

## THE FOREIGN EXPERIENCE OF PROFESSIONAL TRAINING OF FUTURE EDUCATORS OF CHILDREN OF EARLY AGE

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*Modern challenges in the modernization of preschool education place high demands to the professional training of future educators of children of early age. In order to identify the common and special in the tendencies of training future educators of children of early age, to assess the possibilities of mutual enrichment of the national systems of foreign countries and Ukraine, the author has revealed the strategies and approaches to their training in the USA, Australia, Germany, Italy, Czech Republic, France, Slovenia, Denmark, Poland. The attention to the foreign experience of training preschool education specialists has been caused by the fact that in most countries of the world there has been a significant body of research on this issue. In the process of theoretical analysis of the researches on the experience of training future educators in different countries of the world, the author has found that most universities implement modules that are fundamental in the following areas: physical development and physical activity of children, health care; communication and society; environment; religion, jurisprudence, ethics, etc. The analysis of foreign systems of training future educators of children of early age has made it possible to identify a number of fundamental approaches on which most countries are based: integrative; connection of theoretical and practical activities of students with the real situation in preschool education; multifunctionality and dynamism of the educational process; usage of various forms and methods of pedagogical influence. We are convinced that the implementation of modern experience of foreign countries in training of future educators will make it possible to overcome a number of negative tendencies in the practice of working with children of early age in the Ukrainian system of preschool education, and the productive usage of positive foreign experience is possible only if Ukrainian socio-economic realities, cultural and educational traditions of the country have been taken into account.*

**Keywords:** future educators of children of early age; professional training; foreign experience; preschool education; children of early age.

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## ЗАРУБІЖНИЙ ДОСВІД ПРОФЕСІЙНОЇ ПІДГОТОВКИ МАЙБУТНІХ ВИХОВАТЕЛІВ ДІТЕЙ РАНЬОГО ВІКУ

*Сучасні виклики, що супроводять модернізацію дошкільної освіти ставлять високі вимоги до професійної підготовки майбутніх вихователів дітей раннього віку. З метою виявлення загального й особливого в тенденціях цього процесу, оцінки можливостей взаємозбагачення національних систем закордонних країн та України, автором розкрито стратегії, підходи у їхній підготовці у США, Австралії, Німеччині, Італії, Чеській Республіці, Франції, Словенії, Данії, Польщі. Привернення уваги до зарубіжного досвіду підготовки фахівців дошкільної освіти зумовлено тим, що в більшості країн*

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*світу вже напрацьований вагомий пласт досліджень з цього питання. У процесі теоретичного аналізу досліджень досвіду підготовки майбутніх вихователів у різних країнах світу автором з'ясовано, що більшість університетів упроваджують модулі, які є засадничими, за такими напрямками: фізичний розвиток і рухова активність дітей, здоров'язбереження; комунікація і суспільство; довкілля; релігія, правознавство, етика тощо. Здійснений аналіз закордонних систем підготовки майбутніх вихователів дітей раннього віку уможливив визначення низки засадничих підходів, на яких ґрунтується більшість країн: інтегративності; зв'язок теоретичної та практичної діяльності здобувачів освіти з реальним станом у дошкільній освіті; поліфункціональності та динамічності освітнього процесу; використання різноманітних форм і методів педагогічного впливу. Переконані, що імплементація модерного досвіду закордонних країн щодо підготовки майбутніх вихователів уможливить подолання низки негативних тенденцій у практиці роботи з дітьми раннього віку в українській системі дошкільної освіти, а продуктивність використання позитивного закордонного досвіду є можливою лише за умов врахування українських соціально-економічних реалій, культурних і освітніх традицій.*

**Ключові слова:** майбутні вихователі дітей раннього віку; професійна підготовка; зарубіжний досвід; дошкільна освіта; діти раннього віку.

**Statement of the problem.** Modern challenges accompanying the modernization of preschool education place high demands to the professional training of future educators of children of early age. Drawing attention to the foreign experience of training specialists in preschool education has been caused by the fact that in most countries of the world a significant body of research on this issue has been developed. We have no doubt that generalizing and adapting the best experience to the realities of Ukrainian education will help to avoid mistakes, and the introduction of innovative strategies and technologies will help to solve a number of problems related to both the professional training of future educators and the problems of education, upbringing and development of children of early age.

