International Journal of Evaluation and Research in Education (IJERE)
Vol. 15, No. 6, December 2026, pp. 5328~5339
ISSN: 2252-8822, DOI: 10.11591/ijere.v15i6.39477

The effects of collaborative play on soft skills development in older preschool children

Saulet Tukebayeva[1], Gulbanu Abitova[1], Magripa Ibrayeva[1], Zhanat Mamytbayeva[2], Zhibek Akynova[3], Laura Ermekbayeva[3]
[1]Department of Preschool Education and Social Pedagogy, Abai Kazakh National Pedagogical University, Almaty, Kazakhstan
[2]Department of Pedagogy of preschool education and training, Zhanibekov University, Shymkent, Kazakhstan
[3]Department of Practical Foreign Language, Kazakh National Women's Teacher Training University, Almaty, Kazakhstan

Article Info

Article history:

Received Mar 12, 2026
Revised Oct 23, 2026
Accepted Nov 2, 2026

Keywords:

Collaboration
Collaborative play
Communication
Preschool education
Problem-solving
Soft skills

ABSTRACT

Early childhood education (ECE) increasingly emphasizes the development of soft skills (SS), such as communication, cooperation, and problem-solving, yet empirical evidence on effective teaching strategies in non-Western contexts remains limited. This study investigates the effectiveness of structured collaborative play (CP) as an intervention to foster these competencies in older preschool children (OPC). The study used a quasi-experimental pretest and posttest design with 72 children assigned to an experimental group (EG) and a control group (CG). The six-week intervention included three 40-minute sessions per week. SS were assessed using a standardized social skills rating scale and structured behavioral observations. Results showed significant improvements in the EG across all targeted domains, with large effect sizes. Implementation fidelity was consistently high, supporting the reliability of the outcomes. These findings indicate that CP is an effective, scalable, and contextually adaptable approach for promoting SS in preschool settings, providing both theoretical support for social learning models and practical guidance for curriculum implementation.

This is an open access article under the CC BY-SA license.

Corresponding Author:

Gulbanu Abitova
Department of Preschool Education and Social Pedagogy, Abai Kazakh National Pedagogical University
Dostyk St., 13, Almaty 050010, Kazakhstan
Email: abitova.64@mail.ru

1. INTRODUCTION

Rapid societal transformations have significantly changed expectations for education systems worldwide. In the 21st century, schools are expected not only to provide academic knowledge but also to develop a broad set of interpersonal and cognitive competencies, commonly called soft skills (SS) [1], [2]. SS are commonly understood as socio-emotional and interpersonal competencies that enable children to communicate, cooperate, regulate emotions, and solve problems in social contexts [3]. This study focuses specifically on communication, cooperation, and problem-solving as core SS relevant to preschool collaborative play (CP) [4]. These competencies are emphasized in international early childhood education (ECE) frameworks, including those of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) [5].

These policy documents highlight the importance of developing such competencies from the earliest stages of education. Consequently, ECE plays a crucial role in shaping children's social behavior, communication abilities, and readiness for lifelong learning. This lack of context-specific evidence highlights the need to examine CP in diverse educational settings, including emerging education systems undergoing

curriculum reform [6]. The preschool period is a particularly sensitive stage during which children acquire social experience through interaction with peers and adults [7]–[9]. Within this context, researchers emphasize the importance of play-based learning (PBL) and cooperative interaction as effective ways to foster SS in preschool children [10]. Numerous studies indicate that PBL supports social interaction, cooperation, and communication development in early childhood settings [11], [12]. This study is particularly important for ECE as it provides empirical validation for scalable, low-resource pedagogical strategies such as CP, which are especially relevant in resource-constrained or reforming educational contexts. These strategies contribute to the development of essential SS, including communication, cooperation, and problem-solving, during early childhood.

A growing body of research has explored how SS develop in early childhood and the pedagogical mechanisms that support them [13]. A growing body of research shows that play-based and collaborative learning environments enhance communication, cooperation, and self-regulation in preschoolers [14]. Research on collaborative learning demonstrates that joint problem-solving and group activities improve children's ability to negotiate, share responsibilities, and resolve conflicts [15]. Empirical evidence also indicates that CP boosts peer communication, increases participation in group activities, and strengthens coordination skills [16]. Overall, CP provides a structured social context for developing socio-emotional competencies in early childhood [17].

Most existing research focuses on general social competence or socio-emotional development, whereas the concept of SS as an integrated set of competencies has only recently been applied in early childhood research [18]–[22]. Although CP has been widely discussed in the literature, empirical investigations specifically examining its role in fostering SS among older preschool children (OPC) are still limited [23]–[26]. Furthermore, the majority of empirical research has been conducted in Western educational contexts, particularly in North America and Western Europe [26]–[28]. Consequently, there is insufficient empirical evidence regarding how CP functions as a pedagogical strategy for SS development in other educational systems and cultural contexts [29]–[35]. In particular, research addressing this issue within Kazakhstani preschool education remains scarce.

In Kazakhstan, ECE has been undergoing significant reforms aimed at implementing competency-based curricula that emphasize the development of social, emotional, and cognitive competencies. Despite these reforms, current preschool practices often rely on traditional teacher-led instruction, and structured strategies to foster SS through collaborative activities remain limited. Many educators face challenges in designing PBL environments that effectively promote communication, cooperation, and problem-solving. Empirical evidence on the implementation and effectiveness of CP in Kazakhstani preschool settings is scarce, highlighting a critical gap between national policy goals and classroom practice. To our knowledge, this study is among the first to empirically examine the effectiveness of CP in fostering SS in OPC within Kazakhstan, providing insights into the implementation of competency-based education (CBE) in ECE.

The novelty of this study lies in several key contributions. First, it provides one of the first empirical investigations of CP as a structured pedagogical intervention explicitly targeting an integrated set of SS—communication, cooperation, and problem-solving—among OPC in Kazakhstan. Second, unlike prior research [36]–[38], which primarily focuses on general socio-emotional development, this study conceptualizes SS as a measurable and integrated construct within ECE. Third, it offers context-specific evidence from a non-Western, reform-oriented educational system, thereby addressing the geographical and cultural imbalance in the existing literature. Finally, the study develops and empirically validates a scalable, low-resource model of CP-based activities that can be applied in resource-constrained preschool settings, helping to bridge the gap between competency-based policy frameworks and actual classroom practice. Considering the ongoing modernization of the national education system and the growing emphasis on CBE, investigating effective pedagogical approaches for SS development during the preschool period is particularly timely and relevant [39], [40].

