

Values and Life Skills Education for Preschool Children through a Social-Emotional Approach: Orientations from Vietnam's Pilot Early Childhood Education Curriculum

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
Article history Received: August 26, 2026 Revised: September 24, 2026 Accepted: September 26, 2026 Published: September 30, 2026 Keywords values education life skills social-emotional education preschool children early childhood education curriculum  License by CC-BY-SA Copyright © 2027, The Author(s).	Values and life skills education plays an important role in children's personality formation, adaptability, and social participation from the early years. In the context of Vietnam's pilot Early Childhood Education Curriculum being implemented from the 2026–2027 school year, with an emphasis on holistic development, child-centred education, play, and experiential learning, identifying an appropriate approach to values and life skills education for preschool children is necessary. This paper employs document analysis of Vietnamese early childhood curriculum documents and selected national and international literature on values education, life skills, and social-emotional learning. The paper clarifies the relationships among values, life skills, and social-emotional competencies and proposes five educational orientations together with appropriate ways of implementation in preschool settings. Values and life skills education should be integrated into play, experiential activities, and daily routines; embedded in meaningful situations; supported through teacher modelling and consistent educational environments; and strengthened through preschool–family–community collaboration. This approach can help avoid fragmented and didactic teaching of values and life skills and better align educational practice with the orientations of Vietnam's renewed early childhood education curriculum.
How to cite: Anh, P. T. (2027). Values and Life Skills Education for Preschool Children through a Social-Emotional Approach: Orientations from Vietnam's Pilot Early Childhood Education Curriculum. <i>Journal of Education and Social Science</i>, 3(2), 72-80. doi: https://doi.org/10.70716/jess.v3i2.852	

INTRODUCTION

Preschool education is the initial level of the national education system, laying the foundation for holistic development and the formation of the early elements of a child's personality (MOET, 2021). Beyond physical, cognitive, linguistic, and aesthetic development, the early years are a crucial period for children to develop self-awareness, regulate their behavior, establish relationships with others, choose how to conduct themselves, and adapt to life situations. Therefore, education on life values and life skills should be regarded as an integral part of the educational process for children, rather than as supplementary content or isolated lessons.

A growing body of research supports this view. Denham et al. (2014) found that preschoolers' social-emotional learning, assessed through self-regulation, emotion knowledge, social problem solving, and social-emotional behavior, was related to their later classroom adjustment and academic readiness in kindergarten. In a similar direction, Jones et al. (2015) reported that children's social competence at kindergarten entry is associated with their wellness in later life. These findings suggest that the values, attitudes, and skills formed in the preschool years are not merely short-term behavioral outcomes but part of the foundation on which children build their subsequent adaptation to school and society.

The current preschool education curriculum aims to foster children's holistic development, shape the initial elements of their personalities, and prepare them for entry into Grade 1 (Ministry of Education and Training [MOET], 2021). As part of the ongoing reform process, on February 12, 2026, the Ministry of Education and Training issued Decision No. 388/QĐ-BGDĐT, approving a pilot preschool education

curriculum to be implemented starting from the 2026–2027 academic year; subsequently, Official Dispatch No. 2595/BGDĐT-GDMN, dated May 14, 2026, provided guidelines for the pilot implementation at selected preschool education institutions. The curriculum maintains a focus on holistic, integrated, and child-centered development, emphasizing learning through play and experiential activities, while also prioritizing flexibility and the initiative of educational institutions (MOET, 2026a, 2026b).

In this context, the approach to teaching life values and life skills also requires re-examination. If values education merely requires children to memorize standards such as "knowing how to love," "sharing," or "being polite," or if life skills education is delivered through isolated lessons, children may understand adult expectations without necessarily being able to apply them in real-life situations. A more critical issue is creating opportunities for children to understand, experience, choose, and practice appropriate behaviors.

This concern is closely related to a broader tension in early childhood education. Yogman et al. (2018) observe that early childhood programs are sometimes pressured to add more didactic components and less playful learning, and they emphasize the importance of a balanced curriculum that recognizes the developmental value of play. For values and life skills education, this tension is particularly relevant: lessons that transmit adult expectations verbally may be easy to organize, but they offer children few opportunities to test, adjust, and internalize those expectations through their own actions. Rethinking the approach therefore means shifting attention from what children are told about values and skills to what they are enabled to experience and do in meaningful situations.

