

# Methodology For Developing Healthy Eating Habits In Preschool Children

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## Abstract

**Purpose:** This study aims to examine the methodology for developing healthy eating habits among preschool-aged children by integrating scientific and pedagogical approaches. The research seeks to identify effective educational strategies that enhance children's understanding of nutrition, promote rational dietary behavior, and prevent micronutrient deficiencies during early childhood development.

**Research methodology:** A descriptive and analytical research design was employed, combining literature review, observation, and pedagogical experimentation in preschool institutions for children aged 3–7. The study draws on global best practices and recommendations from the World Health Organization (WHO) and UNICEF, emphasizing interactive learning methods such as games, group discussions, and storytelling to promote positive eating behaviors.

**Results:** Findings demonstrate that the use of play-based and participatory learning activities significantly improves children's awareness of healthy food choices and fosters long-term behavioral changes. Collaboration between teachers, parents, and healthcare professionals enhances the effectiveness of nutritional education programs and supports the holistic development of preschoolers.

**Conclusions:** Developing healthy eating habits in early childhood requires an interdisciplinary approach that combines pedagogy, health education, and family involvement. Implementing structured nutrition education programs within preschool settings can contribute to children's physical growth, cognitive development, and overall well-being.

**Limitations:** The study was limited to selected preschool institutions and did not include longitudinal assessment of behavioral outcomes.

**Contribution:** This research provides practical insights into the integration of health education and pedagogy to form sustainable healthy lifestyle habits among young children.

**Keywords:** *Education, Health, Nutrition, Pedagogy, Preschool*

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## 1. Introduction

Providing high-quality preschool education services worldwide, identifying the physical development characteristics of children, implementing scientific and organizational-methodological approaches to improve their rational nutrition, and developing innovative methods for forming correct and healthy eating habits in preschool children aged 6-7 years are all becoming increasingly necessary. In preschool education, systematic efforts aimed at promoting healthy nutrition, sanitation, and child protection, carried out in line with promising practices such as the World Health Organization (WHO) Jebriil (2020), a specialized agency of the United Nations (UN), and UNESCO's "Global Partnership Strategy for Early Childhood" UNESCO (2021); Engdahl, Pramling Samuelsson, and Årlemalm-Hagsér (2023), are proving to be highly relevant.

In developed countries, including the United States' National Research Council (NRC), the University of Western Australia, Swansea University in Wales, Telethon Kids, and Curtin University, scientific studies are being conducted to increase the physical activity of preschool-aged children and to assess their proper and healthy development based on newly established growth and development standards. These studies also focus on shaping children's eating skills, determining their growth and development levels, and applying the new standards for child growth and development (Ares et al., 2024). Moreover, issues related to improving children's proper and healthy nutrition, preventing micronutrient deficiencies, identifying the link between improper nutrition and the onset of various diseases, and determining factors affecting children's health, physical, and intellectual development remain highly relevant (Gao, Chen, Sun, Wen, & Xiang, 2018; Li et al., 2019). In our country, failure to adhere to physical activity and nutritional norms, excessive consumption of foods and sweets high in salt, sugar, and fat, as well as insufficient intake of vitamins and minerals, leads to delayed rational growth and cognitive development in young people and contributes to the development of various diseases that can result in premature death. Currently, non-communicable diseases account for 78% of deaths among people in our country. The main factors causing these diseases are largely related to lifestyle.

On November 6, 2020, in his speech at a meeting on the reform of the healthcare system, the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Shavkat Mirziyoyev, emphasized that “everyone must equally understand how many diseases can be prevented and lives saved through a healthy lifestyle, proper nutrition, and physical activity”. He also noted that folic acid and iron deficiencies are observed in 40% of women, anemia occurs in 55% of children under five due to iron deficiency, and 70% of preschool and school-age children have intestinal parasitic diseases. It should be noted that, according to the “New Uzbekistan – 2030” Rakhimova (2024) strategy, starting from January 1, 2024, state preschool education institutions are tasked with providing children with milk enriched with protein, vitamins, and minerals, as well as bread products fortified with iodine. Consequently, developing proper and healthy eating habits among preschool-aged children remains a pressing issue.