**Analysis of recent research and publications.** The foreign experience of professional training of teachers has been presented in the works of N. Avsheniuk, T. Andrushchenko, L. Dyachenko, K. Kovtun, L. Lukianova, N. Melnyk, O. Mkrtychyan, N. Nychkalo, S. Sysoieva, O. Sulyma, Z. Halo, L. Khomych, and others. It should be noted that despite the existing researches on the foreign experience of training future educators, insufficient attention has been paid to the specifics of training these specialists to work with children of early age. The urgency of this problem indicates the need to study the best foreign models of professional training of future educators of children of early age and implement them in the practice of national higher educational institutions.

**The purpose of the article** is to present the foreign experience of professional training of future educators of children of early age.

**Presentation of the main material.** The study of the experience of professional teacher training in developed foreign countries, according to scholars, has opened up new opportunities for improving the system of continuing pedagogical education in Ukraine in terms of its adaptation to the requirements of the European educational space. That is why the progressive achievements of countries that demonstrate a high level of professional training of teachers in accordance with international standards; have rich historical traditions of education, which contributes to their leading role in science and

education at the regional and global levels; have accumulated significant experience in the field of professional training of teachers in new socio-cultural conditions have become of great scientific interest [2, 4].

The United States was one of the first countries in the world to recognize the need to improve the quality and effectiveness of pedagogical education. That is why we have found the experience of this country very interesting, where the Center for Career Development in Early Care and Education, which includes the Association for Childhood Education International (ACEI), the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), and the Office of Head Start (OHS), has been established to present the system of training future educators in the United States. One among the many functions of these institutions is the development of professional competency standards for educators (Center for Career Development in Early Care and Education).

The standard for training educators of preschool education in the United States has been developed with the support of the National Association for the Education of Young Children. There are two areas of a teacher's activity: caregiver – an educator who provides supervision and care services for children and teacher – an educator who is able to organize the educational process in an educational institution. Future educator training programs in the United States, which have been approved in different states, prepare students in the following areas: early childhood educators, family or professional support specialists (these can be early childhood administrators), program mentors, etc.

At the same time, in the United States, the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) trains future educators in the development and education of young children from birth to eight years. Students are provided with in-depth knowledge in at least two of the three periods of early childhood education (infants / toddlers; preschool and elementary school); understanding of inclusive early childhood institutions, including those that accept children with special educational needs. The content of the variable part of the teacher educational programs in each state may

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vary. The basis for the training of future educators in the United States is the following disciplines: educational psychology; early childhood diagnosis; child development assessment; early social and emotional development; early childhood science, etc. For our research, the formation of skills in creating an environment in groups of young children is valuable in the experience of training future educators.

In Australia, pre-school education has been a feminized and therefore marginalized profession. The provision of quality early childhood education and care (ECEC) supports children's learning, fully agreeing that early childhood teachers (ECTs) play a central role in quality assurance. However, Australian ECT employers report that tertiary graduates are not always well prepared to work in ECEC settings. This may be due to the fact that it is not clear what constitutes optimal EC ITE programs. To study the design of EC ITE programs, the research of W. Boyd, L. Mahony, J. Warren, S. Wong [8] reports on the design of EC ITE programs in the international context and the views of 19 Australian ECT employers on the development of EC ITE programs. The conclusions of the study have pointed to a lack of consensus on the development of EC ITE programs with inconsistencies between and within countries. Australian employers have identified gaps in graduates' knowledge. This research highlights recommendations to understand how programs prepare ECTs by conducting studies that track teachers working in preparatory courses from EC ITE programs to teaching ECEC.

It should be noted that the Australian government has supported early childhood educators in developing their skills and qualifications. To ensure that early childhood education and care services can develop high quality programs that support a child's learning, they need qualified staff. Staff need a range of skills to enable children to try new things, play games, ask questions, pay attention, and interact well with caregivers and other children. Early childhood education services include extended day care, preschool educational institutions, kindergarten, and after-school care. Early childhood educators must have an approved bachelor's degree or equivalent qualification in early childhood education.

