual educational trajectories for preschool children into the educational process of preschool education organizations as a factor of children's social and personality development. In conjunction with collective forms of work, these trajectories allow expanding the range of children's ideas about different emotional states promoting feelings of empathy and sympathy. The introduction of individual educational trajectories explicated in trajectory maps of social and personality development contributes to improved communicability with peers and adults and reduces conflict in this process. The number of conflict situations in children's communication with others is lowered. The introduction of individual educational trajectories promotes the development of each child's readiness for independent goal-setting, action planning, and communication with children and adults. Children learn to evaluate the actions of peers and adults establishing themselves as social subjects and accounting for the social norms and regulations adopted in society, i.e. the norms of the human community.

Keywords: Preschool Children, Preschool Education, Social and Personality Trajectory Maps of Social and Personality Development.

Introduction

The system of preschool education is currently undergoing major changes due to the innovative processes taking place in society, modernization, and the standardization of the entire education system. The introduction and implementation of the Federal State Educational Standard for Preschool Education urges the pedagogical community to search for the effective

means of social and personality development of preschool children as an important personality component. According to the Federal Law №273-FZ of December 29, 2012 "On Education in the Russian Federation", the social demand of the state is to prepare a socially adapted child able to plan their actions and having general culture and developed personal qualities (Federal State Educational Standard..., 2020). The Federal State Educational Standard for Preschool

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Education also reflects the need to introduce children to the socio-cultural norms and traditions of family, society, and the state (Federal Law "On Education in the Russian Federation" ..., 2021). This implies that the modern trends in the modification of the Russian education system call for a substantial update of the content, forms, and methods of work with children in preschool educational organizations, ensuring children's personality development, and a qualitative re-evaluation of the conditions for children's socialization and the forms of its realization.

Modern preschool children have to be well-oriented in social categories, understand the necessity of compliance with the generally accepted social traditions and norms, and understand the value of human relations (Antopolskaya, Zhuravleva, Baybakova, 2017; Chandio, Ali, 2019). Preschool students have to strive for establishing various relations with others, show interest in their peers, parents, and teachers (Ding, Littleton, 2005). By the age of 5-7 years old, children should develop confidence in life, a desire for independence, activity, and initiative, as well as a sense of responsibility for their actions and the actions of other children younger than them (Nattermann, 2018). Older preschool age is one of the most important periods in preschool childhood that is significant for every child's life, therefore, it is necessary to enrich children's experiences and foster their own opinions and assessments that provide them with social confidence and help express their personal qualities (Schmidt, 2019).

Thus, the problem of children's social and personality development and developing and approving individual educational trajectories as a factor of their development is relevant and significant for the modern stage of the education system's functioning.

Materials and Methods

The methods selected for the realization of the study goals include:

- Theoretical methods: the analysis of normative and legal documents used to substantiate the relevance of the formulated problem; theoretical and methodological analysis allowing to outline the background of the study; system analysis serving as the basis for a holistic consideration of the research problem;
- Empirical methods: an experiment for the evaluation of children's social and personality development, a survey, testing. The deployed empirical methods include T.A. Repina's method "The study of the characteristics of the social and moral development of children in a group

and children's relationships in a peer group", R.M. Kalinina's "Plot pictures" (Dermanov, 2002), the "Tree" method, the "Could this happen to you?" method, the "Ladder" test (as modified by Ia.L. Kolominskii and M.I. Lisina) (Uruntaeva, 2009), observation of children in routine situations, and individual conversations.

The study involves four preschool educational organizations in the city of Chelyabinsk, the overall sample of the study comprises 118 preschool children and 26 teachers.

Results and discussion

Modern trends in the development of preschool education in the Russian Federation call for the introduction of individual personality development trajectories in accordance with the current social demands and legal regulations. The Federal State Educational Standard for Preschool Education indicates that one of the main principles is "the organization of educational activity based on the individual needs of every child in which the child themselves becomes active in choosing the content of their education, becomes a subject of education" (Federal Law "On Education in the Russian Federation" ..., 2021).