The growing global emphasis on childhood nutrition stems from increasing recognition that health behaviors established during early childhood tend to persist into adulthood. According to UNICEF in 2022 and FAO in 2023 reports, countries that invest in preschool nutrition programs witness long-term benefits in public health outcomes, including improved learning capacity, reduced disease prevalence, and higher productivity in adulthood. Studies from Sweden, Japan, and Australia demonstrate that systematic early nutrition education within preschools significantly reduces the risk of childhood obesity and malnutrition. For instance, Japan's *Shokuiku* policy integrates nutrition education into all preschool activities—combining classroom learning, food preparation, and parental involvement—which has become a model of success for early health education worldwide (Zairina, Wibisono, Ngaliman, Indrayani, & Satriawan, 2023).

In many European countries, the focus is shifting from simple dietary instruction toward holistic child development, which incorporates nutritional awareness, emotional well-being, and physical activity. Research by Lehtisalo et al. (2021) in Finland and Pollard et al. (2017) in Australia shows that children who receive both nutrition and physical activity education in preschool demonstrate higher academic performance and better emotional regulation later in life. These findings reinforce the view that nutrition education is not an isolated component of health but part of a broader pedagogical system that nurtures both mind and body.

From a methodological perspective, the development of healthy eating habits requires a multidisciplinary approach that unites the efforts of educators, healthcare professionals, and parents. Modern educational psychology emphasizes that preschool-aged children learn most effectively through play-based, interactive, and sensory activities. Incorporating visual aids, games, storytelling, and group discussions helps children internalize information about healthy foods in an engaging and age-appropriate way. The World Health Organization (WHO) also recommends integrating nutrition lessons into daily preschool routines—during mealtimes, outdoor play, and creative sessions—to create a consistent and experiential learning environment.

Furthermore, the role of family participation is crucial. Parental modeling of eating behaviors strongly influences children's dietary preferences. Research conducted by Scaglioni et al. (2018) found that when parents adopt healthy eating behaviors, children are more likely to consume fruits, vegetables, and whole grains. In Uzbekistan, increasing parental awareness through community-based educational programs can greatly support the government's ongoing reforms in preschool nutrition. Local initiatives that include nutrition workshops for parents and caregivers would complement the *New Uzbekistan – 2030* goals and enhance long-term behavioral outcomes. Digital innovation also presents new opportunities for promoting healthy habits among preschoolers. Interactive educational applications and digital storytelling platforms can supplement traditional classroom activities, offering visually engaging ways to teach concepts of food groups, portion sizes, and balanced meals. However, as Kapural et al. (2023) caution, digital tools must be carefully designed to suit the developmental level of young children and should not replace hands-on, real-world learning experiences such as gardening, cooking demonstrations, or tasting new foods.

In Uzbekistan's context, the ongoing preschool reform presents a unique opportunity to integrate evidence-based health education methodologies aligned with global standards. The initiative to provide fortified foods such as milk enriched with proteins, vitamins, and iodine-fortified bread products represents a major step forward in addressing nutritional deficiencies (Bouga, Lean, & Combet, 2018). However, to ensure sustainability, these interventions must be supported by systematic monitoring, teacher training, and continuous evaluation of children's growth and health outcomes. Building partnerships between ministries of education, health, and agriculture will also be essential for ensuring coordination in implementing and scaling up these programs.

