

**DEVELOPING PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE AND CREATIVITY OF
PRESCHOOL EDUCATION TEACHERS**

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Annotation: This article discusses the importance of developing both professional competence and creativity among preschool education teachers. It highlights the multifaceted nature of professional skills required in early childhood education, including pedagogical knowledge, emotional intelligence, and the ability to foster child development through innovative methods. The article emphasizes the need for continuous professional development, creative autonomy, and institutional support to ensure that educators not only meet curricular demands but also inspire and guide young learners in imaginative and meaningful ways.

Keywords: Preschool education, professional competence, teacher creativity, early childhood development, educational innovation, pedagogical skills, teacher training, child-centered learning

The foundation of a nation's intellectual and moral development begins in early childhood. At this critical stage, preschool teachers serve not merely as caretakers but as the first educators who shape children's personality, curiosity, and capacity for lifelong learning. Therefore, strengthening the professional competence and creativity of preschool educators is essential for improving the quality of early education and ensuring holistic child development. Professional competence in the context of preschool education includes pedagogical knowledge, emotional intelligence, communication skills, and a deep understanding of child psychology. A competent preschool teacher is not only aware of curriculum standards and developmental milestones but also possesses the ability to design age-appropriate learning experiences that respond to children's individual needs and interests. This competence requires constant professional development, reflective practice, and an openness to pedagogical innovations.

Equally important is the cultivation of creativity. In a rapidly changing world, children must be equipped not only with knowledge but with flexible thinking, imagination, and problem-solving skills. Teachers who demonstrate creativity in their instructional approaches inspire similar traits in their students. Creative preschool teachers incorporate storytelling, music, movement, role-play, art, and nature-based learning into their daily routines, making the learning process dynamic, engaging, and joyful. The development of teacher creativity is closely linked to their motivation and emotional well-being. A supportive work environment that encourages experimentation, collaboration, and self-expression plays a critical role in enhancing teacher creativity. When educators feel empowered and trusted, they are more likely to generate innovative ideas and take ownership of their professional growth. Leadership within preschool

institutions must therefore prioritize the psychological safety and continuous development of their staff.

Modern preschool education also demands that teachers integrate digital literacy and intercultural awareness into their professional competence. As children are increasingly exposed to digital tools and diverse worldviews, teachers must be prepared to guide them responsibly. Competence today includes not only teaching ABCs but fostering empathy, digital ethics, and ecological awareness from an early age. This multidimensional view of competence ensures that the preschool educator is not only effective in instruction but also a role model for 21st-century values. Teacher training institutions and in-service development programs must adapt to these evolving expectations. Training models should shift from lecture-based learning to interactive and practice-oriented formats where educators engage in collaborative lesson planning, microteaching, case analysis, and reflective dialogue. Creativity can be nurtured through exposure to the arts, innovative pedagogical methods, and the study of international early childhood practices.

Moreover, research shows that teachers who engage in action research, classroom inquiry, and peer learning are more likely to develop both competence and creativity. Institutions should encourage such professional learning communities where experiences and insights are shared, challenges are collectively addressed, and a culture of innovation is cultivated. In conclusion, the development of professional competence and creativity among preschool educators is not a one-time goal but a continuous journey. By investing in their intellectual growth, emotional well-being, and creative capacities, societies can ensure that the youngest members of the community receive the best possible start in life. Empowered and inspired teachers are the cornerstone of a high-quality preschool system—one that nurtures both the mind and spirit of every child.

To ensure that preschool education meets the developmental needs of children in a dynamic and diverse world, preschool teachers must be lifelong learners. The capacity to reflect on one's practice, identify areas of improvement, and embrace new methodologies is at the heart of professional competence. Effective teachers frequently assess the outcomes of their teaching, seek feedback, and make pedagogical decisions based on the evolving needs of the children in their care. This culture of reflection not only refines teaching practices but also fosters personal growth and confidence in educators. In parallel, creativity in preschool teaching must go beyond occasional artistic activities—it should become a core element of instructional design. A creative teacher is one who can transform a simple story into a multisensory experience, who adapts everyday materials into educational tools, and who turns unexpected classroom situations into valuable learning moments. This level of inventiveness is especially critical in early childhood settings, where curiosity, play, and exploration are central to learning.

Importantly, the interplay between creativity and competence is mutually reinforcing. As teachers become more competent in child development theory and instructional strategy, they gain the confidence to take creative risks. Conversely, the freedom to innovate in the classroom leads to a deeper engagement with educational content and methods, enhancing competence

through experience. This cycle should be supported by leadership that values innovation, allows for flexible planning, and encourages experimentation without fear of failure.

In the context of inclusive education, both competence and creativity are vital in adapting materials and methods to support children with diverse abilities and backgrounds. Preschool educators must be able to differentiate instruction, adjust communication strategies, and build emotionally supportive environments for every child. Creative approaches—such as using music for language acquisition, or dramatization to teach social behavior—enable teachers to reach learners who might otherwise struggle in traditional formats. Technology integration is another domain where competence and creativity intersect. Digital tools such as interactive whiteboards, educational games, and storytelling apps offer endless possibilities for engaging young children. However, using technology effectively requires teachers to make informed choices about digital content and to balance screen time with active, hands-on learning. Professional development in this area should emphasize both technical proficiency and pedagogical creativity.

Ultimately, shaping a generation of preschool educators who are both professionally competent and creatively empowered requires systemic change. Policies should support competitive compensation, manageable workloads, and recognition of teaching as a skilled profession. Institutions must foster a sense of professional community and collaboration, where teachers learn from one another and share innovations openly. At the same time, partnerships with families and local communities enrich the educational experience and support teachers in contextualizing their teaching practices. In sum, the mission of preschool education cannot be achieved without strong, creative, and well-prepared educators. Their influence extends beyond academic instruction—they are emotional anchors, moral guides, and facilitators of discovery. By continually investing in their development, education systems ensure that every child has the opportunity to learn from inspired teachers who model the very qualities we hope to instill in future generations: curiosity, compassion, imagination, and integrity.

Conclusion:

The growth of professional competence and creativity in preschool teachers is a vital element in building a strong educational foundation for children. As society evolves, so too must the skills and mindset of those who guide its youngest members. Creative and competent teachers are better equipped to adapt to children's individual needs, introduce new ideas, and foster an enriching learning environment. To achieve this, ongoing training, psychological support, and institutional encouragement must be prioritized. Investing in the personal and professional development of preschool educators is, ultimately, an investment in the future of the nation.

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