The creation of preschool children's individual educational trajectories as a factor of their social and personality demonstrates relevance in this context. Said creation involves the preliminary identification of the further activity of children and teachers and determining its main components and details. Designing is one of the predominant functions of a teacher allowing them to develop an approximate scenario for further activity and establish the expected results. Designing is a deliberate activity resulting in the identification and modeling of the idea of further activity (production or non-production) aimed at meeting the social or personal needs (J. Dewey, L. Tondl, I. Peisha) (Lushchikov, 2012).

The design of an individual educational trajectory is based on the concept of individualized education theoretically substantiated in the works of T.M. Kovaleva (2021), N.B. Krylova (2004), A.A. Pinskiy (2003), and others. According to N.B. Krylova, the success of individualized education is associated with the need to ensure the self-renewal and self-development of the entire education system including preschool education.

Analysis of scientific research allows outlining several viewpoints regarding the individualization of preschool education and the choice of individual educational trajectories. Individualization is understood as a process aimed at the development of individual

characteristics, potential abilities, self-concept, self-esteem, self-identification, etc. (O.S. Grebeniuk, V.V. Davydov, L.V. Zankov, A.M. Matiushkin, M.I. Makhmutov, etc.) (Zeer, 2003); as the discovery and further assertion of one's "self", the identification of one's aptitudes, abilities, and character traits, that is, the formation of and reflection on one's individuality (Mikhailova-Svirskaya, 2015); as a process of a person creating and comprehending their own experience in which they function as a subject of activity who freely determines and realizes their own goals and voluntarily takes responsibility for their actions (Udova et al., 2015). Following L.V. Trubaichuk, we consider the individualization of preschool education as "the acceptance of the inimitability and uniqueness of each child's personality, support of their individual needs and interests, and the focus of the pedagogical process on the peculiarities and potentialities of each child" (Trubaichuk, 2015).

The individualization of education implies accounting for the individual characteristics of development and potential capabilities of each child to plan educational work, choose the optimal forms and methods of teaching, and discover the potential of a child's personality. Individualization promotes the effectiveness of the educational process organization including the process of preschool children's social and personality development. This process involves developing and introducing individual educational trajectories for students that take into account their individual characteristics, abilities, subjective experiences, interests, and desires, create the situations of choice in the process of education and upbringing, and provide for a preschooler's further self-development, self-knowledge, and self-realization.

In our view, the development and implementation of individual trajectories for preschool children's social and personality development support the formation of a child's personal opinions, the manifestation of their capabilities in different types of activity including communication with other people, the formation of ideas about the society they live in, and so on. This allows a teacher to create the conditions for children to choose between different types of activity, work individually or together with other children, and create collaborative or independent creative projects.

The concept "individual educational trajectory" is interpreted by researchers as a deliberately designed differentiated educational program putting a child into the position of a subject of choice and providing for their self-identification and self-realization (A.P. Triapitsyna (2009), Iu.F. Timofeeva (2013), etc.). The content of an individual educational trajectory is shaped by the educational needs and individual

abilities and capabilities of a child (the degree of readiness for mastering the program content), as well as by the existing standards for the content of education (Gogoberidze, Solntseva, 2019). An individual educational trajectory is an integrated model of pedagogical space created by a teacher to realize the individual characteristics of development and learning of a child in a certain time period (Kovaleva, Yakubovskaya, 2017). Its implementation helps a teacher to ensure that the objectives of a child's harmonious development are resolved effectively.

The process of education individualization allows incorporating the needs of the service consumer (a parent) and the trends of a preschool educational organization's development in society that can be realized through the development of an individual educational trajectory of a child's social and personality development. Such a trajectory supports a child in goal-setting and action planning, meeting their needs for communication with the members of society, and them discovering their own "self".

It is expedient to design an individual educational trajectory of a preschooler's social and personality development in a sequence of interrelated stages.