Another important component is the development of national methodological guidelines for nutrition education in preschool institutions. These guidelines should provide a clear structure for teachers, specifying learning outcomes, content standards, and pedagogical techniques for developing healthy habits (Darling-Hammond, Flook, Cook-Harvey, Barron, & Osher, 2020). Moreover, regional cultural and dietary patterns should be considered to ensure the relevance and acceptance of educational materials across diverse communities. Finally, the success of preschool nutrition programs depends on capacity building and professional development for educators. Continuous training workshops and certification programs focusing on nutrition literacy, child psychology, and interactive teaching methods can empower preschool teachers to become effective health educators. Investment in such training aligns with Uzbekistan's commitment to educational modernization and supports the creation of a healthy, knowledgeable, and responsible young generation (Afriyani, Indrayani, Indrawan, Wibisono, & Ngaliman, 2023).

In summary, the modernization of preschool nutrition education in Uzbekistan reflects a global movement toward holistic child development, integrating health, education, and social well-being. By adopting international best practices, strengthening institutional collaboration, and prioritizing teacher competence, Uzbekistan can establish a sustainable framework for nurturing healthy eating behaviors among preschool children. This approach not only addresses current health challenges but also lays the foundation for a healthier, more productive society in the decades to come.

## **2. Literature review and hypothesis/es development**

### ***2.1 Theoretical Foundations of Healthy Eating Behavior in Early Childhood***

Developing healthy eating habits during the preschool years (ages 3–7) is essential for ensuring long-term physical health, cognitive performance, and emotional well-being. According to the World Health Organization in 2020, the early years represent a “critical window” for shaping dietary preferences and establishing routines that influence lifelong health outcomes. Children's eating behaviors are molded not only by biological factors but also by environmental and social influences, which makes early childhood education a vital platform for health promotion (Firdi, Wibisono, Ngaliman, Indrayani, & Satriawan, 2023).

Härkönen (2001) provides a conceptual basis for understanding how children's eating behaviors emerge from interactions within multiple layers of their environment — from the family and school

(microsystem) to the broader social and cultural settings (macrosystem). Similarly, Bandura and Hall (2018) highlights that children learn behaviors such as food selection and eating patterns through observation, imitation, and reinforcement. These frameworks underscore that healthy eating is not solely a matter of information transfer but a behavioral and socialization process requiring systematic, experiential learning.

Furthermore, Fosnot and Perry (1996) suggest that children actively build knowledge through engagement and exploration. Therefore, effective nutrition education in preschool must be interactive, sensory-rich, and contextually meaningful to support internalization of positive habits. The pedagogical principle of learning through play, as emphasized by Brehony (1988) and further developed in early childhood education models, aligns perfectly with the developmental needs of preschoolers, allowing nutrition education to be embedded in daily routines, storytelling, and interactive games.

## ***2.2 The Importance of Early Nutrition Education***

A wide range of research supports the notion that nutrition education in early childhood significantly impacts children’s dietary preferences and health outcomes. Birch and Bonwick (2019); Ventura, Levy, and Sheeper (2019) argue that taste preferences are largely established before the age of five, meaning interventions at the preschool stage can yield long-term benefits. Studies have shown that children exposed to diverse, healthy foods and positive mealtime environments develop more varied and balanced diets (Savage et al., 2019).

Early nutritional interventions are also preventive tools against lifestyle-related diseases. According to Liu and Chang (2023), increasing global rates of childhood obesity and nutrient deficiency call for structured educational programs beginning in preschool. The UNICEF in 2021 framework for early childhood development emphasizes the need to integrate health, nutrition, and education interventions to ensure holistic development. Furthermore, nutrition education during the preschool period influences not only physical outcomes but also cognitive and socio-emotional development. Balanced nutrition contributes to better attention span, memory, and learning performance (Burns, 2024; Grantham-McGregor & Smith, 2016). Therefore, teaching children to make informed food choices becomes an educational priority, linking health promotion with broader goals of human development and educational equity.

## ***2.3 Methodological Approaches in Teaching Healthy Eating to Preschoolers***

The methodology for developing healthy eating habits in preschool children has evolved toward active, integrative, and play-based approaches. Traditional didactic teaching methods are less effective for this age group because preschoolers learn primarily through experience, observation, and sensory engagement rather than abstract reasoning.