CP is a critical pedagogical approach in ECE because it actively fosters essential SS, including communication, cooperation, and problem-solving, which are foundational for children's social, emotional, and cognitive development. By engaging in structured CP, children learn to negotiate roles, share responsibilities, resolve conflicts, and practice joint decision-making. The findings of research on CP have important implications for educational practice, offering guidance for teachers and curriculum developers to design PBL environments that effectively support skill development. Furthermore, at the policy level, emphasizing CP aligns with international CBE frameworks and early learning standards, highlighting the need for systematic incorporation of collaborative and interactive activities in preschool curricula to promote lifelong learning competencies. In addition, the findings of this study may inform educational policy by supporting the mainstreaming of CP within ECE standards and national curricula. This can assist policymakers in integrating structured play-based and interaction-focused approaches into competency-based early learning frameworks.

Therefore, the present study addresses this research gap in the context of Kazakhstani preschool education. It is guided by the following research question: How does CP influence the development of SS in OPC in preschool educational settings? The aim of the study is to examine the effectiveness of CP as a pedagogical intervention for fostering SS, specifically communication, cooperation, and problem-solving, in OPC. To achieve this aim, the study pursues three objectives: i) to identify key SS that can be developed through CP activities in preschool settings; ii) to design and implement CP–based activities in the learning environment; and iii) to evaluate the impact of these activities on children's communication, cooperation, and problem-solving skills.

2. METHOD

2.1. Research design

This study employed a quasi-experimental pretest–posttest design with an experimental group (EG) and a control group (CG) [41] to examine the effects of CP on the development of SS in OPC. A quasi-experimental approach was selected because intact preschool groups were used and random assignment of children to conditions was not feasible due to institutional and ethical constraints typical of early childhood educational settings. The independent variable in the study was participation in the CP intervention, while the dependent variables represented key components of SS, including communication, cooperation, and problem-solving. In the present study, SS were operationalized through these three competencies, which are widely recognized as foundational interpersonal and collaborative abilities in early childhood development. These competencies were measured at both pretest and posttest to allow for comparison of changes between the EG and the CG. To complement the quantitative assessment, systematic behavioral observations were conducted during CP sessions in the EG. These observations provided additional evidence regarding patterns of peer interaction, cooperative behavior, and collaborative problem-solving emerging during the intervention. The combination of experimental comparison and structured observations enabled a comprehensive evaluation of CP as a pedagogical approach for fostering SS in preschool children.

2.2. Participants

The study was conducted at Kindergarten No. 144, Almaty City Department of Education (Almaty, Kazakhstan). Written informed consent was obtained from all parents or legal guardians prior to participation. Participants were 72 children aged 5–6 years enrolled in the older preschool group. Inclusion criteria were: i) age between 5 and 6 years; ii) typical developmental status according to preschool records; and iii) parental consent. Children with diagnosed developmental disorders, irregular attendance, or without parental consent were excluded. Children were assigned at the classroom level (cluster allocation) to preserve existing classroom groups to either the EG (n=36) or the CG (n=36) to preserve natural classroom structures and minimize disruption to regular activities. Groups were balanced by age and gender to ensure comparable baseline characteristics. Demographic characteristics of the participants are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of participating children

Group	Age (mean±SD)	Boys	Girls
EG	5.4±0.3	16	20
CG	5.3±0.4	19	17

2.3. Procedure

The intervention was conducted over six weeks between March and May 2025, with three 40-minutes CP sessions per week. A structured protocol ensured methodological rigor, high implementation fidelity, and consistent data collection. The procedure consisted of five stages: teacher preparation, baseline assessment, CP implementation, intervention monitoring, and post-intervention assessment. Prior to the intervention, classroom teachers attended a two-hour training session led by the research team. The training covered the theoretical foundations of CP and its relevance for developing communication, cooperation, and problem-solving behaviors, practical guidance on organizing CP activities, including group formation, role distribution, and facilitation strategies. Procedures for observing and documenting children's interactions during sessions were also covered. A pilot study was conducted with eight children from the same preschool to evaluate the clarity and feasibility of CP activities and behavioral observation procedures. Minor adjustments were made to activity instructions, materials, and session timing, and research assistants were trained on checklist use and video recording procedures.

Weekly monitoring and fidelity checks were conducted by the research team to ensure adherence to the intervention protocol and provide feedback to teachers. The pilot also provided training for research

assistants on checklist use and video recording procedures. All systematic behavioral observations during the intervention were conducted by research assistants trained in using the checklists and video recording procedures to ensure consistency and reliability. During the intervention, teachers followed a standardized CP activity guide developed by the research team, detailing activity descriptions, required materials, and facilitation prompts to stimulate collaborative dialogue and joint problem-solving. The CG continued their routine preschool activities in parallel with the experimental sessions. The stages of the intervention procedure are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2. Stages of the intervention procedure

Stage	Duration	Activities
Preparation phase	1 week	Teacher training; preparation of materials and observation tools
Pre-intervention assessment	1 day	Administration of the SSIS
CP intervention	6 weeks, 3 sessions/week (total 18 sessions)	Role-playing, cooperative construction tasks, group problem-solving
Monitoring and fidelity check	Weekly	Verification of protocol adherence; feedback to teachers
Post-intervention assessment	1 day	Re-administration of the SSIS

2.4. Intervention

The CP intervention was implemented with the EG over six weeks, with three 40-minute sessions per week. Children in the EG were organized into six stable subgroups of six participants each. Subgroups remained constant throughout the intervention to maintain cohesion and facilitate peer familiarity. CP sessions were conducted during the morning schedule (9:30–12:00) and were integrated into the regular preschool routine.

Materials—including construction blocks, story cards, role-play props, and problem-solving games—were standardized across all subgroups. Each session followed a consistent three-stage structure: teachers introduced the collaborative activity and its objectives, and children discussed strategies for completing tasks together; children then engaged in the main CP activity, working on cooperative tasks such as role-playing, cooperative construction, and problem-solving games, which promoted peer interaction, shared decision-making, and negotiation; sessions concluded with reflection and discussion, during which teachers facilitated dialogue using guiding questions such as “how did your group make decisions?” and “how were challenges resolved?” Teachers acted primarily as facilitators, encouraging independent negotiation and problem-solving while providing minimal direct instruction.

All sessions were facilitated by the same classroom teachers who received prior training in CP methods and observation procedures. This approach minimized potential teacher-related variability and ensured that differences between groups were primarily associated with the intervention. Weekly fidelity monitoring was conducted by the research team to support consistent implementation of the protocol. During each session, all subgroups participated simultaneously in the same activity format while working with different materials or scenarios. The CG continued their routine preschool activities in parallel with the experimental sessions, including educational tasks, free play, and teacher-led activities, without exposure to structured CP sessions. The detailed schedule of CP sessions for the EG is presented in Table 3. All activities were designed to foster SS, operationalized as communication, cooperation, and problem-solving, which were the primary outcomes assessed in this study.