The first stage – the diagnostic: assessing the level of preschoolers' development, their interests, potential abilities, and communication skills, leading them to the awareness of the value of other people's activities.

The second stage – the analytical: a teacher determining the specific features of the development of each child, identifying common problems and reasons for them, discussing the results of pedagogical diagnostics through the selected methods with other teachers and specialists.

The third stage – the preparatory: the development of a plan for work with different categories of children, selecting the forms, methods, and means for their education and upbringing, the development and introduction of a system for the control and assessment of children's activities.

The fourth stage – the activity stage: a teacher implementing the individual trajectories of children's social and personality development, creating and solving educational situations, adjusting and improving the content of education.

The fifth stage – the reflective and evaluative: becoming aware of and assessing the degree to which the established goals are achieved, the dynamics of children's development, the quality of the educational process, and children's self-esteem.

Thus, designing an individual educational trajectory for the social and personality development of each child during preschool childhood allows:

1) Accounting for the individual capabilities, abilities, and interests of each child contributing to their mastery of the preschool education program, socialization in the close social environment, mastery of the social experience of action and relations, free development, and the exercise of the abilities for self-expression and self-realization.

2) Determining the positive changes and achievements of a child in their social and personality development.

3) Uniting the efforts of a preschool educational organization and family regarding a child's development and self-development.

The experiment on the creation and approbation of individual educational trajectories for preschool children fostering their social and personality development was conducted from 2018 to 2020 in preschool educational organizations in the city of Chelyabinsk "Kindergarten №17", "Kindergarten №23", "Kindergarten №85", and "Kindergarten №213". In total, the experiment involves 118 children aged 5-7 years old and 26 teachers.

Four groups of children were formed in the planning of the pedagogical experiment: three experimental groups and one control group. Individual educational trajectories were implemented in the three experimental groups.

The level-criterion apparatus for the social and personality development of preschool children was developed and includes the description of criteria, indicators, and levels, as well as the diagnostic instruments for the assessment of the degree of social and personality development. All the criteria of children's social and personality development represent three levels, namely the optimal, the acceptable, and the unacceptable, and cover children's cognitive (knowledge), emotional (interest in joint activity, communication, etc.), and behavior (actions, participation in different types of activities) spheres.

The developed criteria of children's social and personality development are a child's attitude towards themselves, peers, and adults, a child's understanding of the moral norms and rules of behavior, understanding of the feelings and emotions of other people in the process of communication, and manifestations of self-reflection.

Each criterion receives a score ranging from 1 to 3 points. The optimal level of children's social and personality development corresponds to three points, the acceptable level is rated with 2 points, and the unacceptable level is marked by 1 point. The total maximum score for all of the criteria is 12 points and the minimum is 4 points. The scale of assessment is divided into 3 assessment levels: 1-4 points – the unacceptable level; 5-8 points – the acceptable level, and 9-12

points – the optimal level of preschoolers' social and personality development.

The methods selected for the diagnostics of the level of preschoolers' social and personality development are T.A. Repina's method "The study of the characteristics of the social and moral development of children in a group and children's relationships in a peer group", R.M. Kalinina's "Plot pictures", the "Tree" method, the "Could this happen to you?" method, the "Ladder" test (as modified by Ia.L. Kolominskii and M.I. Lisina) (Zeer, 2003), observations of children in routine situations, and individual conversations.

Analysis of the results obtained using R.M. Kalinina's "Plot pictures" shows that the preschoolers cope with the presented task and arrange the pictures correctly but their emotional reactions in assessing actions are poorly expressed. The children demonstrate insufficient understanding of people's emotional states and have difficulty explaining the reason for their occurrence giving examples of situations.

