



RESEARCH ARTICLE

Pedagogical Skills of Educators Working with Children Aged 3-6

Mevlude Aliu-Gashi^{1*}, Dean Iliev²

¹ Kosovo Pedagogical Institute

² Faculty of Education – Bitola, University “St. Kliment Ohridski” Bitola – North Macedonia

ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
Received: Oct 18, 2024 Accepted: Dec 16, 2024	<p>The pedagogical skills of educators working with children encompass the ability to effectively manage educational activities, including planning, implementation, and evaluation of learning outcomes. Deficiencies in these skills can hinder the holistic development of children. This study employs a qualitative approach to identify and analyze the pedagogical skills of educators in planning educational activities, implementing them, and evaluating the learning achievements of children aged 3-6 years. The sample consists of 10 kindergarten educators. The selection of the sample is intentional. The research was conducted using observation instruments and semi-structured interviews. The analysis of the observation and interview data was carried out through thematic analysis.</p> <p>The research results from the observations indicate that educators demonstrate a limited approach to planning based on observation, documentation, and evaluation of children. They present their work planning as a positive approach based on inclusivity and adaptation of content to the age group, aiming to achieve the outcomes of the Curriculum and the Standards indicators.</p> <p>The findings also indicate that educators are competent in preparing indoor environments and utilizing materials such as paper, glue, crayons, and scissors. However, significant gaps were observed in the use of outdoor environments and the incorporation of recyclable and natural materials. Children's progress is evaluated every two years using checklists with summary descriptions. Challenges in evaluating children's achievements stem from the absence of a clear system and the need for additional professional development in assessment practices.</p> <p>This study highlights the need to enhance educators' pedagogical skills to improve the quality of early childhood education.</p>
Keywords Educator Children Aged 3-6 Years Preschool Institution Pedagogical Skills	
*Corresponding Author: mevludealiugashi@gmail.com	

INTRODUCTION

The pedagogical skills of educators play a crucial role in making the learning process enjoyable and engaging, thus laying a foundation for later academic success and fostering a desire for learning. Research has shown that the preparation and training of educators with the necessary pedagogical skills for working with children are key to achieving educational outcomes and goals. Therefore, educators must possess the required skills to effectively fulfill their responsibilities. In addition to general skills, educators also acquire professional and pedagogical competencies through their education. However, there are differences among educators in terms of the level and quality of their practical work with children.

Official and professional documents developed and approved by the Ministry of Education, Science, Technology, and Innovation (MESTI) regarding preschool education emphasize the professionalism of educators as a critical factor in the development of educational practices in preschool institutions, particularly with respect to their professional and humane approach to working with children aged 3–6 years. At present, preschool education is progressing with the introduction of innovations in the pedagogical process. This shift brings new and modern demands for educators' activities. The pedagogical process in preschool institutions is based on the interaction between the educator and the child, and educators must possess the professional skills necessary to carry out their work effectively.

This research is grounded in both theoretical and empirical contexts, focusing on the pedagogical skills of educators in planning activities, implementing them, and assessing children's achievements. A successful educator continuously explores best practices for teaching young children. To achieve the highest levels of competence, educators must be committed to raising their professional and pedagogical standards through ongoing education. Mastery of pedagogical skills contributes to success, enhances efficiency, and helps in shaping high-quality educators. Additionally, it influences the social transformation of future generations. The issue of educators' pedagogical skills has been addressed by various authors in different contexts.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The pedagogical skills of educators in working with children underscore the importance of continuously improving their readiness to develop these skills for the formation and development of the individual. The term "skill" refers to the ability or capacity to perform something as a result of knowledge, training, practice, or experience. A skill is an acquired and automated ability to perform a task, job, or specific act with ease and appropriateness, supported by relevant abilities and training (Koliqi, 2022).

Analyzing the professional profile of educators, Crosby Kile (2018) highlights four key dimensions of educator professionalism: professional knowledge, competence, commitment to ethical standards, and personal characteristics. He explains that a professional in the field of preschool education possesses the personal characteristics, knowledge, and skills necessary to facilitate children's learning (Kile, 2018). Building on the premise that the identity of a professional is gradually formed through three complementary steps—education, professional integration, and performing professional duties with ongoing professional development—Androuso & Tsafos (2018) explored the parameters influencing the formation of professional identity among preschool educators. Their preliminary findings revealed that pedagogical experience and prevailing beliefs about education are more significant in building professional identity than formal education. Their research reflects on the issue of personal characteristics, higher education, knowledge, skills, professional development, adherence to ethical and professional standards, and competencies impacting educators' professional activities (Androuso & Tsafos, 2018).