2.5. Instruments

The study employed a set of validated and adapted instruments to assess children’s SS and to monitor the implementation of the intervention. Children’s SS were assessed using the social skills improvement system (SSIS) rating scales [42]. The SSIS is a widely used standardized instrument designed to evaluate children’s SS across multiple domains. For the purposes of the present study, three domains relevant to early childhood interaction were analyzed: communication, cooperation, and problem-solving. Items were rated using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (rarely) to 5 (almost always). The instrument was translated and culturally adapted into Kazakh using forward–backward translation procedures to ensure linguistic accuracy and conceptual equivalence. Pilot testing with a small sample of preschool children confirmed the clarity and appropriateness of the adapted items for the local context. Internal consistency of the adapted scale was assessed using Cronbach’s alpha, yielding acceptable reliability for the overall scale ($\alpha \approx 0.85$), with subscale values ranging from 0.82 to 0.86. Content validity of the adapted instrument was ensured through expert review by ECE specialists, who evaluated the relevance and clarity of the items for the preschool context.

To complement the questionnaire data, structured behavioral observation checklists were used to document children’s interactions during CP sessions. The observational framework was informed by established approaches to the assessment of social interaction in early childhood play contexts [43], [44].

Observers recorded the frequency of specific behaviors, including peer communication, cooperative engagement, and collaborative problem-solving during group activities. All observation sessions were video-recorded to support accurate coding and verification.

Table 3. CP intervention schedule for EG

Week	Session	Activity type	Objective
1	1	Role-playing	Practice turn-taking and verbal interaction
1	2	Cooperative construction	Develop joint problem-solving strategies
1	3	Group problem-solving game	Foster collaborative decision-making
2	4	Role-playing	Encourage empathy and perspective-taking
2	5	Cooperative construction	Enhance planning and teamwork skills
2	6	Group problem-solving game	Apply conflict resolution strategies
3	7	Role-playing	Strengthen communication strategies
3	8	Cooperative construction	Practice role allocation and shared responsibility
3	9	Group problem-solving game	Improve negotiation and joint decision-making
4	10	Role-playing	Increase social-emotional awareness
4	11	Cooperative construction	Promote cooperation and task completion
4	12	Group problem-solving game	Solve complex collaborative challenges
5	13	Role-playing	Develop negotiation and perspective-taking skills
5	14	Cooperative construction	Consolidate planning and collaboration abilities
5	15	Group problem-solving game	Strengthen teamwork under group constraints
6	16	Role-playing	Review communication strategies
6	17	Cooperative construction	Consolidate collaborative problem-solving
6	18	Group problem-solving game	Integrate teamwork and decision-making

Data collection procedures were complemented by a systematic coding process. Two trained research assistants independently coded the recorded interactions using standardized observation forms. Prior to data collection, a structured coding scheme was developed based on established frameworks of preschool social interaction, and observers underwent training sessions to ensure consistent interpretation of behavioral categories. A calibration exercise was conducted before the main study to align coding decisions and reduce subjective bias. Inter-rater reliability was calculated using Cohen's kappa and demonstrated strong agreement between observers ($\kappa>0.84$).

The checklist was adapted by the research team from established fidelity monitoring frameworks used in early childhood intervention research [45], [46]. To ensure consistent implementation of the CP intervention, a fidelity observation checklist was used to monitor adherence to the intervention protocol. The checklist assessed three key components: i) adherence to the structured CP procedure; ii) quality of peer interaction during activities; and iii) appropriate rotation of play tasks among children. Items were rated on a 3-point scale ranging from 1 (not implemented) to 3 (fully implemented). Observations were conducted weekly across all experimental subgroups to verify that the intervention was delivered as intended. The observation and fidelity instruments were piloted prior to the main study to ensure clarity, feasibility, and consistency of use in classroom settings.

2.6. Ethical considerations

The study adhered to international ethical standards for research involving children. Ethical approval was obtained from the Ethics Committee of the Almaty City Department of Education, Almaty, Kazakhstan (approval number 2025-PE-08). Informed consent was obtained in writing from all parents or legal guardians prior to participation. Children participated voluntarily and could withdraw at any time without penalty. All collected data were anonymized to protect confidentiality and privacy.

2.7. Data analysis

Pre- and post-intervention scores obtained from the SSIS were analyzed using a two-way mixed-design analysis of variance (ANOVA), with group (experimental vs. control) as the between-subjects factor and time (pre-test vs. post-test) as the within-subjects factor. This approach allowed examination of the interaction effect between group and time, indicating the effectiveness of the CP intervention in fostering SS—operationalized as communication, cooperation, and problem-solving behaviors. Prior to conducting the ANOVA, key statistical assumptions were evaluated. The normality of score distributions was assessed using the Shapiro–Wilk test, and homogeneity of variance between groups was examined using Levene's test. Because aggregated scores from 5-point Likert scales are commonly treated as approximately interval-level data in educational research, parametric statistical tests were considered appropriate. Effect sizes for ANOVA results were reported using partial eta squared (ηp^2) to indicate the magnitude of the intervention effect. Following commonly accepted benchmarks, ηp^2 values of 0.01, 0.06, and 0.14 represent small, medium, and

large effects respectively. In addition to the main inferential analysis, descriptive statistics (means and standard deviations) were calculated to summarize children's performance in each domain of SS. Behavioral observation data and fidelity indicators were summarized using descriptive statistics (mean, median, range) to illustrate trends in collaborative interactions and adherence to the intervention protocol. All statistical analyses were conducted using IBM SPSS Statistics (version 27), with the significance level set at $p<0.05$.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As shown in Table 4, no statistically significant differences were found between the EG and the CG across any of the measured domains at the pre-intervention stage. The mean scores for communication, cooperation, and problem-solving were highly comparable between groups, indicating that participants demonstrated similar baseline levels of SS prior to the intervention. These results confirm the equivalence of the two groups at baseline, supporting the validity of subsequent comparisons to examine the effects of the CP intervention.