Observations of children in routine situations also demonstrate that the preschoolers enter into interaction with adults and peers and take part in joint activity but their interest is most often situational and they are not always ready to set goals and plan their own actions. One-third of the preschool children are unable to act independently in various types of activity, have difficulty assessing the consequences of their actions and the actions of their peers, demonstrate violations of social norms and rules, and are not ready to carry out any tasks and assignments. This indicates the insufficient level of the children's independence necessary for their further development and self-realization, as well as the lack of understanding of the need to follow the generally accepted rules of behavior and others' approval.

Considering the results of the "Ladder" method (as modified by Ia.L. Kolominskii and M.I. Lisina), it is noteworthy that in the process of evaluation, the children often put themselves on steps 4-6 without justifying their decision and attributing it to the committed actions: "upset my mom, brought her to tears", "screamed loudly", "behaved poorly at the dinner table", etc. Positive self-assessment in various situations is substantiated by the children by proper behavior, having positive qualities, providing help to a teacher or their mother, and the level of development of certain skills.

Analyzing the correspondence between the real and the ideal by the results of the "Tree" method, we note certain discrepancies which can indicate the underestimation of one's capabilities based on the assessment of others, the lack of self-confidence, and anxiety. We can also note difficulties in assessing the behavior of other children and justifying one's choice (in placing

children on the “tree”) which demonstrates the lack of ability to adequately assess one’s own abilities.

The results of the initial observation obtained through deploying the selected diagnostic methods to assess the initial level of the preschoolers’ social and personality development show that a major part of the children is not sufficiently mature in the social and personality aspect. The summarized results of the ascertaining stage of the experiment for the control and experimental groups are presented in Table 1.

Table 1.

Assessment of the level of preschool children’s social and personality development (initial observation)

group	N	levels					
		optimal		acceptable		unacceptable	
		N	%	N	%	N	%
EG-1	30	8	26.7	12	40	10	33.3
EG-2	29	9	31	10	34.5	10	34.5
EG-3	30	7	23.3	12	40	11	36.7
CG	29	9	31	11	38	9	31

The results obtained at the ascertaining stage of the experiment indicate that prior to the empirical study, most of its participants were at the acceptable (38.1% of the total sample) and the unacceptable (33.9% of the total sample) levels of social and personality development which results from the lack of attention to the problem under study.

The study of the level of social and personality development of the experiment participants demonstrates that all of the preschoolers have certain advantages and disadvantages and most children understand the values and norms of human relations which indicates their awareness of themselves as members of the collective, society, and the world. However, the children are unable to clearly justify their choices which led to difficulties in choosing the optimal forms and methods of work.

The formative stage of the experiment was conducted in the natural conditions of the social and personality development of preschool children.

Considering the results of pedagogical diagnostics, we compiled the set of methodical and didactic instruments for the individual educational trajectories of social and personality development from the preexisting list. The

organization and deployment of the instruments took place both in individual work and joint activity with other children. For this purpose, the development-inducing object-spatial environment was supplemented with the necessary material equipment: printed manuals (pedagogical periodicals, methodical developments), toys (storytelling toys – dolls, fairy tale character figurines; theatrical toys – dolls of theatrical characters, dolls, bibabo dolls, marionette dolls, costumes and props for dramatizations and story games), artistic resources (children’s fiction books, works of national culture – costumes of the peoples of the world, folklore), means for creative activity (brushes, felt-tip pens, watercolors, gouache, pencils, wax crayons). All of the above allowed to maximize the development-inducing effect. A teacher’s choice of the instruments depended on the form of organization of children, the specific educational and upbringing task at hand, and the individual characteristics of children. The choice of pedagogical instruments corresponded to the main requirements for creating a development-inducing object-spatial environment according to the Federal State Educational Standard for Preschool Education: a variety of materials provides children with free choice and free access and allows taking the interests, abilities, and preferences of each child into account; alternation of different types of activities during the day ensures children’s involvement in joint activity.

Trajectory maps of social and personality development were developed for the children of all three groups. Special attention was paid to the social and personality development of children at the unacceptable level of development. Along with group forms of social interaction, their trajectory maps include the procedure of solving problem situations exercised individually as a part of conversations with a teacher, a children’s psychologist, and other specialists.

