


# Chapter 9

## Teaching Social Studies as an Interdisciplinary Field in Preschool Education

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### **ABSTRACT**

*This chapter deals with the importance and methods of teaching social studies in preschool period. First, it focuses on why and how social studies should be taught in preschool. The authors explain how social studies can be taught effectively, taking into account children's learning capacity and needs at this stage. The chapter discusses the basic principles and strategies for teaching social studies in preschool. Among these, methods such as play-based learning, interactive activities, storytelling, and drama stand out. It also emphasizes the importance for teachers to support children's curiosity and desire to explore, and to relate social studies to everyday life. The chapter also discusses how teaching social studies in the preschool period can contribute to students' cognitive, emotional, and social development. It emphasizes how topics such as the development of social skills, cultural awareness, and tolerance can be taught in this period.*

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## INTRODUCTION

In its broadest sense, the period spanning from a child's birth until the commencement of primary school is commonly referred to as the “preschool period,” with the educational endeavors undertaken within this timeframe encapsulated under the rubric of “preschool education” (Oktay, 1990, p. 151). This foundational education endeavors to cultivate fundamental cognitive and emotional skills in children. While the contemporary conception of preschool education may be a relatively recent phenomenon, its antecedents trace back to antiquity, underscored by ongoing discourse and emphasis across epochs (Başal, 2005). A historical examination reveals a lineage of philosophical, educational, and scholarly voices advocating for the early education of children (Arslan, 2005). These luminaries cast early education as pivotal, with profound implications for an individual's vocational acumen and adaptability in adulthood. For instance, Plato, among the early proponents, articulated in his magnum opus “Republic” the formative influence of early childhood education on later-life accomplishments. Plato's discourse underscores the consequential role of early education in shaping adult trajectories. Furthermore, within the same treatise, the philosopher delved into considerations of individual disparities, endeavoring to delineate strategies conducive to the revelation and cultivation of each child's unique talents (Oğuzkan & Oral, 1987).

### Preschool Education

During the 17th and 18th centuries, luminaries such as Comenius, Locke, and Rousseau directed their intellectual gaze not only towards the essence of human nature and the myriad influences shaping it but also delved into the realm of early childhood education (Ural & Ramazan, 2007). Amidst their contemplations on the foundational tenets of childhood education, these thinkers meticulously scrutinized the processes underpinning early learning. Notably, Comenius emerged as a seminal figure, hailed as an educational trailblazer for his pioneering vision. Comenius advocated for the provision of education from infancy, eschewing discrimination based on gender or socioeconomic status, with the overarching aim of elevating societal standards of living (Oğuzkan & Oral, 1987). His advocacy underscored a commitment to egalitarian principles, positing education as a universal right accessible to all, irrespective of social or economic background. In essence, Comenius's ethos epitomized a progressive stance, championing educational equity as a cornerstone of societal advancement.

The 18th and 20th centuries emerge as pivotal epochs witnessing the institutionalization and widespread proliferation of preschool education (Arslan, 2005). These eras, marked by the profound impacts of the industrial revolution and atten-

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