Table 4. Baseline equivalence of the EG and the CG

Domain	EG mean±SD	CG mean±SD	t(70)	*p*
Communication	3.04±0.50	3.08±0.47	-0.34	0.73
Cooperation	3.05±0.55	3.08±0.51	-0.24	0.81
Problem-solving	2.98±0.60	3.01±0.56	-0.22	0.83

Table 5 presents the pre- and post-intervention scores for the EG and the CG across the measured domains of SS. Mixed-design ANOVA revealed statistically significant group×time interaction effects across all domains ($p<0.001$). These results indicate that the improvements observed in the EG were significantly greater than those in the CG, suggesting that participation in CP activities contributed to the development of SS in OPC. Effect sizes were large (ηp^2 ranging from 0.40 to 0.44), reflecting a substantial impact of the intervention.

Table 5. Pre- and post-intervention SSIS scores

Domain	EG pre (mean±SD)	EG post (mean±SD)	CG pre (mean±SD)	CG post (mean±SD)	F (1,70)	*p*	ηp^2
Communication	3.04±0.50	4.22±0.40	3.08±0.47	3.18±0.45	50.80	<0.001	0.42
Cooperation	3.05±0.55	4.18±0.44	3.08±0.51	3.22±0.47	56.10	<0.001	0.44
Problem-solving	2.98±0.60	4.05±0.49	3.01±0.56	3.12±0.50	47.80	<0.001	0.40

Note: values represent mean±standard deviation. F statistics correspond to the interaction effect of group×time in the mixed-design ANOVA. ηp^2 represents partial eta squared.

The mean frequencies of observed behaviors and fidelity scores are summarized in Table 6. The EG demonstrated higher frequencies of SS behaviors across all domains compared with the CG. Fidelity monitoring indicated consistently high adherence to the CP protocol (3-point scale), high-quality peer interactions, and full rotation of activities across sessions. These findings suggest that improvements in the EG were attributable to the intervention rather than variability in teacher implementation.

Table 6. Observed behavioral outcomes and intervention fidelity

Domain/indicator	EG (mean per session)	CG (mean per session)
Behavioral observations		
Social interaction (communication+cooperation)	8.37	3.5
Problem-solving–joint strategies	6.9	2.7
Intervention fidelity (EG only)		
Adherence to CP protocol	3 (median)	-
Peer interaction quality	3 (median)	-
Rotation of activities	3 (median)	-

As shown in Figure 1, social interaction increased steadily from week 2, while problem-solving skills improved more gradually, becoming more pronounced after week 3. Social interaction represents the mean of communication and cooperation behaviors, and problem-solving reflects joint problem-solving behaviors. Means represent the average number of observed behaviors per session over six weeks of the CP intervention.

Implementation fidelity was assessed using a structured observation checklist across the six experimental subgroups, shown in Table 7. Fidelity scores demonstrated low variability across teachers, indicating that the CP protocol was implemented consistently across sessions and facilitators. This consistency supports the conclusion that the higher frequency of observed SS behaviors in the EG reflects the structured CP intervention rather than differences in teacher performance.

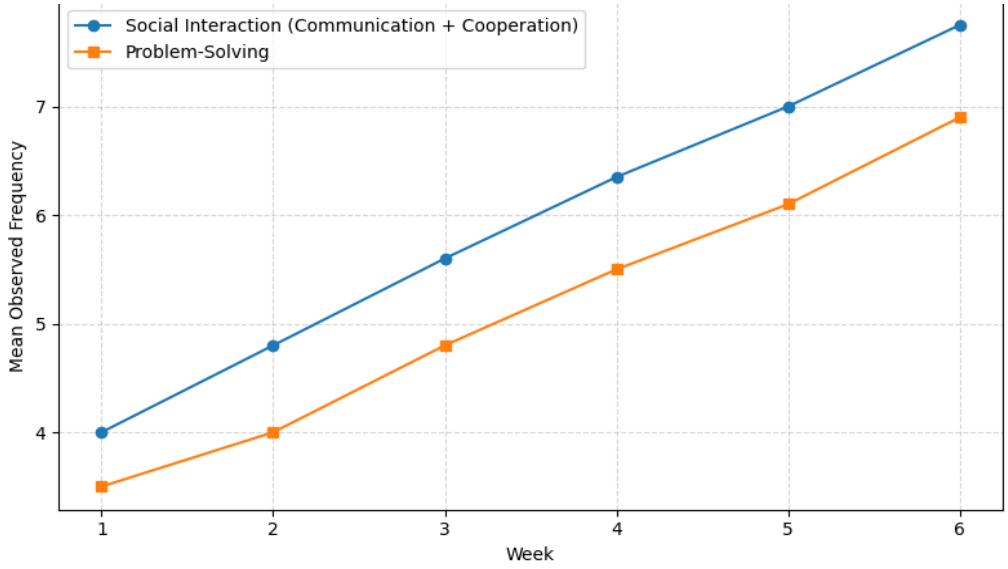


Figure 1. Weekly progression of collaborative skills in the EG

Table 7. Implementation fidelity indicators

Subgroup	Planned activities completed (%)	Fidelity score (mean±SD)
1	92	2.8±0.20
2	95	2.9±0.10
3	94	2.8±0.20
4	96	2.9±0.20
5	93	2.7±0.20
6	96	2.9±0.10
Mean±SD	94.3±1.63	2.8±0.20

The results indicate that participation in CP sessions led to significant improvements in communication, cooperation, and problem-solving skills within the EG, whereas the CG showed minimal changes. Consistently high implementation fidelity indicates that the observed gains in SS were attributable to the structured CP protocol rather than teacher-related variability. Communication skills, including turn-taking and expressive behaviors, improved rapidly, with notable changes observed in the early weeks of the intervention. Cooperation skills also showed early improvement, particularly in sharing, role allocation, and group coordination tasks. Problem-solving skills developed more gradually, reflecting the increasing cognitive demands of collaborative tasks requiring joint planning and negotiation. These developmental trajectories suggest that structured peer interactions facilitate the development of SS.

The findings of this study are consistent with and extend a substantial body of prior research on CP and early childhood development. Previous studies have demonstrated that structured peer interaction in play-based contexts significantly enhances communication skills, including verbal expression, turn-taking, and pragmatic language use [47], [48]. Another research [49], [50] demonstrate that cooperative and socially interactive play environments promote social competence, role negotiation, and perspective-taking in preschool children. In addition, studies on peer-mediated learning indicate that cooperative activities promote the development of prosocial behaviors, including sharing, helping, and coordinated group action [51], [52]. Empirical evidence also suggests that collaborative learning environments improve children's ability to engage in joint problem-solving, plan actions collectively, and resolve conflicts through dialogue [53], [54]. Furthermore, longitudinal and intervention-based studies have reported that structured play interventions lead to measurable gains in socio-emotional competencies and self-regulation [55], [56]. The large effect sizes

observed in the present study are consistent with findings from experimental research demonstrating that well-designed collaborative interventions can produce substantial improvements in multiple domains of SS simultaneously [57]. Importantly, while most existing studies have been conducted in Western contexts, recent cross-cultural research confirms that the positive effects of collaborative and PBL are robust across diverse educational settings [58]. In this regard, the present study not only confirms previous findings but also extends them by providing empirical evidence from a Central Asian context, thereby contributing to the growing body of research on the cultural generalizability of CP interventions [59].