Vũ (2020) defines life skills education for preschool children as a process of organizing educational activities aimed at shaping and developing their psychosocial competencies by equipping them with relevant knowledge, values, attitudes, and skills. Đặng et al. (2021) also emphasize the teacher's role in identifying and selecting life skills content that is essential and appropriate for preschool children. These perspectives indicate that values, attitudes, and skills do not exist in isolation but are interconnected during the development of a child's behavior and competencies.

Internationally, the World Health Organization (WHO, 1997) identifies core life skills such as decision-making, problem-solving, communication, interpersonal relationships, self-awareness, and empathy. UNICEF (2019) approaches transferable skills as a key component of lifelong learning. Meanwhile, the social-emotional learning framework of the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL, 2020) highlights five competency areas: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making.

Although these frameworks originate from different institutions and purposes, they share an emphasis on competencies that are developed through practice rather than through knowledge transmission alone. Evidence from program evaluations points in the same direction. Durlak et al. (2011), in a meta-analysis of 213 school-based universal social and emotional learning programs, found that participants showed improved social and emotional skills, attitudes, behavior, and academic performance compared with controls. At the preschool level, Domitrovich et al. (2007) examined a structured preschool curriculum designed to improve young children's social and emotional competence in a randomized trial. Taken together, these sources justify examining how the international frameworks can inform values and life skills education in the Vietnamese preschool context.

Based on these foundations, this article focuses on: (1) clarifying the relationship between values, life skills, and social-emotional competencies in preschool children; and (2) proposing a suitable framework for values and life skills education; and (3) determining certain organizational approaches within the context of implementing the pilot preschool education program.

METHOD

This article employs a literature review methodology. Selected sources include official documents regarding Vietnam's Early Childhood Education (ECE) curriculum; domestic studies specifically addressing life skills education for preschool children; and materials from WHO, UNICEF, and CASEL, alongside peer-reviewed international studies concerning values education and the socio-emotional development of young children. The analysis focuses on the following aspects: concepts of values, life skills, and socio-emotional competence; the interrelationships among these concepts; and educational approaches suited to the

learning characteristics of preschool children. These elements are then compared with the orientation of the pilot ECE curriculum to formulate recommendations.

The review proceeded in three steps consistent with these aims. First, the selected documents and studies were read to identify how values, life skills, and social-emotional competence are defined and described for young children. Second, these definitions and descriptions were compared in order to clarify where the concepts overlap and where they differ, particularly in terms of their focus, the behaviors through which they appear, and the educational conditions that support them. Third, the resulting conceptual relationships were examined against the holistic, integrated, and child-centered orientation of the pilot ECE curriculum (MOET, 2026a, 2026b), so that the proposed framework and organizational approaches remain consistent with the curriculum context in which they are intended to be used.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Life values, life skills, and socio-emotional competencies in preschool children

Life values and life values education

Values can be understood as principles or concepts held in high regard by individuals and communities, serving to guide choices and actions. In the context of early childhood education, Sigurdardottir et al. (2019) argue that values are conveyed to children through communication, interactions, and the daily routines of the educational setting. Consequently, life values education goes beyond merely teaching children the names of specific values; more importantly, it involves creating opportunities for them to experience the meaning of these values and gradually demonstrate them through their behavior. For preschool-aged children, values such as love, respect, honesty, responsibility, cooperation, and sharing need to be translated into tangible, relatable behaviors: listening when a peer speaks; helping a peer in need; taking care of shared belongings; knowing how to apologize and express gratitude; completing age-appropriate tasks; and caring for plants and animals. Thus, values are cultivated through experiential learning and social interaction rather than through abstract explanations. A review by Lin et al. (2025) indicates that values education in preschool settings can be implemented through curriculum integration, intentional educational activities, teacher modeling, and the educational environment.

In practice, this means that a value such as respect is not learned as a definition but through repeated, concrete episodes in which it is enacted and recognized. When a teacher waits for a child to finish speaking, thanks a child who has helped tidy the classroom, or invites children to comfort a peer who is upset, the value becomes visible in ordinary interaction. Such episodes are consistent with the observation of Sigurdardottir et al. (2019) that values are communicated to children largely through everyday communication and routines, and with the review by Lin et al. (2025), which highlights the importance of embedding values education in the curriculum and the educational environment rather than treating it as a separate subject. For preschool children, therefore, the quality of daily experiences matters greatly in shaping how values are understood and expressed.