The process of solving pedagogical situations provided for the development of integrative qualities, specifically:

- The reproduction of social experience;
- Assimilation of the values and norms of human relations;
- The development of friendliness in communication and interaction with others;
- The formation of a sense of patriotism.

The reproduction of social experience was facilitated by solving such problem situations as the following:

Situation 1. All the children are drawing. Natasha and Marina chose the same pencil and started arguing because of it. Natasha stood up and moved to a different table. Why did Natasha

leave? What would you have done in this situation?

Situation 2. All the children are doing the task, but you are not doing well. What will you do? How will you talk to the teacher?

Assimilation of the values and norms of human relations was initiated by solving problem situations of the following type:

Situation 1. Maxim came to kindergarten very sad. What would you do to help Maxim not be sad? What would you say to him?

Situation 2. Serezha and Nikita had a fight over a toy car. How can they be reconciled?

The development of friendliness in communication and interaction with others was facilitated by tasks of the following type:

Situation 1. Katia and Olia decided to play the "Mothers-daughters" roleplaying game. Vova came up to them and asked: "Can I play with you?", to which the girls responded: "No". Why didn't the girls let Vova join in? How can the problem be solved?

Situation 2. Ksiusha and Olia decided to build a sandcastle. Stepa came up to them and crashed everything. How will you respond?

The formation of a sense of patriotism was facilitated by solving such problem situations as:

Situation 1. After camping in the woods, hikers left behind the garbage, some of which they buried. Did the hikers do the right thing? What should they have done with the garbage?

Situation 2. A person decided to wash their car in a lake. Evaluate their actions.

We developed a structure of an individual trajectory of social and personality development of a preschool child. This trajectory allows ensuring a favorable introduction of a child into the world of social relations, gaining personal experience in activity, exploration, and communication, as well as the development of positive emotions.

The individual educational trajectory of the social and personality development of a preschool child comprises the following goal orientations:

- Ideas about people, their relationships, emotional and physical states.
- Notions of active emotional responsiveness (feeling sorry for a person, comforting them, giving treats, etc.).
- Active expression of kindness towards close people.
- The development of habits of cultured behavior and communication in the family, kindergarten, public places, and on the street.
- Notions of the family, family relations;

- Ideas about oneself, one's body, personal qualities, capabilities, achievements.
- "Reading" emotions in facial expressions, gestures, and intonation;
- The forms of greeting, request, expression of gratitude, encouragement.
- The focus of children's consciousness, feelings, and actions on humane and just actions.
- Self-control over one's actions, reflection.
- A sense of self-respect, personal dignity.

Further, we provide examples of goal orientation indicators. The first goal orientation calls for encouraging students to get to know themselves and other people as representatives of society; developing active forms of communication between children and adults in different types of activity; promoting a respectful attitude toward children and adults; enriching children's ideas about male and female professions and genders.

The implementation of individual educational trajectories of social and personality development of preschool children involved developing such methodical and didactic means supporting the educational process as an organization of the development-inducing object-spatial environment; conducting conversations ("Men and women", "A child and a peer", "A child and an adult", etc.); discussions of problem situations; the development of illustrative manuals (situations with moral actions of adults and children) and multimedia presentations ("My family", "I am a human"); watching video and photo materials for joint discussion with children, making descriptive stories; creating joint collages and other creative works; organizing didactic games ("Find the common thing", "Find the couple", "Find out who this is", "Guess emotions"); the use of development-inducing computer games and electronic illustrative educational materials; designing computer presentations ("Love", "Responsibility", "Shame", "Caring"); watching morally oriented video and photo materials and animated films; using workbooks (creative assignments); using toys (action figures, fairy tale characters, dolls, marionettes, bibabo dolls); using experimental kits for children's creativity; organizing didactic games ("Travel", "Polite words", "Sights of my city", "Who lives in what country") and communicative games ("Trunk of magic words"); creating an activity center "Hello, it's me!"; conducting conversations ("Tell about yourself", "What I like"; organizing a story game "Visiting a friend", etc.).

