

STAGES OF DEVELOPING ECOLOGICAL COMPETENCE CONCEPTS IN
PREPARATORY GROUP TRAINEES

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Аннотация. В статье рассматриваются содержание, этапы и значение процесса формирования экологической компетентности у дошкольников. Анализируются научно-педагогические основы формирования экологических знаний, умений и ценностей у детей и предлагаются эффективные пути их поэтапного развития.

Ключевые слова. Дошкольное образование, экологическое образование, экологическая компетентность, подготовительная группа, экологическая культура, формирование знаний, формирование эмоционально-ценностных отношений, этап внедрения и приобретения опыта, этап закрепления и интеграции.

Abstract. This article discusses the content, stages and importance of the process of forming ecological competence in preschoolers. The scientific and pedagogical foundations of the formation of ecological knowledge, skills and values in children are analyzed and effective ways of their gradual development are proposed.

Keywords. Preschool education, ecological education, ecological competence, preparatory group, ecological culture, knowledge formation, emotional-value relationship formation, implementation and experience acquisition stage, consolidation and integration stage.

INTRODUCTION.

Today, the ecological problems we face are not only environmental issues but also reflect certain aspects of humanity's development, production, and way of conceptualizing the world; in other words, they are fundamentally issues of values. They emerge in socio-ecological processes of degradation based on specific forms of power and knowledge. Over the past several decades, educational reforms in our country, as well as in almost all countries worldwide, have integrated ecological education into curricula at various levels as a key component for teaching about environmental problems. Currently, ecological education affects all people on the planet. Although schools have long included topics within ecological education in their lessons, the purpose of this material is to promote the dissemination and acceptance of new theoretical perspectives in this field, while emphasizing the crucial importance of fostering ecological worldview today. The growing intensity of ecological problems requires humanity, especially the younger generation, to adopt a responsible attitude toward nature. Therefore, systematically organizing ecological education in preschool institutions and developing ecological competence in children has become an urgent issue.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE.

In recent years, as ecological problems have become global, the importance of ecological safety, nature conservation, sustainable development, and ecological education has increased. Researchers such as A. Yoldoshev, N. Karimova, G. Rakhimova, and others emphasize that ecological education is a key factor in fostering in individuals a conscious attitude toward nature, a sense of responsibility, and ecological culture. This process should begin within the preschool education system, as early childhood is the period when fundamental values and behavioral models are formed. Scientific literature extensively discusses the content and stages of ecological education. For instance, T. Qodirova (2020) proposed a step-by-step model for developing ecological awareness in preschool children. Similarly, G. Norqulova (2021) highlights the effectiveness of play- and experience-based methods in developing ecological competence.



These approaches demonstrate that in preparatory groups, ecological knowledge can be effectively imparted through practical activities, including play, observation, labor, and project-based tasks.

The relevance of ecological education is determined by the need to protect our country's nature, ecosystems, and environment from instability and degradation, to raise the ecological culture of the population, and to ensure that all segments of society, especially children, contribute to addressing these extremely serious and vital issues. However, a systematic analysis of the implementation process of ecological education shows that significant problems and shortcomings remain, hindering the full realization of reforms in organizing ecological education. In this regard, the tasks outlined in the "Action Strategy" for the five priority areas of Uzbekistan's development for 2017–2021 have been unconditionally implemented. The integration of the education system into addressing ecological problems across the regions of the republic has contributed to increasing the ecological literacy of the growing generation, forming and developing ecological awareness and ecological culture, and effectively organizing the process of ecological education and upbringing.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY.

Ecological competence is the ability of an individual to understand the interconnections between nature, society, and humans, to apply ecological knowledge in practice, and to maintain a responsible attitude toward the environment. In preschool age, this competence develops through the integration of knowledge, emotional attitudes, and practical activities. Preparatory group children (ages 6–7) acquire the ability to perceive nature, understand cause-and-effect relationships, and evaluate the consequences of their own actions. Therefore, the step-by-step development of ecological competence during this period is considered an important pedagogical task.