Overall, the study provides empirical support for theories of social learning and peer-mediated development, suggesting that structured collaborative experiences promote the gradual consolidation of SS through guided interaction and reflection. Practically, these results highlight the potential of CP as an evidence-based pedagogical approach in preschool curricula. Teachers can implement short, structured sessions to foster SS without requiring extensive resources or specialized training beyond initial facilitation guidance. While these findings indicate that CP can be effectively scaled within typical preschool settings, they should be interpreted in light of several methodological constraints, including the quasi-experimental design and the relatively short duration of the intervention, which may limit causal inference and conclusions about long-term effects.

The study has important implications at multiple levels of the education system. At the classroom level, teachers can implement structured CP sessions as a practical and resource-efficient strategy to foster communication, cooperation, and problem-solving skills in preschool children. At the curriculum level, CP can be systematically integrated into early childhood programs as a core pedagogical approach aligned with CBE frameworks. At the policy level, these results support the institutionalization of structured CP within national ECE standards, ensuring that social and collaborative competencies are explicitly targeted within early learning outcomes. Sustained implementation may require ongoing professional development and institutional support to maintain high-quality delivery across diverse preschool contexts. Future research should incorporate qualitative methodologies, such as teacher interviews, classroom ethnography, or child-centered observations, to better understand the interactional processes through which CP supports the development of SS. In addition, mixed-methods designs could provide a more comprehensive explanation of how and why CP interventions are effective across different educational contexts.

Several limitations should be noted. First, the study employed quasi-experimental assignment at the classroom level, which may reduce internal validity compared with fully randomized designs. Although groups were balanced by age and gender, residual confounding variables cannot be entirely ruled out. Second, the intervention period was relatively short (six weeks), and follow-up assessments were not conducted. Consequently, the long-term retention of SS remains unknown. Future research should examine longer interventions with follow-up assessments to evaluate the sustainability of CP effects. Future randomized controlled trials across multiple preschool settings would also strengthen external validity and support broader generalizability. Third, behavioral observations were limited to the EG sessions, with only descriptive comparisons to the CG. This limits the ability to quantify between-group differences in observed behaviors beyond SSIS scores of SS. Integrating objective, technology-assisted behavioral coding could enhance measurement precision and allow more detailed analyses of interaction patterns. Finally, investigating CP in combination with teacher scaffolding strategies may further clarify the mechanisms by which collaborative experiences foster specific SS.

4. CONCLUSION

This study provides empirical evidence that structured CP interventions can significantly enhance SS—including communication, cooperation, and problem-solving—among OPC in Kazakhstan. The EG demonstrated substantial gains across all assessed domains, with large effect sizes and a clear progressive trajectory of observed collaborative behaviors. Consistently high implementation fidelity indicates that these improvements were attributable to the structured CP protocol. The findings have important theoretical implications, supporting social learning and peer-mediated development models that emphasize structured interactions as catalysts for the acquisition of SS. Practically, the results suggest that CP can be feasibly integrated into preschool curricula to foster essential competencies required for future social and academic success. Despite these promising outcomes, the quasi-experimental design, relatively short intervention period, and absence of follow-up assessments limit the generalizability of the findings. Future research should employ fully randomized designs, include longitudinal follow-ups to examine skill retention, and explore combining CP with teacher scaffolding strategies to optimize developmental outcomes. In summary, structured CP interventions represent an effective, scalable, and contextually adaptable pedagogical approach for promoting SS in ECE.

FUNDING INFORMATION

Authors state no funding involved.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS STATEMENT

This journal uses the Contributor Roles Taxonomy (CRediT) to recognize individual author contributions, reduce authorship disputes, and facilitate collaboration.

Name of Author	C	M	So	Va	Fo	I	R	D	O	E	Vi	Su	P	Fu
Saulet Tukebayeva	✓		✓		✓			✓		✓		✓	✓	
Gulbanu Abitova		✓				✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Magripa Ibrayeva	✓		✓	✓			✓			✓	✓			✓
Zhanat Mamytbayeva		✓		✓		✓			✓		✓		✓	
Zhibek Akynova	✓		✓		✓		✓			✓		✓		✓
Laura Ermekbayeva	✓			✓		✓		✓	✓		✓		✓	

C : **C**onceptualization
M : **M**ethodology
So : **So**ftware
Va : **Va**lidation
Fo : **Fo**rmal analysis
I : **I**nvestigation
R : **R**esources
D : **D**ata Curation
O : Writing - **O**riginal Draft
E : Writing - Review & **E**diting
Vi : **Vi**sualization
Su : **Su**pervision
P : **P**roject administration
Fu : **Fu**nding acquisition

CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

Authors state no conflict of interest.

DATA AVAILABILITY

The corresponding author may provide study data upon reasonable request.

REFERENCES

[1] S. I. Marin-Zapata, J. P. Román-Calderón, C. Robledo-Ardila, and M. A. Jaramillo-Serna, "Soft skills, do we know what we are talking about?" *Review of Managerial Science*, vol. 16, no. 4, pp. 969–1000, May 2022, doi: 10.1007/s11846-021-00474-9.

[2] J. Lamri and T. Lubart, "Reconciling hard skills and soft skills in a common framework: the generic skills component approach," *Journal of Intelligence*, vol. 11, no. 6, p. 107, Jun. 2023, doi: 10.3390/jintelligence11060107.

[3] D. T. Utami, Hapidin, and A. Supena, "Integrating conflict resolution into problem-based learning: a novel model to enhance social skills in early childhood education," *Journal of Cultural Analysis and Social Change*, vol. 10, no. 3, pp. 2166–2176, Dec. 2025, doi: 10.64753/jcasc.v10i3.2728.

[4] S. A. Tukabayeva, G. T. Abitova, and K. T. Zhansugurova, "Development of soft skills in children of the older group in joint cognitive activity," *Bulletin of Ablai Khan KazUIRandWL Series "Pedagogical Sciences,"* vol. 79, no. 4, pp. 578–591, Dec. 2025, doi: 10.48371/peds.2025.79.4.035.

[5] H. J. Ho, "Analysis of the competency-based curriculum and learning strategies: the moderating effect of educational resources," *Discover Education*, vol. 5, no. 1, p. 94, Jan. 2026, doi: 10.1007/s44217-025-00791-1.

