

## Communication Through Dialogue Between Preschool Children with Leadership Skills

Ulzharkyn M. Abdigapbarova<sup>a</sup>, Kamarsulu E. Ibrayeva<sup>a</sup>,  
Aigerim M. Baikulova<sup>a</sup>, Magripa K. Ibrayeva<sup>a</sup>,  
Laura I. Shalabayeva<sup>a</sup>, and Turarkhan N. Zhundybayeva<sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup>Abai Kazakh National Pedagogical University, Almaty, KAZAKHSTAN.

### ABSTRACT

This article discusses the issues of the dialogue among preschool children with leadership skills. An important quality of a leader is sociability, i.e. the ability to quickly establish contacts with other children and feel confident in a team. As shown by the results of the study, self-motivated children with leadership skills are able to attract other children with their ideas and thoughts. Children, who have organizational skills, easily find their way around any game situation and are able to quickly make the right decision. Leadership skills of preschoolers include such qualities as honesty, fairness and consistency, ability to direct the attention of others, and to come up with new solutions in gaming activity, self-confidence, courage and determination, the ability to quickly establish contact with other children, activity, sociability etc. The development of leadership skills is more favorable in childhood, as children can master them without pressure and having to overcome themselves. The parent's and teacher's main purpose should be to develop a child's sense of self-efficacy: "I want to!", "I succeed!", "I can!". The means of leadership development include sport and intellectual competitive games, requiring the child's agility, precision, speed, or memory rate, accuracy, and information reproduction speed.

### KEYWORDS

Leader; leadership; activity; family education; early children development; pre-school education; communication; dialogue

### ARTICLE HISTORY

Received 8 November 2015  
Revised 17 January 2016  
Accepted 5 February 2016

## Introduction

### *Urgency of the problem*

In an emerging market society, success depends largely on the ability to work in a competitive environment: to respond quickly to changes, analyze the information and predict the future course of events based on it, to make appropriate decisions and act according to them. Therefore, the development of

**CORRESPONDENCE** Kamarsulu E. Ibrayeva ✉ kamar.sulu@mail.ru

© 2016 Abdigapbarova et al. Open Access terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>) apply. The license permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, on the condition that users give exact credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons license, and indicate if they made any changes.

social activity, determination, endurance and stamina should begin as early as preschool age, with special attention paid to the child's self-confidence (Yemelyanova, 2009).

This is why modern pedagogical practice should be based on learner-oriented education, from the point of which the child is regarded as the subject of pedagogical process, where the most attention is paid to creating optimum conditions for the intellectual, social and emotional development of a growing personality. Studying the mechanisms of child's activity demonstration and the process of leadership potential development of children is of paramount importance for finding effective ways and means of contributing to the formation of the individual's activity and its fulfillment in the present and future environment (Bellon, Ngware & Admassu, 2016).

### ***Leadership: analysis of the scientific pedagogical discourse***

Leadership as a phenomenon is a complex educational problem, initially considered by the pedagogical science in groups of children as a group process (Zhuravlev, 2006). One of the first to study the issue of leadership was A. Makarenko (1990), whose ideas influenced the development of the most important concepts of group and individual education (Ailwood, Boyd & Theobald, 2016), teaching staff development (Druzhinin, 2003), problems with identifying leaders in the team (Shalaginova, 2007), the formation of organizational skills (Umansky, 2004). Leadership in the works of pedagogy scientists is considered to be "the ability to influence individuals, groups and direct their efforts to achieve the objectives of a team" (Evtikhiev, 2007), as well as "a type of talent, caused by an increased ability to focus, understand and accept other people", while leadership talent is understood as "the possession of any value that is important to society, an exceptional ability to establish constructive relations" (Bityanova, 2001).