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS.

The analysis indicates that although certain achievements have been made in the field of ecological education within Uzbekistan's education system, several issues still hinder its full implementation. These include the level of ecological literacy among educators, the lack of didactic materials, insufficient methodological guides, and limited experience-based approaches, all of which prevent reforms from yielding their full effectiveness. Therefore, systematically organizing ecological education and incorporating methodological approaches aimed at developing ecological competence into educational programs remain key tasks today.

Research results show that the step-by-step development of ecological competence—through knowledge acquisition, fostering emotional and value-based attitudes, organizing practical activities, reinforcement, and integration—enables children to understand nature, care for it, and develop a sense of ecological responsibility. Moreover, this approach not only enhances the quality of ecological education but also contributes to the harmonious social, aesthetic, and moral development of the individual.

Consequently, educators in preparatory groups need to effectively utilize interactive methods, observation- and experience-based activities, and integrate ecological tasks into children's daily activities to foster ecological competence. As a result, ecological education serves to cultivate in preschool children a culture of love for nature, care for the environment, and preservation of natural The formation of ecological competence is a continuous and systematic process, which is implemented in the following four stages:

Stage 1. Knowledge Formation (Informational Stage)

Purpose: To develop in children basic knowledge about natural phenomena, living organisms, and



inanimate objects.

Tasks: To provide understanding of changes in nature, seasons, the animal and plant world; to comprehend the interconnection between nature and humans; to teach ecological terms.

Methods: Conversation, observation, experiments, visual aids, and multimedia materials.

Stage 2. Formation of Emotional-Value Attitudes

Purpose: To develop love, care, and aesthetic feelings toward nature.

Tasks: To cultivate ecological sensitivity in children; to evoke positive emotions through activities related to caring for plants and animals; to instill the idea “Nature is my friend.”

Methods: Story therapy, role-playing games, dramatization, and nature walks.



Stage 3. Implementation and Experience-Gaining

Stage

Purpose: To develop the skills to apply ecological knowledge in practical activities.

Tasks: To engage in practical nature conservation activities (cleaning flower beds, planting trees, saving water); to sort waste properly and maintain cleanliness; to participate in ecological projects.

Methods: Project-based approach, practical exercises, ecological games, and experimental activities.

Stage 4. Reinforcement and Integration Stage

Purpose: To consolidate ecological competence and integrate it with other types of activities.

Tasks: To connect ecological knowledge with drawing, music, storytelling, and mathematics activities; to reinforce ecological behavior in daily life; to instill the concept “Ecological culture – a healthy future” in children’s minds.

Methods: Integrated lessons, ecological quizzes, and creative projects.

Research indicates that the step-by-step development of ecological competence in children leads to:

- the ability to analyze natural phenomena,
- the formation of a system of ecological values,
- practical ecological skills,
- the development of responsible behavior.

This, in turn, contributes to one of the primary goals of preschool education — the social and ecological maturation of the individual. The gradual development of ecological competence in preparatory group children represents a scientifically grounded approach to ecological education. When each stage is implemented in accordance with the age characteristics of the children, it ensures the stable formation of their ecological culture, sense of responsibility, and caring attitude toward the environment.

CONCLUSION.

In conclusion, the development of ecological competence in preparatory group children represents a significant stage in their personal development, ensuring the harmonious formation of ecological knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Through the step-by-step development of ecological competence, children cultivate love, care, responsibility, and the foundations of



ecological culture toward nature. The effective organization of ecological education using play, observation, experimentation, project-based activities, and interactive methods yields high results. These methods allow children to connect ecological concepts with practical activities, understand natural phenomena based on their own experiences, and develop ecological behavior. Gradually developing ecological competence in preparatory group children enhances the effectiveness of the educational process and contributes to fostering ecological awareness, ecological thinking, and a responsible attitude toward the environment.

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