[6] S. P. Chand and K. K. Kumar, "The role of preschool and primary school teachers in curriculum development," *Research on Preschool and Primary Education*, vol. 3, no. 1, pp. 157–165, May 2025, doi: 10.55976/rppe.320251381157-165.

[7] T. Diebold, A. K. Jaggy, and S. Perren, "Socialisation of emotion regulation in preschool classrooms: how do peers matter?" *Infant and Child Development*, vol. 34, no. 1, p. e2566, Jan. 2025, doi: 10.1002/icd.2566.

[8] Y. Ji, J. White, and S. Sharma, "Social–emotional learning of 2-year-olds within peer interactions in early childhood education settings: a scoping review," *Behavioral Sciences*, vol. 15, no. 10, p. 1303, Sep. 2025, doi: 10.3390/bs15101303.

[9] K. E. Darling-Churchill and L. Lippman, "Early childhood social and emotional development: Advancing the field of measurement," *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology*, vol. 45, pp. 1–7, Jul. 2016, doi: 10.1016/j.appdev.2016.02.002.

[10] M. E. Taylor and W. Boyer, "Play-based learning: evidence-based research to improve children's learning experiences in the kindergarten classroom," *Early Childhood Education Journal*, vol. 48, no. 2, pp. 127–133, Mar. 2020, doi: 10.1007/s10643-019-00989-7.

[11] G. M. Mwinsa and M. Dagada, "Play-based learning: a pedagogical approach for social skills development in ECE learners in Zambia," *Social Sciences and Humanities Open*, vol. 11, p. 101396, 2025, doi: 10.1016/j.ssaho.2025.101396.

[12] J. L. Gibson, E. Pritchard, and C. de Lemos, "Play-based interventions to support social and communication development in autistic children aged 2–8 years: a scoping review," *Autism and Developmental Language Impairments*, vol. 6, pp. 1–30, Jan. 2021, doi: 10.1177/23969415211015840.

[13] R. Thümmler, E. M. Engel, and J. Bartz, "Strengthening emotional development and emotion regulation in childhood—as a key task in early childhood education," *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, vol. 19, no. 7, p. 3978, Mar. 2022, doi: 10.3390/ijerph19073978.

[14] A. Pyle, E. Danniels, N. E. Larsen, and R. Martinussen, "Supporting children's self-regulation development in play-based kindergarten classrooms," *International Journal of Educational Research*, vol. 116, p. 102059, 2022, doi: 10.1016/j.ijer.2022.102059.