Children at the optimal level of social and personality development participated in the general trajectory of educational activities carried out in the group. Their progress along the individual educational trajectory was also supported by their parents.

The content of the trajectory map of social and personality development for children at the acceptable level also included individual counseling to discuss situations that promoted their socialization and personal growth as an addition to the group forms of work.

Methodical recommendations were developed for the use of these situations by parents and teachers. The discussion of the results of their introduction into the education and upbringing process was conducted during parents' meetings and pedagogical council sessions.

The developed bank of problem situations for the development of children's social and communication skills incorporates the following directions: the formation of ideas about the

surroundings (the material world and social relations); the development of cognitive interest; social and personality development of a child in the process of children's activities.

Thus, the integrated use of a variety of methodological and didactic means of support for children made it possible to foster their positive attitude toward the world around them, to teach them the value of cooperation with other people, and develop their social skills, which presents the important components of the social and personality development of preschool children.

The effectiveness of the conducted study of the implementation of individual trajectories and the social and personality development of preschool children is tested through conducting control assessments.

A comparison of the results of the initial and final assessments of the social and personality development of preschool children is presented in Table 2.

Table 2.

Compared results of the assessment of preschool children's social and personality development in the initial and final observations

observation	group	N	levels					
			optimal		acceptable		unacceptable	
			N	%	N	%	N	%
initial observation	EG-1	30	8	26.7	12	40	10	33.3
	EG-2	29	9	31	10	34.5	10	34.5
	EG-3	30	7	23.3	12	40	11	36.7
	CG	29	9	31	11	38	9	31
final observaiton	EG-1	30	12	40	12	40	6	20
	EG-2	29	14	48.3	12	41.4	3	10.3
	EG-3	30	17	56.7	12	40	1	3.3
	CG	29	10	34.5	12	41.4	7	24.1

Thus, the formative stage of the experiment allows us to conclude that the process of the social and personality development of preschool children is more successful in the groups implementing individual educational trajectories in conjunction with collective forms of work (EG-1, EG-2, EG-3).

Analysis of the results of the control assessment proves the effectiveness of teachers' deliberate work on developing and implementing the individual trajectories of preschool children's social and personality development. This result demonstrates the advantage of the specially organized process of the social and personality development of a preschool child.

The final results of the experiment show that the number of children at the optimal and acceptable levels of development of the identified criteria (a child's attitude towards themselves, their peers, and adults; a child's understanding of

the moral norms and rules of behavior; understanding of the feelings and emotions of others in the process of communication; manifestations of self-reflection) increased in all experimental groups.

The children have a greater knowledge of the different emotional states, they are able to explain the reason behind a certain condition and show sympathy. There is a greater number of children who ask questions in communication with adults when facing difficulties, their interest in new things has increased. A lesser number of children are prone to conflict in communication with others, unable to act independently in social situations, and challenged by the organization of some children's activities. This evidences the readiness of every child for independent goal-setting, action planning, and communication with children and adults. It should also be noted that the children have learned to evaluate the actions of other

children and adults considering social norms and regulations.

Conclusion

The novelty of the present study lies in the development and approbation of individual trajectories of the social and personality development of preschool children, as well as in the assessment of the levels of this development.

The introduction of individual educational trajectories for the social and personality development of preschool children allows us to draw the following conclusions:

- The use of the trajectory maps of children's social and personality development has led to an increase in the number of children at the optimal and acceptable levels of development of the identified criteria.
- The emotional and feeling range of mechanisms of the perception of other people's states has expanded in most children in the experimental groups.
- The number of conflict situations in children's interactions with peers and adults has reduced.
- Most of the children have learned socially appropriate behavioral norms;
- The children have developed such integrative qualities as the reproduction of social experience, integration of the values and norms of human relations, the development of friendliness in communication with others, and the formation of a sense of patriotism.

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