### ***2.3.1 Play-Based Learning***

Play is one of the most effective pedagogical tools for health education in early childhood. Altarriba Bertran, Wilde, Berezvay, and Isbister (2019); Gibbs (2019) demonstrate that interactive games involving food sorting, cooking simulations, and storytelling can significantly increase children’s willingness to try new foods. Role-playing activities—such as pretending to be “nutrition explorers” or “fruit detectives”—create emotional connections with healthy foods and reduce food neophobia (fear of new foods). Simpson et al. (2020) emphasize that play-based learning allows educators to integrate nutrition concepts seamlessly into daily routines, including snack time discussions, classroom gardening, or art projects featuring fruits and vegetables. This approach fosters experiential learning, where children associate healthy food with fun and social interaction rather than restriction or obligation.

### ***2.3.2 Integrated and Cross-Curricular Learning***

Modern methodologies advocate for integrating nutrition education across different learning domains — such as science, language, and physical education. Grady et al. (2023); Salmon et al. (2018) found that combining nutritional themes with storytelling and physical activities increases engagement and retention. For instance, children can count fruits during math lessons, describe colors and textures in

language classes, or discuss healthy meals in group discussions. This integration aligns with the Reggio Emilia approach, which promotes child-led exploration and the use of real-world experiences as learning materials. In this context, nutrition education becomes part of a holistic pedagogical environment that values curiosity, participation, and collaboration.

### *2.3.3 Family and Community Involvement*

Research consistently highlights the role of the family in reinforcing nutrition education. Scaglioni et al. (2018) found that parental modeling strongly influences children's food choices. Educational programs are most effective when they involve parents through workshops, cooking demonstrations, and take-home materials that encourage consistent practices at home (Putra, Ahadiyat, & Keumalahayati, 2023). Additionally, the inclusion of community stakeholders—such as health workers, dietitians, and local food producers—enhances the social relevance of preschool nutrition programs. Zarnowiecki et al. (2020) emphasize that collaborative programs between schools and communities lead to sustained behavioral changes and foster a culture of healthy living.

## **2.4 Global Models and Best Practices in Nutrition Education**

International organizations such as WHO, FAO, and UNICEF have developed several frameworks for promoting healthy eating in early childhood education. The WHO Nutrition-Friendly Schools Initiative in 2020 recommends combining nutrition education with supportive food environments and policies that limit unhealthy food exposure. In Finland and Sweden, preschool curricula include structured nutrition education emphasizing local foods, cooking skills, and outdoor activities (Lehtisalo et al., 2021; Levak et al., 2024). These programs successfully integrate health, sustainability, and cultural identity, leading to measurable improvements in children's dietary diversity.

Similarly, in Japan, the “Shokuiku” program, launched in 2005, institutionalized nutrition education across all levels of schooling, starting from preschool. Kobayashi, Hayakawa, Somarathne, and Okafor (2019) reported that children exposed to Shokuiku demonstrated higher knowledge of balanced diets and greater consumption of vegetables compared to those without formal nutrition education. In Australia, the “Eat Smart, Play Smart” initiative combines nutritional guidelines with physical activity promotion in early learning centers (Pollard et al., 2017). This model recognizes the interdependence between healthy eating and active lifestyles, aligning with WHO recommendations for comprehensive health education. In developing countries, community-based preschool interventions are increasingly recognized as effective. For instance, Rahmani and Nadhiroh (2024) in Indonesia demonstrated that integrating nutrition education into local early childhood programs improved children's dietary diversity and reduced anemia prevalence. These findings suggest that culturally adapted, low-cost educational strategies can have significant health impacts even in resource-limited settings.