Life skills in preschool children

The WHO (1997) defines life skills as abilities that enable individuals to engage in adaptive and positive behavior, allowing them to effectively cope with the demands and challenges of daily life. Commonly cited skills include decision-making, problem-solving, communication, interpersonal relationships, self-awareness, empathy, and coping with emotions.

For preschool children, these skills must be adapted to their developmental stage. Children do not need to make complex decisions like adults but rather learn to choose between options; they do not need to resolve complex social issues but can find ways to handle conflicts during play; and while not yet fully autonomous, they can gradually perform self-care tasks, regulate their behavior, or seek help when facing difficulties.

Vũ (2020) emphasizes that life skills education for preschoolers must be linked to fostering positive behaviors and modifying inappropriate habits or behaviors through the development of knowledge, values, attitudes, and skills. This perspective indicates that life skills education is not merely about teaching specific actions but is directly connected to the child's psychosocial well-being and value system.

UNICEF (2019) also emphasizes that transferable skills develop effectively only when learners have opportunities to practice them in diverse contexts. This is particularly relevant for preschool children, as they learn primarily through activities, experiences, interactions, and repetition within meaningful situations.

The developmental adaptation of life skills also has implications for teachers' expectations. Vŭ (2020) links life skills education to the formation of positive behaviors, while Đặng et al. (2021) stress that teachers need to identify content that is both essential and appropriate for preschool children. Taken together, these views suggest that teachers should not expect children to display skills in adult-like forms. A young child who asks for help with a difficult task, an older child who waits for a turn during a game, and another who proposes a way to share materials are each demonstrating life skills at a level that matches their stage. Recognizing and encouraging these age-appropriate forms is part of what makes life skills education meaningful rather than burdensome for young children.

Social-emotional competence and its relationship with values and life skills

According to CASEL (2020), social-emotional learning is the process through which individuals develop and apply the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to build a positive identity, manage emotions, achieve goals, show empathy, maintain supportive relationships, and make responsible decisions. The five core competency areas are: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making.

A synthesis study by Blewitt et al. (2018)—based on 79 studies involving 18,292 children aged 2–6—indicates that social-emotional development programs in early childhood education settings have a positive impact on social competence, emotional competence, self-regulation, and certain learning outcomes, while also helping to mitigate behavioral and emotional difficulties.

The findings of Blewitt et al. (2018) are consistent with the wider literature on social and emotional learning. Durlak et al. (2011) reported that school-based social and emotional learning programs were associated with improved social and emotional skills, attitudes, and behavior, and that their outcomes were moderated by the use of recommended practices for developing skills and by the presence of implementation problems. Denham et al. (2014) further showed that the components of social-emotional learning in preschool (self-regulation, emotion knowledge, social problem solving, and social-emotional behavior) are interrelated and together predict children's classroom adjustment and academic readiness. For the present article, these studies reinforce the view that social-emotional competence is best understood as an integrated set of capacities that develop through structured and repeated opportunities for practice, rather than as a collection of separate lessons.

While there is an overlap between values, life skills, and social-emotional competence, they are not identical. Values guide what children perceive as right, good, and worth striving for; life skills represent the methods children use to conduct themselves and address life's demands; and social-emotional competence reflects the ability to mobilize knowledge, values, attitudes, and skills in specific situations.

This relationship can be summarized through the following process:

Recognizing values → forming attitudes → exhibiting behaviors → practicing skills → applying them in situations → gradually developing social-emotional competence.

For instance, respect is a value. When children understand that a peer also has needs and the right to be heard, they gradually form an attitude of respect. When they know how to wait their turn, listen, or ask for permission before taking a peer's belongings, that value is manifested through behaviors and skills. As children apply these behaviors across various situations, the behaviors gradually become integral components of their social competence. Thus, the socio-emotional approach provides a foundation for integrating values and life skills into a unified developmental process, rather than treating them as two separate sets of content.

This example also illustrates why the sequence proposed above should be read as a developmental progression rather than a rigid series of steps. Children do not move mechanically from recognizing a value to applying it; they return to the same value repeatedly, in different situations and with different peers, and each return deepens their understanding and refines their behavior. A child who has learned to wait for a turn with a familiar friend may need further support to do so in a larger group or during an exciting activity. Through this repetition, values, attitudes, behaviors, and skills gradually become connected, and the child's

ability to draw on them together in new situations, which is the essence of social-emotional competence, becomes stronger.

