

**THE ACTIVITY OF THE MINISTRY OF PRESCHOOL EDUCATION OF
UZBEKISTAN**

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The Ministry of Preschool Education of Uzbekistan (Maktabgacha Ta'lim Vazirligi) plays a crucial role in shaping the early educational landscape of the country. Established in 2017, the ministry's core mission is to provide high-quality preschool education for children aged 3 to 7 years, ensuring a strong foundation for lifelong learning. This article delves into the ministry's activities, achievements, and ongoing reforms to improve the early childhood education system in Uzbekistan.

Historical Context and Establishment

Before the creation of the Ministry of Preschool Education in 2017, the preschool education system in Uzbekistan was under the responsibility of the Ministry of Public Education. However, with growing recognition of the importance of early childhood development, the government decided to elevate the focus on preschool education by establishing a separate ministry. This decision marked a new era for the country's education sector, aiming to meet international standards in early education and address the growing demands of modern society.

Key Responsibilities and Functions

The Ministry of Preschool Education oversees the entire framework of early childhood education in Uzbekistan, focusing on a wide range of functions:

- Curriculum Development:** One of the main responsibilities of the ministry is the creation and regulation of the national preschool curriculum. This curriculum incorporates a balanced approach, ensuring that children develop cognitive, emotional, social, and physical skills. The emphasis is on play-based learning, which aligns with global best practices in early childhood education.
- Teacher Training and Professional Development:** The ministry works to improve the qualifications of preschool educators by organizing regular training programs and certification courses. This is vital for ensuring that teachers are equipped with the necessary pedagogical skills and knowledge to foster a positive learning environment for young children.
- Infrastructure Development:** Expanding and modernizing preschool institutions is another priority. The ministry is committed to improving the accessibility and quality of preschool facilities across the country. This includes building new kindergartens and upgrading existing ones to ensure that children have access to safe, stimulating, and well-equipped learning environments.
- Public Awareness and Advocacy:** The Ministry of Preschool Education also focuses on raising awareness among parents and communities about the importance of early childhood education. It advocates for greater parental involvement in the learning process and aims to ensure that all children, including those in rural or disadvantaged areas, have equal access to quality preschool education.

5. **Inclusive Education:** A key goal of the ministry is to promote inclusivity by ensuring that children with special needs also receive the support they need. The ministry collaborates with healthcare professionals and special education experts to develop programs that cater to the diverse needs of young learners.

Reforms and Achievements

Since its establishment, the Ministry of Preschool Education has introduced several reforms aimed at modernizing the sector. These include:

- **Expansion of Preschool Enrollment:** There has been a significant increase in the number of children attending preschool. As of recent years, over 80% of children between the ages of 3 and 7 are enrolled in preschool institutions, with efforts underway to further increase this rate, particularly in rural areas.
- **Quality Assurance:** The ministry has implemented regular monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to ensure that preschool institutions meet established quality standards. This includes evaluating teaching practices, learning outcomes, and the adequacy of resources available in preschools.
- **Innovative Pedagogical Approaches:** The Ministry of Preschool Education has incorporated modern teaching methods, such as Montessori and Reggio Emilia, into the curriculum. These approaches focus on child-centered learning, allowing children to explore and learn through hands-on activities.
- **International Collaboration:** The ministry has actively sought partnerships with international organizations such as UNICEF, UNESCO, and various European education agencies to bring global best practices to Uzbekistan's preschool education system. These collaborations have contributed to the modernization of curriculum and teaching methodologies.

Challenges and Future Directions

Despite the significant progress made, there are still challenges to address. These include:

1. **Regional Disparities:** While urban areas generally have better access to quality preschool education, rural areas often face shortages of qualified teachers, infrastructure, and resources.
2. **Sustainability of Reforms:** Ensuring that the reforms introduced by the Ministry of Preschool Education are sustainable in the long term requires continuous investment, both financially and in terms of human resources.
3. **Public Awareness:** Despite efforts to raise awareness, there is still a need to further educate parents and communities about the importance of early childhood education and its impact on a child's future success.

Conclusion

The Ministry of Preschool Education of Uzbekistan has made remarkable strides in transforming the early childhood education system in the country. Through its comprehensive reforms and initiatives, it has enhanced the accessibility and quality of preschool education, laying a strong foundation for future generations. However, the continued success of these efforts will depend

on addressing remaining challenges and ensuring that all children, regardless of their background, have access to a high-quality early education experience.

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