Thus, the scientists' understanding of the concept "leadership" allows us to state, that the majority of scientists consider its essence as the organizing and motivating "influence" on the group or the decision of a particular member of the group (Adifanov, 1991). It distributes within a team. (Hogan & Kaiser, 2005). Leadership goals, as a rule, are presented in a general form: high performance, high efficiency, group goals achievement. In the context of our research, in the analysis of this phenomenon, we are of the opinion, that leadership is an important element of interpersonal, intergroup communication, and a social phenomenon, which allows solving problems with performance more efficiently (Solovieva, 2011). The term "leadership" in the context of our research will be understood as a specific type of interpersonal relationships, in which leadership is used as a tool (Valli, Stefanski & Lacobson, 2016).

### ***Developing leadership skills in the preschool age: problem statement***

One of the means of leadership qualities formation in the preschool years is training and communication. The knowledge of nature, society and self makes a human being free. Moreover, knowledge makes a person strong, confident in their abilities, able to change the outside world according to their needs. Only people who have sufficient knowledge, can ensure the development of social production based on science, and thus to be active leaders.

All the factors of personality development and leadership qualities are in a certain interdependence (Francis et al., 2015). Their impact, sometimes conflicting, make up the external and internal conditions of formation and development of a human being. Leadership skills training problem in preschool children is also topical due to the fact, that during this period the formation of personality takes place. On how easily a child will be able to communicate with the people around him, to establish contact, how good his leadership qualities will be developed, depends their further studying, professional activities, their destiny and place in life (Rittschof & Fortunato, 2015). The preschool age is just the time to learn the rules and norms of communication, which a child will follow, always and everywhere, regardless of the circumstances. While the nature of oral and evocative communication will define the measure and the degree of freedom of children among other people in the course of their life.

### **Materials and Methods**

The following basic research methods were used: system analysis, synthesis, generalization, theoretical analysis of philosophical, pedagogical, psychological, scientific, methodical and technical literature on the research problem.

The purpose of the research is to examine the issues of dialogue between preschool children with leadership skills.

### **Results**

The development of characteristics of communication with peers (preschool children, classmates, high school students) in preschool and school games an important role in the development of social activities and communication. At an early age, children start expressing a keen interest in one another: they look upon each other, exchange toys, tend to show each other their achievements and even try to compete. Competitiveness in achievements (the ability to play the ball, learning to carry out some actions with the object, cycling, etc.) determines the motivation to achieve goals that sets the successful implementation of the desire for recognition. However, the child's reflection on his/her own achievements and achievements of the others is being formed. A three-year-old child has a sufficient degree of mental development to be successful or be suitable enough in social situations of communication; he/she can control his/her emotions and will.

Communication is the basis of interpersonal relationships, which are the most preferred type of communication among children. Communication with peers is a very important specific information channel.

In the process of communication directed and undirected personal mutual influence is carried out, which can be both positive and negative, both verbal and non-verbal and can be implemented by means of suggestion, persuasion, inspiration and emulation. These conditions are the prerequisites for the formation of close or similar mental states.

In cooperation with other people in a new kind of activity a person relies on more or less generalized own experience and people's cognitive experience and behavior accumulated in other conditions rather than in a given kind of activity (Kontsova, 2007).

Communication of a child, who started to go to kindergarten, is based on the vision of people, which was formed in his family and in the nursery. The

same applies to non-verbal experience of cooperation. In the preschool period, non-verbal behavior is natural and well-understood for both counterparts and adults. Preschooler's opinion on other people is rather unstable and largely depends on the situation. In the childhood, the image and actions of the nursery teacher and relations between children are of great importance in the development of the child's opinion on surrounding people.

Features of the child's communication with his/her peers are generally expressed not under control of the teacher. Information on such communication between the teacher and preschool children can be received by observing the children in the group room or on the playground.

A characterizing feature of preschool children communication with counterparts differs considerably from communication with adults (i.e. family education). Contacts with peers are deeply emotional and accompanied by sharp intonations, shouts, aping, and laughter. In contacts with other children there are no strict rules and norms of behavior, that must be followed in communication with adults. In conversations with the elders, the child uses familiar statements and methods of behavior. In communication with peers children are more at ease, they pronounce unexpected words, make fun of each other, expressing creativity and imagination.