According to the General Standards of Preschool Education (MESTI, 2006), educators play a key role in the successful implementation of educational activities, including drafting educational programs in harmony with children's development, executing these activities, and assessing children's achievements.

The Curriculum for Early Childhood Education (2023) is a pilot document currently being tested in a limited number of preschool institutions. However, the Preschool Education Curriculum in Kosovo for Children Aged 3–6 (MESTI, 2006), although outdated given the rapid changes in education, remains largely valid for most preschool education in Kosovo. This curriculum emphasizes Child-Centered Education, based on several key principles: children acquire knowledge, master skills and habits, and gain experiences through interactions with the surrounding world. Adults—parents,

educators, and others—encourage the holistic growth and development of children, based on their interests, needs, and abilities (MESTI, 2006).

The Curricular Framework for Pre-University Education of the Republic of Kosovo (MESTI, 2016) emphasizes the importance of development and learning standards for early childhood education (ages 0–6), which support and promote optimal development. Preschool education represents a period of rapid physical, cognitive, emotional, and social development, and achieving this requires educators who possess both personal and professional qualities, skilled in educating new generations (MESTI, 2016).

In line with the Core Curriculum for the Preparatory Class and Primary Education of Kosovo (MESTI, 2016), which includes the preparatory class for children aged 5–6, planning and implementation must align with learning outcomes. Competency-based teaching requires educators to select appropriate strategies, methods, techniques, tools, and various forms of working with students, reorganizing their learning experiences to integrate knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes (MESTI, 2016).

Educators' pedagogical skills in planning educational work

The preparation of preschool education plans demonstrates that educators intentionally design the content and activities they implement. An educator with pedagogical skills prepares “effective teaching plans that help organize various teaching methods and learning outcomes for children in the group, linking activities and themes” (Brightwheel, 2023).

Planning in early childhood education plays a crucial role in ensuring that children benefit from continuous learning, helping them achieve desired early learning goals. It is often useful to divide the planning process into manageable parts to focus efforts and ensure all essential aspects of the preschool year are addressed (ICTE, 2023).

According to Brightwheel (2023), educators must be able to define learning objectives based on developmental standards or curriculum requirements. They must also select appropriate materials, prepare the learning environment, outline implementation procedures, and determine expected outcomes.

Educators' pedagogical skills in implementing educational work

Educators' pedagogical skills are critical in the implementation phase of educational work. Vygotsky (1978) describes implementation as a process of designing and executing plans and pedagogical activities in the preschool environment to support children's development. This involves using appropriate methods and strategies suited to the child's age and developmental level, as well as creating a stimulating and supportive environment. Successful implementation requires strong communication skills, creativity, organizational abilities, and the capacity to build positive relationships with children and the school community.

The quality of implementation is essential for achieving desired outcomes. Research by the OCTAN (2012) indicates that the success of educational programs depends on effective implementation. If a program is poorly executed, its goals are unlikely to be met, or the results will be less impactful.

An integrated, holistic curriculum supports all areas of child development, updating methodologies and using appropriate strategies for effective learning (IZHA, 2017).

Educators' pedagogical skills in assessing children's achievements

According to the General Standards for Preschool Education (2006), the assessment of children's achievements involves observing, recording, and documenting a child's development and learning. The purpose of assessment is to guide educators in planning appropriate educational activities for

each child. Assessment should be carried out during the learning process, in play, and systematically (MEST, 2006).

Educators demonstrate their pedagogical skills by observing and documenting a child's work and performance throughout the year, which provides valuable information for planning an appropriate curriculum and individualized instruction (Brain Building in Progress, 2020).

Skilled educators use assessments to:

- Provide parents with essential information about their child's development.
- Identify children who may need additional support and determine whether interventions are necessary.
- Plan individualized lessons for children or groups at the same developmental stage (Brain Building in Progress, 2020).

Common assessment methods include:

Observation

Observation is a critical tool in preschool education, allowing educators to learn about a child's mental, physical, and emotional development. It helps identify individual needs and developmental levels, supporting tailored learning (NASEM, 2020).