## **2.5 Pedagogical Innovations and the Role of Digital Tools**

Recent years have witnessed the introduction of digital media and technology-assisted learning in preschool nutrition education. Manago and McKenzie (2022); Fitton, MacKenzie, and Read (2024) observed that interactive digital games and animated videos help capture children's attention and reinforce positive eating messages. Mobile applications that simulate food selection or promote healthy recipes have also proven effective when combined with teacher guidance (Endi, Fanggalda, & Ndoen, 2023). However, scholars such as Smith, Buckton, Patterson, and Hilton (2023) caution that digital tools should supplement—not replace—human interaction and experiential learning. Preschoolers benefit most from tactile, sensory, and social experiences, such as cooking classes, food tasting, or gardening projects, where they can directly engage with real foods. Thus, digital materials must be embedded in a balanced, multisensory pedagogical framework.

## **2.6 Challenges and Barriers in Developing Healthy Eating Habits**

Despite the proven effectiveness of early nutrition education, several barriers persist.

First, socioeconomic inequalities significantly affect children's access to nutritious foods and educational opportunities. UNICEF in 2022 reports that food insecurity and poverty reduce the feasibility of healthy eating, even when knowledge is provided. Second, teacher preparedness remains a challenge. Many early childhood educators lack training in nutrition or health education, resulting in

inconsistent implementation of programs (Hayes & O'Brien, 2020). Continuous professional development and curriculum integration are therefore critical for sustainability. Third, commercial food marketing targeted at children often undermines educational messages. Harris et al. (2021) demonstrate that exposure to advertisements for sugary and processed foods strongly influences children's food preferences, counteracting school-based interventions. Policy-level regulations on advertising and school food environments are thus necessary complements to educational efforts. Lastly, cultural norms and family eating patterns can either support or hinder program success. In cultures where high-calorie or processed foods are symbols of status or affection, educators must use culturally sensitive strategies that promote balance rather than restriction.

### ***2.7 Effective Models and Future Directions***

To ensure lasting behavioral change, researchers advocate for multi-component, participatory programs that combine education, environment modification, and parental engagement. Contento and Koch (2020) argue that effective nutrition education must involve repetition, reinforcement, and modeling within consistent settings. Future directions in early nutrition education emphasize sustainability and local relevance. Programs that include school gardens, farm-to-table activities, and lessons on food origin connect children to nature and promote ecological responsibility. Holloway et al. (2023) found that preschoolers involved in gardening projects were more likely to consume fruits and vegetables voluntarily. Another emerging approach is the integration of mindfulness practices into eating education, encouraging children to recognize hunger cues and appreciate food through sensory awareness (Emerson, 2022). Such techniques support the development of positive relationships with food and prevent emotional overeating in later years. Finally, collaborative partnerships between educators, healthcare professionals, and policymakers are essential for scaling up successful models. National curricula should embed nutrition education as a core competency rather than an extracurricular activity, ensuring equal access for all preschool-aged children.

## **3. Methodology**

The methodology of this study is based on a system of pedagogical approaches aimed at developing healthy eating habits in preschool-aged children. The research employed methods such as interactive activities, games, circle discussions, and practical exercises conducted with 3-7-year-old children, based on the "First Step" state program. The methodology was designed taking into account the children's physical, mental, and intellectual development, as well as their rational eating and hygiene skills. During the research process, children's eating habits and attitudes toward a healthy lifestyle were identified through pedagogical observations, parent and teacher surveys, as well as individual and group activities. At the same time, encouraging children from an early age to eat properly, adopt a healthy lifestyle, and take responsibility for their own health was established as a key criterion of the pedagogical process. The research results were aimed at developing methodological recommendations and effectively fostering healthy eating habits within the preschool education system.

## **4. Results and discussion**

In preschool education, the development of healthy eating habits in children, as a pedagogical challenge, has continuously evolved and improved alongside the culture of nutrition, types of food, and dietary practices throughout human evolution and progress. In other words, human history is, in turn, the history of meals and food products. In today's modern world, nutrition is increasingly recognized not only as a factor that determines a person's socio-economic status but also as a crucial condition for safeguarding their health as a biological being. In this article, the extensive awareness and promotional activities carried out to organize healthy nutrition in preschool education institutions are discussed, along with the educational activities, games, and group discussions aimed at developing proper eating habits among preschool children. Using authorial methods, the partial program for 3-7-year-old children based on the "First Step" state curriculum has been presented in detail. It is stated that the implementation of this program has enabled children, educators, and parents to further develop their knowledge and skills regarding adherence to healthy eating principles (Chen, Huang, & Liu, 2022; Fináncz et al., 2023; Moreira et al., 2023).