During the preschool period, communication of children with each other undergoes considerable changes in all parameters: the content of needs, motives, and methods of communication. These changes can occur smoothly, gradually, however, some qualitative changes (so-called turning points) can be observed. Two such turning points can be observed at the age of 2-7: the first occurs, when the child is approximately 4 years old, the second – at the age of six.

External manifestations of the first turning point mean a sharp increase in the importance of other children in the child's life. If during 1-2 years of the child's life the need for communication with peers is not of great importance (at the age of 2-3 it is much more important for the child to communicate with adults and play with toys), then for four-year-old children this need becomes more necessary. They prefer playing with other children rather than spending time with adults or playing alone.

The second turning point has less expressed external signs; however, it is very important. It is connected with the beginning of selective affections, friendship and the beginning of more stable and deep relationships between the children.

These turning points can be considered as the time limits of three stages in the development of communication between children. These stages, similarly to the sphere of communication with adults, were defined as forms of communication of preschool children with peers.

By the age of two the first form of communication with peers appears – emotional and practical form. A new need to communicate with peers takes the fourth place after the need for vigorous activity, communication with adults and need for new impressions. Its main point is about the fact that children expect the participation of peers in their pranks and games, as children want to express themselves. Communication includes running, cheerful shouts, funny motions; it is characterized by looseness and spontaneity.

Children like the process of team actions: the construction of buildings, running away and so on. In fact, for the child the process is the purpose of

activity and its results are not important. The self-determination of the child is a central motive of such communication. Although the child tries to imitate peers, and children's interest in each other increases, the image of a peer for child is very vague due to the fact that their group actions are superficial.

Communication with peers consists of separate episodes. Children can play alone for a very long time. While for coming into contact they use all actions, which they get from the communication with adults – gestures, posture, facial expressions. Emotions of children are very deep and intensive. Subject-effective operations are an essential part of the process when a child comes into contact with peers. At the age of four, the speech becomes increasingly important in communication. At the age of 4-6, preschool children are characterized by the situation-activity form of communication with peers. At the age of four, the need to communicate with peers takes one of the first places. These changes are connected with rapid development of socio-dramatic games and other activities, acquiring a group character. Preschool children seek to establish business cooperation, coordinate their actions to achieve the activity goal, which is the main content of the need for communication.

The desire to work in a team is so strong that children are ready to make compromises – they exchange toys, concede the most interesting role in game, etc.

The children have a clear tendency to the competition, rivalry, uncompromising in assessing peers. At the age of five children are always concerned with the progress of peers, demand recognition of their own achievements, pay attention to failures of other children and try to conceal their own failures. Preschool children try to draw attention to themselves. A child does not notice hobbies, desires of the peers; he/she does not realize the motives of their acts. At the same time, a child has a keen interest in everything that the peers do.

Therefore, the essence of the need for communication is in the desire for recognition and respect. Contacts are characterized by deep emotionality. Children use the variety of communication means and, despite the fact that they talk a lot; their speech remains situational as before.

Communication in its non-situational form is quite rare and can be observed among insignificant number of children at the age of 6-7, but among the senior preschool children there is a clear tendency to its development. Complication of the game activity forces children to agree and plan their activities in advance. The main need for communication is the desire to interact with peers. In this case, communication is not situational. The leading motive of communication changes. A stable image of the peer is formed. As a result, there is affection, friendship. It helps to form a personal attitude to other children – the ability to treat them as equal persons taking into account their interests, as well as the readiness to help. A child gets interested in the personality of his/her peers that is not connected with their real actions. Children's conversations are informative and personally oriented, even though talking about studies is a leading issue. The main means of communication is speech.

Characterizing features of communication with peers are brightly expressed in the topic of conversation. What preschool children talk about is what they appreciate in the peers and this is the way children assert themselves before them. Statements towards the peer, in one way or another are connected with

the self-conception of a child. Younger preschool children's talk is, first of all, about what they see or what they have. They try to share their impressions, draw attention of peers by means of things they have. Similar topics take a special place in communication between younger preschool children and remain throughout the preschool age.

Average preschool children often show peers what they learned to do and how they can do it. Children of 5-7 years old talk a lot about themselves, about what they like or do not like. They tell peers about their knowledge, plans for the future ("who I will be when I grow up").

