

AGE CHARACTERISTICS OF PRESCHOOL CHILDREN IN THE FORMATION OF INNOVATIVE THINKING.

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Annatation: In the article, the formation of innovative thinking in preschool children, their stages of development, children's learning and understanding of the world around them, their cognitive, emotional and social development, creativity, problem solving and innovative thinking, preschool children (3-7 years old) usually have innovative thinking skills illuminated.

The formation of innovative thinking in preschool children is a process that aligns closely with their developmental stages. At this age, children are beginning to explore and make sense of the world around them, and their cognitive, emotional, and social development forms the foundation for creativity, problem-solving, and innovative thinking. Preschoolers (ages 3-7) typically exhibit a range of age-specific characteristics that influence their capacity for innovative thinking. Understanding these characteristics helps educators and caregivers provide the right support and stimulation for fostering creativity and innovation.

1. Cognitive Development Characteristics (Ages 3-7)

Preschool children are in the preoperational stage of cognitive development (according to Jean Piaget). During this stage, children are beginning to use symbols (such as words and images) to represent objects and experiences. Their thinking is more intuitive and imaginative than logical, and they often engage in fantasy play and problem-solving in creative ways.

Key Cognitive Characteristics:

- **Egocentrism:** Preschool children may find it difficult to take on the perspective of others, focusing mostly on their own thoughts and experiences. While this can limit empathy, it also encourages them to innovate based on their own unique viewpoints and imagination.
- **Imagination and Fantasy Play:** Between ages 3-5, children are highly engaged in imaginative play. They pretend to be different characters, use objects symbolically, and invent scenarios, all of which are central to developing innovative thinking. This kind of play allows them to experiment with different ideas and explore novel solutions.
- **Lack of Logical Reasoning:** Preschoolers often engage in non-logical thinking. While this may seem like a limitation, it can actually enhance their ability to think "outside the box." Their minds are flexible, which helps in thinking of creative solutions that don't adhere to rigid rules or structures.
- **Problem-Solving through Exploration:** Children begin to use trial and error to solve problems (e.g., figuring out how to fit puzzle pieces together). They do not yet approach

problems with fixed strategies, which means they are more open to experimenting with different ways of solving challenges. This trial-and-error approach fosters creative thinking and innovation.

- **Symbolic Thinking:** As they begin to understand the symbolic representation of objects, children can imagine and create abstract ideas. This capacity is a precursor to innovative thinking, as children learn that things can be represented by symbols, and one idea can stand for many others.

Implications for Innovative Thinking:

- Encourage imaginative play and opportunities for children to experiment without fear of failure.
- Provide materials that can be used in flexible ways (e.g., building blocks, art supplies, costumes).
- Allow children to create their own scenarios, solutions, and representations of the world, which fosters the development of original ideas.

2. Emotional and Social Development Characteristics

Preschool children are also learning how to express and regulate their emotions while interacting with others. Their emotional and social development can significantly influence their capacity to think innovatively, as emotional expression and collaboration with peers often serve as sources of creativity.

Key Emotional and Social Characteristics:

- **Exploration of Identity:** Children are in the early stages of developing a sense of self. As they discover what makes them unique, they may show increasing confidence in expressing their ideas. This growing self-awareness and self-esteem is important for developing the courage to be innovative and share original ideas.
- **Social Interaction and Collaboration:** While young children tend to play more individually, they gradually begin to engage in cooperative play and collaboration with peers. Collaborative play (e.g., building something together, working on a group project) encourages creative problem-solving and innovation as children negotiate, share ideas, and work together to achieve a goal.
- **Emotional Expression and Regulation:** Children are learning to express their emotions and manage frustration, which can influence their ability to persist in the face of challenges. The ability to regulate emotions allows children to take risks and try new things, an important trait for innovative thinking.
- **Empathy and Perspective-Taking:** By around age 5, children start to develop an understanding of others' feelings and viewpoints, which encourages creative thinking that

incorporates different perspectives. Empathy allows children to think beyond their own immediate desires and consider the needs and ideas of others when solving problems.