When discussing the scientific and methodological aspects of the issue, it is first necessary to emphasize that “nutrition” is a multifaceted and complex concept. Nutrition is a complicated, multi-dimensional process whose main purpose is to promote the growth and development of a child’s body, ensure maximum efficiency and well-being during adulthood, and maintain health and longevity in old age. Nutrition also serves as a source of aesthetic pleasure and an important means of therapy. Healthy eating skills are practical and cognitive actions that are formed and continuously refined based on the knowledge and experience gained about proper and rational nutrition at various stages of development.

When considering preschool-aged children specifically, their bodies undergo rapid growth, and the development of organs and systems continues, with metabolic processes occurring at a high rate. The central nervous system develops rapidly. By the end of the preschool period, the child masters all major motor skills and has well-developed speech. They are particularly characterized by high physical activity, which requires a significant expenditure of energy. The child’s body during such development requires a large amount of substances necessary for cell formation, primarily proteins, vitamins, and minerals. Therefore, feeding preschool-aged children differs in quantity and quality from feeding younger infants. Considering the psychological characteristics of children, although parents often try to give their children foods they like or limit certain foods for specific reasons, it is observed that the food choices and preferences of adults and children are not the same. Therefore, it is necessary to develop proper eating habits, that is, skills, in children themselves. The formation of eating habits in humans occurs specifically during childhood (Ruziyeva, 2020).

Therefore, it is necessary to properly develop eating habits in children. Today, in countries around the world, the formation of healthy eating habits in children is recognized as an integral part of the practical activities of preschool education institutions.

Based on the above, the formation of healthy eating habits in children within preschool education institutions:

1. a distinctive component of strengthening the health of the younger generation in our country and raising a comprehensively healthy and well-rounded generation;
2. as a key element of fostering a healthy lifestyle and proper eating habits in children, it represents one of the pressing issues in modern preschool pedagogy;
3. the conditions created by the state in preschool institutions to ensure healthy nutrition also define the essential pedagogical prerequisites for developing children’s healthy eating habits;
4. contributes to enhancing the professional skills and competencies of the pedagogical team in shaping healthy eating habits in children;
5. today, the development of healthy eating habits in children is recognized as an important pedagogical process necessary for the education and upbringing of preschool-aged children (Ruziyeva, 2020)

Having its own experience, technologies, and methods allows Uzbekistan to integrate more actively into the international educational environment. A child’s growth and development are considered the main indicators of their health. The intensity of growth and development processes is a fundamental characteristic of childhood. The reliability of the immune system and the harmonious physical, emotional, and intellectual development are considered key indicators of health. A healthy child is active, resilient, and curious. They adapt easily to environmental conditions. It should be taken into account that a fundamental characteristic of childhood is the intensity of growth and development. The younger the child, the more intensive these processes are.

It is well known that the preschool age is crucial for forming the foundations of physical and mental health. After all, by the age of seven, a person goes through a significant stage of development that will not be repeated later in life. It is during this period that the rapid development of organs and the formation of functional systems in the body take place. Key personal traits and attitudes toward oneself and others are formed. At this stage, it is important to develop in children the knowledge base and practical skills related to a healthy lifestyle, proper nutrition, and a conscious interest in physical activity.