Despite many contacts, the peers have conflicts throughout the entire childhood. Let us analyze their specific reasons.

In infancy and early childhood the most common reason of conflicts with peers is when a child treats another child as an inanimate object. A child cannot play near another child even if there are a lot of toys. Toys for a baby are more attractive than peers. They overshadow a partner and slow down the development of positive relationships. For a preschool child it is especially important to show themselves and do something better than his/her friend. A child needs to be in the center of attention and feel that he/she is the best. A baby has to confirm his/her uniqueness among children. A child compares him/herself with peers. But the comparison is very judgmental, only in his/her favor. Children compare themselves with peers not paying attention to their personality. The interests of peers are often ignored. The baby pays attention to other children when they disturb him/her. Then the peer immediately receives strict assessment and the appropriate characteristic. The child expects the peer's approval and praise, but since he/she does not understand that the other children demand the same, it is difficult for the child to praise or approve the peer. In addition, preschool children poorly understand the reasons of acts of the others. They do not realize that the peer is also a personality with his/her own interests and needs.

By the age of 5-6 the number of the conflicts decreases. For the child it is more important to play together than to assert him/herself before peers. Children often talk about themselves from a "we" position. A child realizes that the peers can have other activities and games, even if preschoolers continue arguing as before and sometimes even fighting.

The contribution of each type of communication to mental development is different. Early contacts with peers during the first year of life serve as one of the essential sources for development of methods and motives of cognitive functioning. Other children act as a source of imitation, common activity, more sensations, and bright positive emotional disturbances. When communication with adults is insufficient, communication with peers performs a compensatory function.

## Discussion

One of the key leadership skills of preschool children is self-confidence, which shows itself together with courage and determination. Confidence in their own abilities allows children to expand their limits and gain new experiences (Tikhomirova, 2003). Activity, as a necessary leadership quality, lets preschool children always be in the center of the action game, learn better and be more informed. An important quality of a leader is sociability, i.e. the ability to

quickly establish contacts with other children and feel confident in a team. As shown by the results of the study, self-motivated children with leadership skills are able to attract other children with their ideas and thoughts. Children, who have organizational skills, easily find their way around any game situation and are able to quickly make the right decision. Leadership skills of preschoolers include such qualities as honesty, fairness and consistency, ability to direct the attention of others, and to come up with new solutions in gaming activity, self-confidence, courage and determination, the ability to quickly establish contact with other children, activity, sociability etc. (Fox, Flynn & Austin, 2015).

The development of leadership skills is more favorable in childhood, as children can master them without pressure and having to overcome themselves. The parents' and teachers' main purpose should be to praise child's independence and self-motivation, without harming the child. One must have the ability to adequately praise both the child with high and low self-esteem: the child's personality, seems to be growing in success, while failure makes them turn into themselves and shut off. The main purpose should be the development of child's sense of self-efficacy: "I want to!", "I succeed!", "I can!" (Ferland et al, 2014).

Scientists distinguish the following psycho-pedagogical conditions of development of leadership skills in preschool children (Gentles-Gibbs, 2016):

1. Formation of leadership qualities is only possible through communication and activities which involve child's activity;
2. It is necessary to create a situation in which children can experience a certain mental state (success, confidence in themselves and their decision), and then to strengthen this state and make it child's sustainable personality trait.

The means of leadership development include sport and intellectual competitive games, requiring the child's agility, precision, speed, or memory rate, accuracy, and information reproduction speed. (Bekmagambetova, Alimbekova & Demeyova, 2014).

## Conclusion

The emotional and practical form of communication encourages children to show initiative, exerts influence on expanding he emotional experience. A situation-activity form of communication provides favorable conditions for personal development, self-awareness, curiosity, confidence, cheerfulness, creativity, while a non-situation-activity form creates the ability to treat a peer as the significant personality, understand his/her thoughts and feelings. At the same time, it gives a child an opportunity to concretize the self-conception.

## Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

## Notes on contributors

**Ulzharkyn M. Abdigapbarova:** Doctor of Pedagogy, Professor of Department of Pedagogy and Psychology at Abai Kazakh National Pedagogical University; Almaty, Kazakhstan

**Kamarsulu E. Ibrayeva:** PhD, Associate Professor of Department of Pedagogy and Psychology, Abai Kazakh National Pedagogical University, Almaty, Kazakhstan

**Aigerim M. Baikulova:** PhD student, Department of Pedagogy and Psychology, Abai Kazakh National Pedagogical University, Almaty, Kazakhstan

**Magripa K. Ibrayeva:** PhD student, Department of Pedagogy and Psychology, Abai Kazakh National Pedagogical University; Almaty, Kazakhstan

**Laura I. Shalabayeva:** PhD student, Department of Pedagogy and Psychology, Abai Kazakh National Pedagogical University, Almaty, Kazakhstan

**Turarkhan N. Zhundybayeva:** PhD; Associate Professor of Department of Pedagogy and Psychology at Abai Kazakh National Pedagogical University, Almaty, Kazakhstan

## References

- Adifanov, S. (1991) The main directions of leadership analysis. *Psychology Issues*, 3, 90-98.
- Ailwood, J., Boyd, W. & Theobald, M. (2016) Understanding Early Childhood Education and Care. Sydney: Allen & Unwin. 375p.
- Bekmagambetova, R., Alimbekova, A. & Demeyova, L. (2014) Chaos, Complexity and Leadership. Switzerland: Springer International Publishing. 233p.
- Bellon, E., Ngware, M. & Admassu, K. (2016) The Role of Parental Leadership in Academic Performance. Direct access <http://eus.sagepub.com/content/early/2016/03/10/0013124516630604.abstract>
- Bityanova, M. (2001) Social psychology: science, practice and thinking. Moscow: EKSMO-Press Publishing. 322p.
- Druzhinin, V. (2003) Psychology of the XXI century. Moscow: PER SE. 205p.
- Evtikhiev, O. (2007) Strategies and techniques of leadership: theory and practice. St. Petersburg: Rech. 243p.
- Ferland, A., Chu, Y., Gleddie, D. & Veugelers, P. (2014) Leadership skills are associated with health behaviours among Canadian children. *Health Promotion International*, 30(1), 76-88.
- Fox, D., Flynn, L. & Austin, P. (2015) Child Leadership: Teachers' Perceptions and Influences. *Childhood Education*, 91(3), 163-168.
- Francis, G., Blue-Banning, M., Haines, S. & Gross, J. (2016) School culture in inclusive schools: Parental perspectives on trusting family partnerships. *Education and Training for Autism and Developmental Disabilities*.
- Gentles-Gibbs, N. (2016) Leadership Development. *Families in society: the journal of contemporary human services*, 97(2), 95-101.
- Hogan, R. & Kaiser, R. (2005) What we know about leadership. *Review of General Psychology*, 2, 169-180.
- Kontsova, O. (2007) The problem of communicative abilities formation in 4-5 year old children in gaming activity. *Humanization of education*, 4, 137-141.
- Makarenko, A. (1990) On education. Moscow: Political Literature Publishing House. 452p.
- Rittschof, K. & Fortunato, V. (2015). The Influence of Transformational Leadership and Job Burnout on Child Protective Services Case Managers' Commitment and Intent to Quit. *Journal of Social Service Research*, 42(3), 1-14.
- Shalaginova, L. (2007) Leadership Psychology. St. Petersburg: Rech. 311p.
- Solovieva, O. (2011) Leadership Psychology: Manual. Stavropol: SSU. 244p.
- Tikhomirova, E. (2003) Education of a leader. *Education for pupils*, 4, 59-67.
- Umansky, A. (2004) *Pedagogical support of children's leadership* (Doctoral dissertation). Kostroma. 211p.
- Valli, L., Stefanski, A. & Lacobson, R. (2016) School-community partnership models: implications for leadership. *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, 1, 44-53.
- Yemelyanova, M. (2009) Teachers' thoughts on the development of leadership potential of preschool children. *Children's educational institutions management*, 7, 112-123.