Documentation

Documentation involves collecting and analyzing information about children's progress and behaviors. This method is similar to observation but focuses on creating a portfolio of notes and evidence to track progress toward developmental milestones (Helm & Beneke, 2010).

Assessment of children's learning achievements

Standardized testing methods can also be employed for preschool assessments. According to Brain Building in Progress (2020), assessment is a cyclical process. Although the specific methods and tools for assessment may vary, the cycle allows educators to adjust their curriculum to better support the children in their programs. This assessment cycle includes: Instruct – Observe – Document – Reflect – Analyze – Assess (Brain Building in Progress, 2020).

According to the General Standards for Preschool Education in Kosovo for Ages 3-6 (2006), assessing a child's achievements serves to adapt the planning of educational activities. Assessments are used to determine the individual needs of each child, which are then reflected in the planning of educational activities. This process is based on continuous observations by the educator, information exchanged with parents, and the child's work portfolio. Preschool-aged children are not assessed through tests or grades. Instead, information about children's progress is collected and organized throughout the year, reflecting their development across all areas of activity. Assessment is an integral part of daily educational activities, with regular communication between staff and families about the child's progress. However, information from the assessment of a single activity is not used to make significant decisions about the child (MEST, 2006).

According to Shadrikov (2013), an ideal educator is one who continually develops and enhances their professional and pedagogical knowledge and skills. Similarly, Florida National University (2012) asserts that successful preschool educators build a variety of skills throughout their education and careers. Educators must have a deep understanding of developmental milestones related to early childhood to create an age-appropriate and engaging program. Other essential skills for preschool educators include strong communication, creativity, organizational skills, documentation of children's work, and the ability to implement appropriate strategies for children (Florida National University, 2021).

Practical Outcomes in Early Childhood Education (2016) highlights that a wide range of important skills is necessary for early childhood educators to provide the highest quality education. It is vital that educators possess not only pedagogical expertise but also human and interpersonal skills, often referred to as "soft skills" (Practical Outcomes, 2016). The responsibility for ensuring positive early childhood experiences is shared among multiple actors, including parents, educators, communities, and policymakers. All of these stakeholders play an equally important role in fostering growth and development in young children, as well as in creating opportunities for children to build skills that prepare them to adapt more easily to the challenges of the surrounding world (The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine, 2023).

PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH

The purpose of this research was to identify the pedagogical skills of educators in planning, implementing, and assessing the achievements of children aged 3–6 years. Additionally, the study aimed to analyze educators' attitudes toward these pedagogical skills and the challenges they face in applying these skills in practice when working with children.

Research questions

- What pedagogical skills do educators possess in planning their work with children?
- What pedagogical skills do educators possess in implementing their work with children?
- What skills do educators have in assessing children's achievements?
- What are educators' attitudes toward pedagogical skills and the challenges in their practical application?

METHODOLOGY

The study is based on a qualitative approach, using an interpretive design to better understand how educators apply pedagogical skills in practice in planning and implementing educational work, as well as in evaluation. This research approach focuses on the individual and subjective experiences of participants.

Sample

Participants were selected based on predetermined criteria aligned with the study's objectives. The sample is purposive and includes educators who have attended training on planning (using observation, documentation, and assessment), implementing appropriate strategies in working with children, and assessing children's learning. The research sample consists of 10 educators working with children aged 3–6 years in 10 preschools across 8 municipalities.

Research Instruments

The instruments used in this research include an observation protocol and a semi-structured interview. The observation tool was designed with criteria and sub-criteria relevant to the research questions, focusing on educators' skills in planning, implementation, and assessment. The semi-structured interview included questions related to educators' attitudes toward applying pedagogical skills in their work and the challenges they encounter in doing so.

Data Collection Procedure

The observation and interview instruments were developed initially. These instruments were not standardized but were adapted to the local context and the research topic. The instruments were piloted in two preschools to ensure the accuracy and consistency of the data, followed by necessary adjustments before finalizing them for fieldwork.

Observations were conducted using a structured format with clear categories and indicators to ensure systematic documentation of relevant aspects. During observations, educators were informed about the purpose of the research without revealing too many details to avoid influencing their behavior.

For the interviews, open-ended and semi-structured questions were prepared to allow flexibility and in-depth discussion on key topics. While key questions were pre-drafted, follow-up questions were used to clarify and expand on participants' responses. The interviews took place in quiet and comfortable environments and lasted approximately 30–40 minutes. To ensure accuracy, interviews were recorded with the participants' consent and transcribed for analysis. Before conducting the observations and interviews, all participants were informed about the study's purpose, data collection procedures, and their rights as participants. The collected data were stored securely and used solely for this research. Participants' identities were kept confidential, and personal information was coded to ensure privacy.