Children should be taught from an early age to take responsible care of their health, to have a conscious need for proper nutrition, and to understand that health is the greatest value granted to a person by nature. Health is the fundamental value of human life. Every child wants to be strong, energetic, and agile, that is, to run without getting tired, ride a bicycle, swim, play with other children in the yard, and not suffer from constant headaches or colds. Feeling unwell and being ill negatively affect a child's overall development. The task of a preschool education institution is to preserve and strengthen a child's health, with proper nutrition being an integral part of this mission. Forming initial ideas in children about a healthy lifestyle and nutrition constitutes an important part of the work of preschool educators (Suhaimi & Mustafa, 2024)

The formation of a healthy child is closely connected with nutrition. Nutrition is an external environmental factor, while simultaneously possessing the significant characteristic of transforming external influences into factors affecting internal organs and body systems. Proper nutrition impacts the central nervous system and the child's intellectual development. In preschool children aged 6-7, developing healthy eating habits, including basic knowledge about their own bodies, fostering the habit of following hygiene rules, and understanding that human health depends on environmental conditions, achieving these goals, comprehending the acquired ideas, and generalizing and systematizing children's knowledge constitute a fundamental component of the pedagogical system. In our practical study, it has been demonstrated that the system of ideas and skills for developing healthy eating habits, which form the basis of a child's behavior, helps in establishing healthy relationships with the natural world and other people, as well as in self-regulation of actions. The child, in turn, becomes a solid foundation for responsible human and social relationships in the future.

It is necessary to ensure the continuity between preschool institutions and the family in properly and healthily feeding children. These two processes complement each other in forming correct and healthy eating habits in children. The lack of individual interaction with the child, the absence of programs in preschool institutions for developing proper and healthy eating skills, parents' misconceptions about healthy eating, parents' failure to use literature on proper and healthy nutrition, adults' desire to create conditions in the family for themselves, their misunderstanding of the importance of these conditions for the child, failure to understand the age-specific characteristics of preschool children, treating children as miniature adults, and feeding them as if they were adults, all these factors hinder the proper formation of healthy eating habits in children. It is of great importance to skillfully use the assessment of children's activities and behavior as motivation for their development. The necessity of further developing their eating habits is emphasized. The advantages of relatively "gentle" relationships between parents and the child, the emotional fulfillment of these relationships, the consistency and continuity of parents' behavior according to the pedagogical program, and their influence on the child are also highlighted.

## **5. Conclusion**

### **5.1 Conclusion**

The methodology for developing healthy eating habits in preschool children has been found, based on research results, to have a direct impact on their physical, mental, and social development. The study showed that through interactive games, circle discussions, and practical activities, children aged 3-7 effectively develop habits of proper nutrition, hygiene rules, and healthy lifestyle skills. At the same time, the involvement of parents and educators enhances children's interest in food choices and rational eating. The study confirmed that developing healthy eating habits in preschool institutions not only strengthens children's health but also contributes to their intellectual, psychological, and social development. In conclusion, forming healthy eating and lifestyle habits in children is an integral part of the pedagogical process, laying the foundation for their future responsible and healthy way of life.

### **5.2 Recommendations**

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, several recommendations can be made to strengthen the methodology for developing healthy eating habits among preschool children:

1. Integrate nutrition education into preschool curricula by systematically incorporating lessons on healthy eating, hygiene, and lifestyle into daily pedagogical activities. This ensures that healthy behavior formation becomes a continuous and structured learning process.
2. Enhance parental involvement through workshops, informational materials, and collaborative activities that align home and school practices in promoting balanced nutrition and healthy lifestyles.
3. Use interactive and play-based learning methods—such as games, storytelling, and role-playing—to make nutrition education more engaging and age-appropriate, thereby increasing children’s intrinsic motivation to adopt healthy habits.
4. Provide professional training for educators to improve their competence in implementing health-focused educational programs and effectively guiding children’s nutritional behavior.
5. Collaborate with healthcare professionals and nutrition experts to develop evidence-based guidelines and educational materials suited to preschool children’s developmental needs.

These measures will foster an integrated, participatory, and sustainable approach to health education, ensuring that preschool institutions contribute meaningfully to the lifelong well-being and responsible lifestyle development of children.

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