Implications for Innovative Thinking:

- Create opportunities for social interaction, both guided and free, where children can share and test out ideas with peers.
- Encourage emotional expression and provide a supportive environment where children feel safe to express creative ideas and take risks.
- Foster collaboration and teamwork, which allow for the pooling of diverse ideas and perspectives, enhancing creative problem-solving.

3. Language Development Characteristics

Language development plays a central role in the formation of innovative thinking. Preschoolers are rapidly expanding their vocabulary and learning how to express complex ideas. Their ability to use language creatively and flexibly supports innovative thought.

Key Language Characteristics:

- **Vocabulary Expansion:** By the age of 5, children's vocabulary grows rapidly. A rich vocabulary enables them to articulate ideas more clearly and experiment with language in creative ways (e.g., inventing words, stories, or alternative ways of describing the world).
- **Storytelling and Imagination:** As children develop language skills, they become better storytellers. This allows them to create new worlds, characters, and scenarios—key components of innovation. Children engage in storytelling as a way of organizing and expressing their imaginative ideas.
- **Problem-Solving Language:** As language skills develop, so does the ability to express problems and solutions. Preschool children begin to use language to reason through challenges, ask questions, and develop explanations for their thinking, all of which promote innovative thinking.
- **Abstract Language:** While still grounded in concrete thinking, preschoolers start using more abstract language (e.g., using "maybe," "imagine," or "what if"). This kind of language allows for the exploration of possibilities and the articulation of creative solutions.

Implications for Innovative Thinking:

- Use storytelling, role-playing, and other language-rich activities to stimulate children's creativity.
- Encourage children to use their growing vocabulary to describe their ideas, ask questions, and explain how they would solve problems.

- Create opportunities for children to engage in "what if" scenarios that expand their thinking beyond the present reality.

4. Physical and Motor Development Characteristics

Though preschool children are still refining their fine and gross motor skills, their growing physical independence allows for the exploration of new activities and experiences that can spark creativity and innovative thinking.

Key Motor Characteristics:

- **Fine Motor Skills:** By age 4-5, children have more control over their hands and fingers, enabling them to engage in activities like drawing, cutting, building, and assembling objects. These hands-on activities stimulate both creative expression and problem-solving.
- **Gross Motor Skills:** Gross motor activities like running, jumping, and climbing also promote creativity by providing opportunities for children to experiment with movement, balance, and coordination. For example, creating obstacle courses or imagining new ways to move can engage innovative thinking.

Implications for Innovative Thinking:

- Provide hands-on, tactile experiences (such as arts, crafts, and construction activities) that require fine motor coordination.
- Encourage physical activities that involve problem-solving and creative exploration, such as obstacle courses, dance, or role-playing scenarios.

5. Moral and Ethical Development Characteristics

While moral reasoning is still in its early stages, preschoolers begin to develop a sense of fairness, justice, and empathy, which are essential components of innovative thinking in social contexts.

Key Characteristics:

- **Fairness and Justice:** Preschool children start to understand the basic principles of fairness and justice, which can guide creative problem-solving in situations involving others. For example, they might come up with creative ways to share resources or solve conflicts.
- **Empathy:** As children develop the ability to understand others' emotions and perspectives, they may come up with more empathetic and creative solutions to social problems (e.g., finding a way to include others in play or resolving disputes).

Implications for Innovative Thinking:

- Encourage group activities where children must negotiate, share, and collaborate to solve

problems.

- Provide opportunities for children to consider different perspectives when solving problems, whether social or cognitive.

Conclusion:

The age characteristics of preschool children in the formation of innovative thinking are deeply intertwined with their developmental stages in cognitive, emotional, social, and language domains. At this age, children have a natural propensity for creative and original thought, driven by their imagination, curiosity, and emerging problem-solving skills. By providing a rich, supportive environment filled with opportunities for exploration, social interaction, and creative expression, educators and caregivers can foster innovative thinking and set the foundation for lifelong creativity and intellectual growth.

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