[15] J. C. Mugabekazi, J. Mukanziza, P. Nizeyimana, and P. Manirahari, "Integrating collaborative learning strategies in the curriculum: enhancing critical thinking and communication skills in primary education," *European Journal of Education Studies*, vol. 12, no. 3, pp. 14–39, Feb. 2025, doi: 10.46827/ejes.v12i3.5848.
[16] P. Löfstrand and I. Zakrisson, "Exploring the impact of role-playing exercises on cognitive and emotional processes: a social- and educational psychological perspective," *Frontiers in Psychology*, vol. 16, p. 1645213, Sep. 2025, doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2025.1645213.
[17] C. P. C. Keung and A. C. K. Cheung, "Towards holistic supporting of play-based learning implementation in kindergartens: a mixed method study," *Early Childhood Education Journal*, vol. 47, no. 5, pp. 627–640, Sep. 2019, doi: 10.1007/s10643-019-00956-2.
[18] V. W. Harris, J. Anderson, and B. Visconti, "Social emotional ability development (SEAD): an integrated model of practical emotion-based competencies," *Motivation and Emotion*, vol. 46, no. 2, pp. 226–253, Apr. 2022, doi: 10.1007/s11031-021-09922-1.
[19] S. Ahmad, E. R. Peterson, K. E. Waldie, and S. M. B. Morton, "Development of an index of socio-emotional competence for preschool children in the growing up in New Zealand study," *Frontiers in Education*, vol. 4, p. 2, Jan. 2019, doi: 10.3389/feduc.2019.00002.
[20] A. Arace, L. E. Prino, and D. Scarzello, "Emotional competence of early childhood educators and child socio-emotional wellbeing," *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, vol. 18, no. 14, p. 7633, Jul. 2021, doi: 10.3390/ijerph18147633.
[21] C. F. Mondi, A. Giovanelli, and A. J. Reynolds, "Fostering socio-emotional learning through early childhood intervention," *International Journal of Child Care and Education Policy*, vol. 15, no. 1, p. 6, Dec. 2021, doi: 10.1186/s40723-021-00084-8.
[22] R. Hosokawa, Y. Matsumoto, C. Nishida, K. Funato, and A. Mitani, "Enhancing social-emotional skills in early childhood: intervention study on the effectiveness of social and emotional learning," *BMC Psychology*, vol. 12, no. 1, p. 761, Dec. 2024, doi: 10.1186/s40359-024-02280-w.
[23] G. Roy, S. Sikder, and L. Danaia, "Adopting scientific literacy in early years from empirical studies on formal education: a systematic review of the literature," *International Journal of STEM Education*, vol. 12, no. 1, p. 26, May 2025, doi: 10.1186/s40594-025-00547-1.
[24] Z. H. Wan, Y. Jiang, and Y. Zhan, "STEM education in early childhood: a review of empirical studies," *Early Education and Development*, vol. 32, no. 7, pp. 940–962, Oct. 2021, doi: 10.1080/10409289.2020.1814986.
[25] A. Morawska, C. K. Dittman, and J. C. Rusby, "Promoting self-regulation in young children: the role of parenting interventions," *Clinical Child and Family Psychology Review*, vol. 22, no. 1, pp. 43–51, Mar. 2019, doi: 10.1007/s10567-019-00281-5.
[26] B. Asmara and A. Rulyansah, "Play to resolve: educational games as a pathway to conflict resolution for early learners," *AL-ISHLAH: Jurnal Pendidikan*, vol. 16, no. 3, pp. 3781–3792, Jul. 2024, doi: 10.35445/alishlah.v16i3.5528.
[27] S. Burns *et al.*, "Navigating technology in the classroom: a scoping review of technology use during peer collaboration in early educational settings," *Educational Review*, vol. 76, no. 7, pp. 2063–2089, Nov. 2024, doi: 10.1080/00131911.2024.2336970.
[28] F. A. Dashti and K. M. Habeeb, "Impact of shared iPads on kindergarten students' collaboration and engagement in visual storytelling activities," *Early Childhood Education Journal*, vol. 48, no. 4, pp. 521–531, 2020, doi: 10.1007/s10643-020-01018-8.
[29] N. Mektepbergenov, S. Nazanova, Y. Makhambetov, L. Orynbayeva, R. Bayaliyev, and S. Nurgaliyeva, "Pre-service teachers' readiness to use artificial intelligence: evidence from Kazakhstan," *International Journal of Information and Education Technology*, vol. 15, no. 12, pp. 2700–2706, 2025, doi: 10.18178/ijiet.2025.15.12.2465.
[30] S. Nurgaliyeva *et al.*, "Evaluating student satisfaction of terminological apparatus with natural and mathematical textbooks in Kazakhstani schools," *Cogent Education*, vol. 12, no. 1, p. 2468563, Dec. 2025, doi: 10.1080/2331186X.2025.2468563.
[31] Z. Zhumabayeva, K. Zhaxylikova, A. Omirzakova, E. Aitenova, M. Zhailauova, and S. Nurgaliyeva, "Enhancing teaching skills through digital feedback in microteaching: a study with prospective primary teachers," *International Journal of Information and Education Technology*, vol. 15, no. 9, pp. 1820–1828, 2025, doi: 10.18178/ijiet.2025.15.9.2383.
[32] T. Kulgildinova, A. Sarsembayeva, D. Surova, I. Kalelova, M. Zhaizhatyrova, and S. Nurgaliyeva, "The influence of an adaptive non-formal education model on student learning activity and engagement," *International Journal of Modern Education and Computer Science*, vol. 17, no. 5, pp. 96–108, Oct. 2025, doi: 10.5815/ijmecs.2025.05.06.
[33] Z. Karibaev, A. Zhumabayeva, B. Kurbonova, and S. Nurgaliyeva, "Subjective well-being among students with disabilities in Kazakhstan: an exploratory study," *Journal of Curriculum Studies Research*, vol. 6, no. 2, pp. 88–103, Oct. 2024, doi: 10.46303/jcsr.2024.12.
[34] S. Abildina, Z. Sarsekeyeva, A. Mukhametzhanova, K. Kopbalina, and S. Nurgaliyeva, "Enhancing reading literacy among elementary school learners in Kazakhstan: the application and effectiveness of modern teaching techniques," *Journal of Infrastructure Policy and Development*, vol. 8, no. 8, p. 5905, Aug. 2024, doi: 10.24294/jipd.v8i8.5905.
[35] Y. Ospankulov *et al.*, "Examining the relationships between primary school students' participation in sports and technology addictions," *International Journal of Education in Mathematics, Science and Technology*, vol. 11, no. 3, pp. 804–819, Apr. 2023, doi: 10.46328/ijemst.3177.
[36] G. S. Ayapbergenova, S. A. Nurgaliyeva, N. A. Bissembayeva, M. P. Kabakova, and M. N. Koyshibayev, "Developing project skills in future primary school teachers within the university-based initial teacher education," *Science for Education Today*, vol. 10, no. 6, pp. 7–26, Dec. 2020, doi: 10.15293/2658-6762.2006.01.
[37] A. Sadreimova, A. Zhumabayeva, M. Mirzakhmetov, S. Kozhageldieva, G. Zhussupbekova, and S. Nurgaliyeva, "Teacher perceptions of neuroeducation: a survey of teachers in Kazakhstan," *TEM Journal*, vol. 15, no. 1, pp. 611–619, Feb. 2026, doi: 10.18421/TEM151-57.
[38] Y. E. Ospankulov, S. Nurgaliyeva, S. Kunai, A. M. Baigaliev, and K. R. Kaldyhanovna, "Using physical education lessons to develop the autonomy of primary school children," *Cypriot Journal of Educational Sciences*, vol. 17, no. 2, pp. 601–614, Feb. 2022, doi: 10.18844/cjes.v17i2.6856.
[39] G. Kurebayeva, T. Kulgildinova, G. Kurebayeva, B. Akhatova, T. Shevyakova, and S. Nurgaliyeva, "From tradition to innovation: pre-service teachers' perceptions of digital transformation in language learning," *Forum for Linguistic Studies*, vol. 7, no. 3, pp. 351–361, Mar. 2025, doi: 10.30564/fls.v7i3.8768.
[40] T. Yerezhepov, G. Kazakhbayeva, N. Mektepbergenov, L. Orynbayeva, T. Shadibekov, and S. Nurgaliyeva, "Exploring professional burnout and resilience in physical education teachers: a case study of Kazakhstan," *Retos*, vol. 68, pp. 66–81, May 2025, doi: 10.47197/retos.v68.113620.
[41] M. L. Maciejewski, "Quasi-experimental design," *Biostatistics and Epidemiology*, vol. 4, no. 1, pp. 38–47, Jan. 2020, doi: 10.1080/24709360.2018.1477468.
[42] F. M. Gresham, S. N. Elliott, and R. J. Kettler, "Base rates of social skills acquisition/performance deficits, strengths, and problem behaviors: an analysis of the social skills improvement system-rating scales," *Psychological Assessment*, vol. 22, no. 4, pp. 809–815, Dec. 2010, doi: 10.1037/a0020255.
[43] S. Smilansky, *The effects of sociodramatic play on disadvantaged preschool children*. New York, NY: Wiley, 1968.