Australian state, territory, and local governments have supported educators of children of early age to develop their skills and qualifications through the National Quality Framework (NQF), which aims to improve the quality of early childhood education and care services and to help services continue to improve in what they do. Some states and territories in Australia have also developed their own early childhood workforce strategies.

The European system of training future educators has certain differences and peculiarities compared to the United States, Australia, and other countries. It is worth noting that within the EU, training systems vary. They have both national and cultural peculiarities and

their own training experience. It is worth noting that 29 European education systems require a bachelor's degree for teachers working in the early childhood education system (ISCED 02), and four countries (France, Italy, Portugal and Iceland) require a master's degree. Only eight European educational systems (Austria, Czech Republic, Ireland, Malta, Latvia, Romania, Slovakia and Scotland) have a lower minimum qualification level, and in the Czech Republic and Slovakia it is the lowest at ISCED 3 (European Commission, 2020). In the United States, a bachelor's degree in early childhood education is also the minimum requirement for obtaining a license / certificate to work in both early childhood educational institutions and public schools in most states.

For example, in the Federal Republic of Germany, future educators of preschool education and care – *Erzieherinnen* and *Erzieher* – receive education in *Fachschulen* for youth, which, according to Z. Halo, are internationally recognized as the highest level [6]. The full period of training for future educators – *pädagogische Fachkräfte* – is from four to five years [5]. According to O. Sulyma, for future educators in preschool education and care, a prerequisite for admission to study is the *Mittlerer Schulabschluss*. The author has noted that an appropriate qualification is also being required, which will take at least two years to obtain, or two years of work experience in the profession.

In Germany, tutors do not have the status of teachers and are therefore deprived of a number of benefits provided by law. For educators in managerial positions, a three-year course of study at a university and one year of practical training or a four-year course of study with two integrated semesters of work experience are provided. According to T. Andrushchenko, academically trained teaching staff – *Kindheitspädagogen* – should work with children, for whom various bachelor's degree courses have been created [1].

It has to be noted that in the context of decentralization of the educational situation in the regions of Germany, the educational systems also differ significantly. Thus, in some states of this country, the training of additional staff, especially nursery assistants (*Kinderpflegerinnen* und *Kinderpfleger*), is carried out together with pedagogical staff (*pädagogische Fachkräfte*). However, in most states, the training of educators of children of early age involves attending two-year training courses at *Berufsfachschulen* in full-time vocational schools [1]. In the context of our research, this is an interesting fact that requires a deeper study.

In the Czech Republic, the preschool education has undergone significant changes over the past three decades, and one of the issues that has led to the biggest changes is the awarding of degrees for the training of preschool educators [10]. A research conducted in the period from 2020 to 2022 by B. Loudovd Stralczynskd, Eva KoZeluhovd has shown that although there is a

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national minimum qualification for secondary professions, third-level qualifications are much more common among those who have recently completed a degree in preschool education. There is no national minimum qualification requirement at the education level for an early childhood educator, as the current minimum is still a higher vocational educational institution with a focus on preschool education [12].

The bachelor's degree in preschool education is currently offered by ten universities in the Czech Republic. These are pedagogical faculties of universities that award 180 ECTS credits ECTS. A further two-year Master's degree awarding 120 ECTS credits is also offered at four pedagogical faculties, but they are accredited as non-credit courses to deepen theoretical training. The master's courses are intended primarily for future managers of preschool educational institutions, employees of the Czech School Inspectorate, counseling or educational institutions in the CPD system.

The concept of the bachelor's program is based on a child-centered model of preschool education that takes into account the peculiarities of child development in preschool age and is aimed at an individual pedagogical approach. It has a balanced composition of professional theoretical and practical subjects and pedagogical practices that reflect current research and educational policy requirements, including new subjects and practices related to the field of inclusive education, differentiation and individualized learning. In the period from 2020 to 2022, the Pedagogical Faculty of Charles University of the Czech Republic has conducted a comparative research of educational programs for preschool educators in Czech universities [12]. However, compared to other European countries where preschool teachers need at least a university degree (e.g. Finland, Switzerland, or Sweden), the training of preschool teachers in the Czech Republic needs further development.