Data Analysis

The analysis of the observation and interview data was carried out using Creswell's thematic analysis approach. All data were transcribed and grouped into themes, further categorized into subcategories and categories. An initial interpretation was made for each subcategory, followed by a final interpretation for each category.

RESULTS

The research results present the level of implementation of educators' pedagogical skills in their work with children aged 3–6 years. Data from the observations and interviews were processed using thematic analysis.

Educators' pedagogical skills in planning work with children

This section addresses educators' skills in planning based on the observation and documentation of children's activities, focusing on planning that considers children's interests, needs, and abilities.

Planning based on observation and documentation of children's activities

The data reveal that educators have a limited approach to planning based on observation, documentation, and assessment. They tend to follow a general, pre-determined plan over extended periods, primarily based on official documents and standards, without considering the current needs, interests, and development of the children.

This planning approach highlights a lack of pedagogical skills centered on observing children and their specific needs, which is essential for creating a relevant and enriched educational program. These findings suggest that educators should improve their pedagogical approach by observing children more closely and planning based on their actual needs and interests.

Planning based on objectives and expected outcomes

All educators prepare work plans with pre-determined objectives aimed at achieving curriculum outcomes and standards. This planning approach is aligned with the guidelines provided by the Ministry of Education (MESTI) and is commonly practiced by educators.

Modern educational planning methods advocate for planning that is based on children's interests and needs, which educators observe within the group. However, most educators have not yet fully embraced these practices.

Educators' pedagogical skills in implementing work with children

This section focuses on educators' skills in preparing and organizing the environment for working with children, preparing materials and tools for activities, and involving all children in activities and self-organization.

Educators' pedagogical skills in preparing the environment for work with children

In most cases, educators demonstrated pedagogical skills in preparing the environment for working with children, such as creating a bright, warm, and suitable atmosphere for activities. They were capable of organizing indoor spaces to accommodate the children and the activities to be conducted. Some educators exhibited skills in encouraging children's interaction and exploration within the learning environment. However, they did not demonstrate the ability to adapt the environment or offer alternative spaces for activities, such as spaces for music or physical games, limiting children's opportunities to develop their abilities in these areas.

Only in rare cases did educators conduct activities in outdoor environments, as limited outdoor space in some preschools made it challenging to use open areas for exploration and games.

Educators' pedagogical skills in preparing materials for work with children

Educators typically demonstrated the ability to present materials clearly and systematically to children, ensuring they understood how to use them. The materials used included paper, colors, scissors, illustrations, and geometric shapes.

Most educators ensured that materials were accessible and varied for children. However, in some cases, children faced difficulties accessing materials that were not provided at an appropriate level, requiring constant assistance from the educator.

Only a few educators incorporated reusable and natural materials into their activities, fostering environmental awareness and encouraging a connection with nature. Exploratory materials, which allow children to transform, investigate, and stimulate curiosity, were not widely used. In some instances, educators restricted the use of materials by giving numerous instructions, limiting children's creativity and independence during activities.

Educators' pedagogical skills in engaging all children in activities and self-organization

Educators' pedagogical skills in engaging children in activities and fostering self-organization typically involved broader participation and active interaction between children and with the educator. This included sharing ideas, collaborating in activities, and engaging in group discussions. In some cases, participation was limited, and some children were less active in discussions or did not initiate questions or explanations. Strict adherence to the educator's instructions resulted in less self-organization and independence, with children focusing on completing tasks rather than exploring and inquiring on their own.

Although all children, including those with special needs, were included in activities, they often depended on the educator's guidance for every part of the activity and did not organize themselves into groups or undertake tasks independently.

Educators' pedagogical skills in assessing children's achievements

This section examines educators' skills in observing children during activities, documenting these observations, and evaluating children's learning achievements.

Observing children during activities

The process of assessing children's learning achievements involves observing them to describe their reactions to various scenarios and interactions, identifying their progress and challenges in specific areas.

Research findings indicate that educators demonstrate a limited approach to observation, documentation, and assessment. They fail to focus on children's needs and interests, hindering the development of richer educational plans and programs.