Orientation framework for values and life skills education for preschool children

Based on a comparison of the WHO life skills framework (1997), the UNICEF transferable skills framework (2019), the CASEL SEL framework (2020), research on values education, and the characteristics of Vietnam's preschool education curriculum, the following five orientation groups are proposed:

Table 1. Framework for guiding life values and life skills education for preschool children

Orientation Group	Related Values	Selected Skills and Child Behaviors
Self-awareness and self-respect	Self-respect, self-confidence, honesty, responsibility	Recognizing and expressing emotions and needs; self-care; recognizing personal abilities; seeking help when needed
Autonomy and adaptability	Responsibility, perseverance, self-control	Waiting; regulating behavior and emotions; making choices; coping appropriately with difficulties; following safety rules
Caring for and respecting others	Love, compassion, respect, sharing	Recognizing others' emotions; empathy; listening; helping; respecting differences
Cooperation and relationship building	Cooperation, solidarity, fairness	Communicating; sharing; coordinating; negotiating; resolving conflicts; seeking and offering help
Responsible choices and actions	Responsibility, honesty, respect for community and environment	Recognizing problems; anticipating simple consequences; choosing behaviors; solving problems; taking appropriate responsibility for actions

This framework is not a rigid standard system or a checklist of content to be taught sequentially. Each value can be manifested through multiple skills, and a single skill can be linked to multiple values. For instance, conflict resolution involves communication and problem-solving while also demonstrating respect, cooperation, and fairness. Therefore, instead of organizing a weekly "lesson on values" or "lesson on skills," teachers need to create contexts that allow children to simultaneously draw upon multiple values, attitudes, and skills. This approach also aligns better with the integrated nature of the Early Childhood Education Curriculum.

The five orientation groups in Table 1 can be understood as complementary perspectives on the same developmental process. The first group, self-awareness and self-respect, concerns children's ability to recognize and express their own emotions and needs, to care for themselves, and to recognize their own abilities; it relates closely to the self-awareness competence identified by CASEL (2020). The second group, autonomy and adaptability, focuses on waiting, regulating behavior and emotions, making choices, and coping with difficulties, which relates to CASEL's (2020) self-management competence and to the WHO's (1997) emphasis on coping with emotions and decision-making.

The remaining three groups extend attention from the child to the child's relationships with others and with the wider community. Caring for and respecting others emphasizes recognizing others' emotions, empathy, listening, and helping, which relates to social awareness (CASEL, 2020). Cooperation and relationship building emphasizes communicating, sharing, negotiating, and resolving conflicts, which relates to relationship skills (CASEL, 2020). Responsible choices and actions emphasizes recognizing problems, anticipating simple consequences, and taking appropriate responsibility, which relates to responsible decision-making (CASEL, 2020). Presenting the groups in this way helps teachers see that a single classroom situation, such as resolving a disagreement over materials, may draw on several groups at once.

Orientation for organizing values and life skills education in the pilot preschool curriculum

Integration into play, experiential activities, and daily routines

Values and life skills education should be embedded in children's daily lives rather than relying primarily on dedicated lessons. Moments such as drop-off, playtime, meals, hygiene routines, outdoor activities, center-based play, or the execution of shared tasks can all serve as educational opportunities.

For example, if two children both want the same toy, instead of resolving the issue by simply telling one child to give it up, the teacher might ask: "You both want to play with this; is there a way for both of you to be happy with the outcome?" The children might suggest playing together, taking turns, or finding another solution. Through such a situation, children simultaneously practice communication, respect, negotiation, decision-making, and problem-solving.

The WHO (1997) emphasizes that life skills should be developed through participation, practice, interaction, and active learning methods. Therefore, the educational process must create opportunities for children to "do" things themselves, rather than merely listening to instructions on how to do them.

Daily routines deserve particular attention because they occur repeatedly and are shared by all children. During meals, for example, children can practice waiting, sharing, and expressing gratitude; during hygiene routines, they can practice self-care and responsibility for shared spaces; and during outdoor play, they can practice following safety rules and cooperating with peers. Because the pilot curriculum retains its focus on holistic, integrated, and child-centered development and on learning through play and experiential activities (MOET, 2026a, 2026b), such moments do not require additional content to be added to the timetable. Instead, they require teachers to recognize the educational potential already present in the day and to respond to it intentionally. This view is compatible with the observation of Yogman et al. (2018) that developmentally appropriate play with peers and adults offers a valuable opportunity to promote social-emotional, cognitive, language, and self-regulation skills.