[44] C. Howes, "Social competence with peers in young children: developmental sequences," *Developmental Review*, vol. 7, no. 3, pp. 252–272, Sep. 1987, doi: 10.1016/0273-2297(87)90014-1.
[45] A. Stone-MacDonald, L. Pizzo, and N. Feldman, "Using checklists to train preservice early childhood professionals for fidelity of implementation of assessment," in *Fidelity of Implementation in Assessment of Infants and Toddlers: Evaluating Developmental Milestones and Outcomes*. A. Stone-MacDonald, L. Pizzo, and N. Feldman, Eds., Cham, Switzerland: Springer International Publishing, 2018, pp. 107–121, doi: 10.1007/978-3-319-74618-0_7.
[46] M. Martin, J. M. Lachman, H. Murphy, F. Gardner, and H. Foran, "The development, reliability, and validity of the facilitator assessment tool: an implementation fidelity measure used in parenting for lifelong health for young children," *Child: Care, Health and Development*, vol. 49, no. 3, pp. 591–604, May 2023, doi: 10.1111/cch.13075.
[47] K. Sormunen, V. Yliverronen, and M.-L. Rönkkö, "Unveiling young children's collaborative communication in hands-on problem-solving," *International Journal of Technology and Design Education*, vol. 36, no. 4, pp. 1483–1508, Sep. 2026, doi: 10.1007/s10798-025-10049-4.
[48] J. M. Kory-Westlund and C. Breazeal, "A long-term study of young children's rapport, social emulation, and language learning with a peer-like robot playmate in preschool," *Frontiers in Robotics and AI*, vol. 6, p. 81, Sep. 2019, doi: 10.3389/frobt.2019.00081.
[49] T. C. Rabinowitch and A. N. Meltzoff, "Synchronized movement experience enhances peer cooperation in preschool children," *Journal of Experimental Child Psychology*, vol. 160, pp. 21–32, Aug. 2017, doi: 10.1016/j.jecp.2017.03.001.
[50] B. Tunçgenç and E. Cohen, "Interpersonal movement synchrony facilitates pro-social behavior in children's peer-play," *Developmental Science*, vol. 21, no. 1, p. e12505, Jan. 2018, doi: 10.1111/desc.12505.
[51] A. Riwayati and B. Pamungkas, "From isolation to interaction: how cooperative learning role-play transforms social skills in behaviorally challenged kindergarteners," *Journal of Innovation and Research in Primary Education*, vol. 4, no. 4, pp. 2023–2035, Sep. 2025, doi: 10.56916/jirpe.v4i4.1994.
[52] C. Ayu, F. D. Hutagalung, C. Savana, A. Indahsari, and M. Jannah, "Enhancing social skills in early childhood through cooperative learning: a case study," *Nak-Kanak: Journal of Child Research*, vol. 2, no. 2, pp. 81–87, May 2025, doi: 10.21107/njcr.v2i2.144.
[53] S. Burns *et al.*, "Improving young children's peer collaboration in early educational settings: a systematic review," *Review of Education*, vol. 12, no. 2, p. e3484, Aug. 2024, doi: 10.1002/rev3.3484.
[54] S. S. Hong *et al.*, "Broadening the definition of collaboration in early care and education," *Early Education and Development*, vol. 30, no. 8, pp. 1084–1093, Nov. 2019, doi: 10.1080/10409289.2019.1656987.
[55] C. Crisan and A. R. Măduța, "The impact of playful educational interventions on the development of emotional skills in early school age," *Revista Romaneasca pentru Educatie Multidimensionala*, vol. 17, no. 2, p. 235, 2025, doi: 10.18662/rrem/17.2/981.
[56] C. Kent, R. Cordier, A. Joosten, S. Wilkes-Gillan, A. Bundy, and R. Speyer, "A systematic review and meta-analysis of interventions to improve play skills in children with autism spectrum disorder," *Review Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, vol. 7, no. 1, pp. 91–118, Mar. 2020, doi: 10.1007/s40489-019-00181-y.
[57] J. S. Vogler, P. Thompson, D. W. Davis, B. E. Mayfield, P. M. Finley, and D. Yasseri, "The hard work of soft skills: augmenting the project-based learning experience with interdisciplinary teamwork," *Instructional Science*, vol. 46, no. 3, pp. 457–488, Jun. 2018, doi: 10.1007/s11251-017-9438-9.
[58] J. Sulaimon, A. A. Adebayo, and B. Mandintereza, "Exploring the impact of play-based learning on teacher satisfaction, stress, and learners' collaboration," *INSPIRA: Indonesian Journal of Psychological Research*, vol. 6, no. 1, pp. 56–69, Jul. 2025, doi: 10.32505/inspira.v6i1.11074.
[59] A. Bautista, J. Yu, K. Lee, and J. Sun, "Impact of play-based pedagogies in selected Asian contexts: what do we know and how to move forward?" in *Effective Teaching Around the World: Theoretical, Empirical, Methodological and Practical Insights*, R. Maulana, M. Helms-Lorenz, and R. M. Klassen, Eds., Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2023, pp. 473–488, doi: 10.1007/978-3-031-31678-4_21.

BIOGRAPHIES OF AUTHORS



Saulet Tukebayeva is a third-year doctoral student in the educational program 8D01201–Preschool Education and Upbringing at Abai Kazakh National Pedagogical University. Her research activity is focused on the fields of pedagogy and psychology. The main direction of her scholarly work is the development of soft skills in preschool children, including the identification of psychological and pedagogical mechanisms, as well as effective methods and strategies for fostering these competencies. She can be contacted at email: saulet.tukebaeva2@gmail.com.



Gulbanu Abitova is a Candidate of Pedagogical Sciences of the Russian Federation and a Ph.D., associate professor of the Department of Preschool Education and Social Pedagogy at Abai Kazakh National Pedagogical University. Her professional and academic activities are focused on the theory and methodology of preschool education, as well as on educational processes within the framework of socio-cultural activities. In addition, her research is distinguished by its relevance to the modernization of preschool education content and the development of children's personal communication skills and information culture. She can be contacted at email: abitova.64@mail.ru.



Magripa Ibrayeva is a Ph.D. in Pedagogy and a senior lecturer at the Department of Pedagogy of Abai Kazakh National Pedagogical University. Her research interests focus on preschool education theory and methodology, the development of cognitive activity in early childhood, and education based on national values. She can be contacted at email: ibraeva.mk1969@mail.ru.



Zhanat Mamytbayeva is a Ph.D., head of the Department of Pedagogy of Preschool Education and Training Zhanibekov University and member of the Central Asian Association for Educational Accreditation (CAAEA). Her research interests include preschool pedagogy, teachers' professional competence, research activity, as well as the development of soft skills in preschool children through collaborative activities. She can be contacted at email: zhanat02014@mail.ru.



Zhibek Akynova is a Ph.D., program leader of the Department of Practical Foreign Languages at the Institute of Philology, Kazakh National Women's Teacher Training University, and a scholar engaged in research in the field of education. In her academic works, she comprehensively examines the pedagogical potential of preparing preschool teachers to develop children's communicative skills through fairy tale therapy, substantiating the cognitive, motivational, and activity-based components of such training both theoretically and practically. Her research areas include the development of communicative skills in preschool children, the improvement of teachers' professional training, and the integration of innovative methods and approaches into the educational process. She can be contacted at email: akynova.zh@qyzpu.edu.kz.



Laura Ermekbayeva is a Candidate of Psychological Sciences and acting associate professor in the Department of Psychology at the Institute of Pedagogy and Psychology, Kazakh State Women's Pedagogical University. Dr. Ermekbayeva is the author of textbooks and teaching manuals in psychology, including works on correctional and developmental education, educational psychology of primary school students, social psychology, and inclusive education. Her research focuses on psychological and pedagogical support, learning difficulties, and the development of effective intervention programs within school settings. She can be contacted at email: laura.ermekbaeva1970@gmail.com.