Most educators do not conduct observations during children's activities. Only a small number of educators have practiced observing children's activities by taking notes or asking direct questions to learn more about children's experiences.

Documenting observations of children's activities and their learning achievement

In most cases, educators document children's activities with photographs and by recording children's names and dates on their work. However, this documentation primarily serves to show that an activity was conducted and to fulfill the pre-prepared plans, rather than to assess children's achievements or address their individual needs.

Some educators do not document activities at all, and the work displayed in classrooms often reflects predefined templates rather than individual children's achievements. Educators do not effectively use documentation to evaluate children's progress or plan work based on their needs and interests.

Educators' attitudes toward pedagogical skills and challenges in their practical implementation

The research results related to educators' attitudes toward pedagogical skills in performing their work, as well as the challenges they face in implementing these skills, are presented below.

Educators' attitudes regarding planning skills and implementation challenges

Educators' attitudes toward planning skills for working with children are divided into two categories: positive attitudes toward planning implementation and the challenges of work planning.

Educators express positive attitudes regarding the implementation of pedagogical skills in planning, emphasizing:

- Adapting the plan to the children's age and organizing inclusive activities.
- Creating plans that are creative, understandable, and appropriate for the group of children.
- Basing planning on monthly themes (e.g., seasons of the year, professions, etc.).
- Ensuring simple plans for activities that foster physical, emotional, and social development.

However, educators also face significant challenges in planning their work, including:

- Lack of work tools, equipment, and concrete materials, as well as logical toys, which can limit children's ability to learn and explore: "We lack tools and materials for working with children. Often, when we plan an activity, we buy the materials ourselves because the kindergarten does not provide them sufficiently" (E5).
- Difficulty preparing individual plans for children with special needs: "I haven't attended training for individual plans for children with special needs, and I don't have an assistant for the two children included in the group" (E2).
- Planning activities for a large number of children, which requires considerable time and effort to ensure each child has a rich and appropriate experience: "The large number of children in the group makes planning difficult because it takes a lot of time and effort to plan appropriately for the children" (E6).

Educators' attitudes toward pedagogical skills in work implementation – challenges

Educators' attitudes regarding the implementation of their work with children highlight both advantages and challenges in their professional practice.

Advantages:

- Preparation of the environment for working with children.
- Preparation of appropriate materials for activities.
- Inclusive participation of children in activities.
- Activities that foster development across all domains, including social, emotional, physical, communication and expression, and cognitive development.

Challenges in implementing work with children:

- Large class sizes that hinder effective individualized attention.
- Lack of didactic materials and spaces for conducting activities.
- Insufficient educators for children with special needs.
- Attendance of children when they are unwell or not in the right emotional state: "The poor health or sometimes even emotional state of a child needs to be addressed by the parent at home, as bringing the child to kindergarten in such conditions often causes issues in the group, both for the child and for others in the group. This happens frequently" (E5).
- Lack of spaces for storing recyclable materials: "We need a space to collect recyclable materials and natural items, where we can frequently bring such materials and use them from time to time in activities with children, for the entire kindergarten" (E1).

Educators' attitudes toward pedagogical skills in assessing children's learning achievements and challenges

Educators' attitudes regarding the assessment of children's learning achievements highlight both advantages and challenges:

Advantages in Assessment:

- Use of observation with checklists for specific activities: "We have a checklist where we note what children can and cannot achieve, but this happens at long intervals, usually at the end of the calendar year and the end of the school year" (E7).
- Descriptive assessment conducted in the first and second semesters to present children's achievements and gaps to parents.
- Challenges in Assessment:
- Focus on curriculum outcomes rather than individual needs: "I implement activities based on annual, monthly, weekly, and daily planning. This planning is based on achieving age-related indicators according to the Standards for Early Childhood Development and Learning" (E9).
- Lack of a clear assessment format: "I attended training on how to conduct observation and documentation, but they never provided a model or observation form. I am not professionally prepared to create my own observation formats" (E3).
- Communication challenges with parents and their expectations: "Parents often have high expectations for their children and sometimes disagree with the assessment I make" (E5).
- Lack of interaction with parents in the assessment process: "We have never sought interaction with parents in the assessment process" (E7).

- Need for professional guidance in observation, documentation, and assessment: "I need to practice observation, documentation, reflection, assessment, and re-planning in the presence and support of professionals to ensure I am doing the right thing" (E10).