The training of future early childhood educators in Italy involves obtaining a bachelor's degree in pedagogy. This degree is designed to organize work with children aged 0 to 3 years (national classification – ISCED 6), and it is also possible to obtain a Master's degree in primary education (ISCED 7), which is integrated with the course of early childhood education (D.Lgs 65/2017). The master's degree (ISCED 7) is obtained after completing a special five-year one-cycle program in primary education disciplines and an internship from the second year, which makes it possible to obtain a teaching qualification (DM 249/2010) [4].

In Italy, different ways of training future educators in ECEC institutions for children under the age of three prevail (D.Lgs. 65/2017 and DM 378/2018). Thus, educators who wish to work in ECEC institutions must have a bachelor's degree (ISCED 6, completion of a three-year program in educational sciences, specifically for work with children aged 0 to 3 years, 180 ECTS credits). Another way is extracurricular learning (self-educational), where 55 ECTS credits are acquired (as part of the main curriculum or as an addition to the curriculum) [7].

Research in French education express concern that future educators are trained to work with preschool children on the model of the school system, especially those who work with children from birth to 3 years old [3].

In Slovenia, there is an interesting experience of the relationship between different professional functions and different responsibilities in different preschool institutions and in the first year of primary school. Different professionals and semi-professionals with different levels of formal education are involved in these processes: preschool educators, assistant of the educators, primary school teachers and Roma assistant teachers. Responsibilities are shared and negotiated between different professional roles in different conditions.

The professional training of future educators (general primary higher education) in Denmark is based on a socio-pedagogical tradition that focuses on broad competencies rather than a list of skills. Pedagogical education is based on a holistic approach to children and adults, as well as on the personal development of future educators.

The training of future educators in Poland has been carried out in public and private universities, which have joint programs for training specialists in preschool education and primary school. The professional training of future educators in Poland primarily involves: educational and pedagogical training, covering psychology and pedagogy (education, training, voice work); subject and branch training; preparation for teaching the first/basic subject or for conducting the first/basic type of classes, or for teaching an additional subject or for conducting an additional type of classes [9].

We would like to emphasize that in Poland, the WTANP program has defined the following: professionalism can be formed in conditions of extreme poverty and lack of qualified labor in cooperation with parents and representatives of local communities. As part of an integrated approach to ECEC, the Comenius Foundation (Poland) has developed a framework for the professional development of educators adapted to the needs of local rural communities.

### **Conclusions and prospects for further researches.**

Thus, in the process of theoretical analysis of research on the experience of training future educators in different countries of the world, it has been found that most universities implement modules that are fundamental in the following areas: physical development and physical activity of children, health care; communication and society; nature science; religion, law, ethics, etc. The analysis of foreign systems of training future early childhood educators has made it possible to identify a number of fundamental approaches on which most countries are based: integrative; connection of theoretical and practical activities of students with the real situation in

preschool education; multifunctionality and dynamism of the educational process; usage of various forms and methods of pedagogical influence.

We believe that the implementation of modern experience of foreign countries in training future educators will make it possible to overcome a number of negative trends in the practice of working with young children in the Ukrainian preschool education system. It is also worth noting that the productive use of positive foreign experience is possible only if Ukrainian socio-economic realities, cultural and educational traditions have been taken into account.

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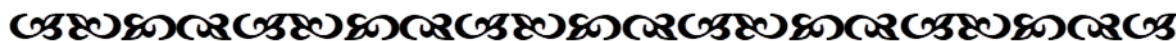
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“Молодий спеціаліст стає хорошим учителем, перш за все, завдяки обстановці творчої праці педагогічного й учнівського колективів”.

Василь Сухомлинський  
український педагог

“Будь-яке навчання людини – це не що інше, як мистецтво сприяти прагненню природи до свого розвитку”.

Йоганн Генріх Песталоцці  
швейцарський педагог-новатор

“Прагнення до нового – перша потреба людської уяви”.

Стендаль  
французький письменник