Based on these results, educators express positive attitudes toward planning their work with children and appreciate the alignment of plans with children's needs and ages. However, challenges such as a lack of materials, large group sizes, and difficulties in creating individualized plans for children with special needs can hinder educators' ability to plan effectively.

The preparation of an appropriate environment and materials, as well as engaging children in comprehensive activities, are seen as strengths in implementing pedagogical skills. However, challenges like the lack of educators for children with special needs, insufficient collaboration with parents, limited alternative spaces for activities, and lack of materials remain significant obstacles.

Educators strive to assess children's achievements fairly and appropriately. Nevertheless, the absence of a clear and defined assessment system and the need for professional development in assessment practices—observation, documentation, evaluation, and planning—are notable challenges.

DISCUSSIONS

Regarding the research question on the pedagogical skills educators possess in planning their work with children, educators demonstrate limited skills in implementing planning practices based on observing and documenting children. They primarily follow general and pre-determined plans without adequately considering the actual needs and developmental stages of the children. A deeper, observation-focused approach is required to design richer and more effective pedagogical programs.

For the research question on the pedagogical skills educators possess in executing their work with children, educators display competence in preparing environments and materials for working with children. However, there is a need to adopt alternative approaches, such as encouraging the use of recyclable materials to foster creativity and making greater use of outdoor environments for activities.

While educators have shown broader and more engaged involvement of children in certain instances, there is a need for a more consistent approach that fosters children's independence and initiative. Strict instructions from educators often hinder opportunities for children to self-organize and develop autonomy during activities.

Regarding the research question on the pedagogical skills educators possess in assessing children's achievements, there is a significant need to enhance their skills in observation, documentation, and assessment processes. Educators need to better understand how to conduct effective observations and use documentation to evaluate individual children's progress comprehensively.

Improving these areas is essential for educators to develop their pedagogical skills and utilize their knowledge to create enriched and supportive learning environments for children.

Addressing the research question on educators' attitudes toward pedagogical skills and the challenges of their practical implementation, a clear depiction emerges of the current state and the obstacles educators face. Educators express positive attitudes toward planning their work but encounter challenges due to a lack of resources and the large number of children in each group.

Additionally, while educators demonstrate potential in organizing environments and providing appropriate materials, they emphasize the lack of storage spaces for recyclable materials that could enhance creativity and imagination. The absence of support or assistant educators for children with special needs also affects the ability of educators to fully exercise their pedagogical skills with the rest of the group.

Although educators exhibit a positive outlook toward assessing children's achievements, challenges such as the absence of a clear and defined assessment system and the lack of consistent assessment formats remain prevalent.

Overall, educators' attitudes toward implementing their pedagogical skills reflect a willingness and commitment to improvement. However, practical challenges and the lack of professional development opportunities and material resources are significant barriers to achieving this goal.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations for planning work with children

- Organize specialized training sessions for educators focused on methodologies for observing and documenting children's development.
- Encourage educators to create individualized plans that address the specific needs and current development of each child.
- Provide support for planning activities based on resources and tools that assist educators in developing detailed, observation-based plans.

Recommendations for realization of work with children

- Promote creative approaches among educators that encourage the use of recyclable and natural materials to foster creativity and incorporate outdoor environments into activities.
- Encourage educators to adopt strategies that promote children's independence and initiative, reducing strict instructions and creating opportunities for self-organization.
- Ensure that educators create enriched work environments filled with materials and activities that stimulate exploration and development.

Recommendations for assessing children's achievements

- Provide advanced training for educators on observation and documentation techniques, enabling them to use these tools effectively to evaluate individual achievements.
- Develop sustainable assessment formats—clear and defined frameworks for evaluating children's achievements that can be consistently applied.

Recommendations for addressing practical challenges in improving educators' pedagogical skills

- Enhance infrastructure by improving educational environments, ensuring adequate spaces for storing and using recyclable and other materials.
- Reduce the workload of educators by organizing smaller groups of children or increasing the number of educators and assistants, particularly for children with special needs, to improve the quality of education and individual attention.
- Promote continuous professional development for educators through ongoing training programs and lifelong learning opportunities.
- By implementing these recommendations, educators can enhance their pedagogical skills, provide a richer and more stimulating environment for children, and overcome practical challenges that affect the application of effective pedagogical practices. These recommendations may also inspire new research ideas in the field of educators' pedagogical skills, such as:

- The effectiveness of specialized training on observation and documentation methodologies in educators' practice.
- Encouraging children's independence.
- Developing sustainable assessment formats.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Androusou & Tssafos. (2018). Aspects of the professional identity of preschool teachers in Greece: investigating the role of teacher education and professional experience. <https://www.tandfonline.com>, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/13664530.2018.1438309>.
- Brain Building in Progres. (2020). Early Childhood Assessment. *Resources for early learning*, <http://resourcesforearlylearning.org/fm/early-childhood-assessment/>.
- Brightwheel. (2023). The Complete Guide to Preschool Lesson Plans. *Brightwheel blog*, <https://blog.mybrightwheel.com/preschool-lesson-plans>.
- CCTAN. (2012). What Is Program Implementation, and Why Is It Important? *Early Childhood Systems Building Resource Guide*, https://childcareta.acf.hhs.gov/systemsbuilding/systems-guides/design-and-implementation/program-design-and-implementation-overview/importance#_ftn2.
- Florida National University. (2021). Skills Every Preschool Teacher Should Have. *Florida National University*, <https://www.fnu.edu/skills-preschool-teacher-should-have/>.
- ICTE. (2023). WHY IS PLANNING IMPORTANT IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION? *ICTE solutions Australia*, <https://www.ictesolutions.com.au/blog/why-is-planning-important-in-early-childhood-education/>.
- IZHA. (2017). *Standardet Profesionale të formimit të përgjithshëm të mësuesit të Arsimit Parashkollor*. Tiranë: Instituti i Zhvillimit të Arsimit.
- Kile, N. C. (2018). I'm a Teacher, not a Babysitter!: Professionalism in Early Childhood. <https://www.continued.com>, <https://www.continued.com/early-childhood-education/articles/i-m-teacher-not-babysitter-22776>.
- Koliqi, H. (2022). *Fjalor Enciklopedik i Edukimit*. Prishtinë: Universiteti i Prishtinës, Fakulteti i Edukimit.
- MASHT. (2006). *Standardet e Përgjithshme të Edukimit dhe Arsimit Parashkollor 3-6 vjeç në Kosovë*. Prishtinë: UNMIK-MASHT.
- MASHTI. (2006). *KURRIKULA E EDUKIMIT PARASHKOLLOR NË KOSOVË 3-6vjeç*. Prishtinë: MASHTI.
- MASHTI. (2016). *Korniza Kurrikulare e Arsimit Parauniversitar të Republikës së Kosovës*. Prishtinë: <https://masht.rks-gov.net/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/korniza-kurrikulare-finale.pdf>.
- MASHTI. (2016). *Kurrikula bërthamë për klasën përgatitore dhe arsimin fillor të Kosovës*. Prishtinë: <https://masht.rks-gov.net/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/kurrikula-berthame-1-finale-2.pdf>.
- MASHTI. (2021). *Udhëzimi Administrativ për normativin mbi kuadrin profesional të arsimit të përgjithshëm*. Prishtinë: https://masht.rks-gov.net/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/udhzimi-administrativ-nr-05-per-normativin-mbi-kuadrin-profesional-te-arsimit-te-pergjithsem-rotated_1.pdf. Gjetur në [udhzimi-administrativ-nr-05-per-normativin-mbi-kuadrin-profesional-te-ars](https://masht.rks-gov.net/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/udhzimi-administrativ-nr-05-per-normativin-mbi-kuadrin-profesional-te-ars).

- Practical Outcomes. (2016). *Top skills and qualities needed to become a great educator*. <https://practicaloutcomes.edu.au/top-skills-and-qualities-successful-educator/>.
- Procare solutions. (2021). *Preschool Assessment: What to Expect*. Concord CA: <https://www.procaresoftware.com/resources/preschool-assessment-what-to-expect/#:~:text=What%20is%20a%20Preschool%20Assessment,the%20child's%20state%20of%20development>.
- Shadrikov, V. D. (2013). *Personaliteti i nje mësuesi parashkollor. Cilësitë profesionale të një mësuesi kopshti*. www.personality-of-a-teacher-of-a-preschool-institution-professional-qualities/.
- The national academies sciences engineering medicine. (2023). *Child Development and Early Learning*. <https://nap.nationalacademies.org/>, <https://nap.nationalacademies.org/resource/19401/ProfKnowCompFINAL.pdf>.
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes*. Harvard University Press.