Utilizing relatable situations and problem-based scenarios

Real-life or hypothetical situations relevant to children's lives are particularly valuable for values and life skills education—for instance: a peer refusing to share a game; a child accidentally breaking a friend's toy; a peer feeling sad; a child getting separated from a caregiver; or a group failing to agree on how to complete a task.

Teachers can use questions such as: "What is happening?", "How do you think your friend feels?", "What are the possible ways to solve this?", "What might happen if we choose this approach?", and "Which method would you like to try?" This line of questioning encourages children not only to find solutions but also to consider their own emotions and needs, as well as those of others. Through this process, children have the opportunity to simultaneously develop self-awareness, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making—key components of the CASEL (2020) SEL framework.

The value of this questioning lies in the role it gives to the teacher as a facilitator rather than a judge. Instead of announcing who is right or wrong, the teacher helps children name what happened, notice how others feel, generate alternatives, and consider likely outcomes before choosing. Each of these moves corresponds to an element of the emotion knowledge and social problem-solving components that Denham et al. (2014) identified as part of preschoolers' social-emotional learning. Over time, children who are regularly invited to think in this way may gradually begin to ask similar questions on their own, which is a step toward the self-regulation and responsible decision-making that the framework aims to develop. Teachers should nevertheless adapt the wording and number of questions to children's age, language ability, and emotional state, so that the process remains a natural conversation rather than a formal interrogation.

Leveraging the role of teacher modeling and the educational environment

Children internalize values not only through what adults say but also through how they act. Sigurdardottir et al. (2019) demonstrated that teachers convey many values to children through daily communication and interaction. Lin et al. (2025) also identified teacher modeling and a supportive environment as crucial factors in values education.

Therefore, to foster respect in children, teachers must demonstrate respect when listening to them; to encourage calm conflict resolution, adults must model calm and fair handling of situations. Inconsistencies between a teacher's words and actions can undermine the effectiveness of values education.

The classroom environment should also provide opportunities for children to make choices, collaborate, take responsibility, and participate in establishing shared norms. When children understand the rationale behind rules and are involved in their implementation, their behavior is more likely to shift from external compliance to self-regulation.

A consistent educational environment is another condition for the effectiveness of these approaches. When the values emphasized in the classroom are visible in the arrangement of space, the availability of materials, the rhythm of the day, and the ways in which adults speak to one another and to children, children receive coherent messages about what is expected and why. Sigurdardottir et al. (2019) and Lin et al. (2025) both point to the role of teachers and the educational setting in conveying values, and Durlak et al. (2011) found that school staff were able to deliver social and emotional learning programs successfully. These findings suggest that, with appropriate understanding and support, preschool teachers are well placed to create such environments as part of their everyday work.

Strengthening school-family collaboration

Values and life skills are shaped across various contexts. If children are encouraged to be self-reliant at school but have tasks done for them at home, or if they are encouraged to express their opinions at school but lack similar opportunities within the family, establishing sustainable behavioral patterns becomes difficult.

CASEL (2020) emphasizes the need to foster connections among the classroom, school, family, and community to support social-emotional development. Therefore, teachers should discuss with parents the values and skills being emphasized, while suggesting simple opportunities for children to practice them at home—such as handling age-appropriate tasks, participating in minor decisions, sharing in household chores, showing concern for others, or attempting to resolve difficulties on their own before seeking adult assistance.

Collaboration with families can take simple and practical forms. Teachers can share with parents, in accessible language, the value or skill that the class is currently emphasizing; describe a short episode in which a child practiced it; and suggest one or two small actions that parents can try at home. Such exchanges help parents see values and life skills education as part of ordinary daily life rather than as a school task. Research on family-school partnerships supports this direction: Sheridan et al. (2010) examined the effects of a parent-engagement intervention, *Getting Ready*, on preschool children's social-emotional competencies, and the meta-analysis by Sheridan et al. (2019) examined family-school interventions in relation to children's social-emotional functioning.

Bierman et al. (2023) similarly reviewed preschool-based strategies that help parents support children's social-emotional and self-regulation competencies as they prepare for the transition to formal schooling. For the pilot curriculum, this evidence suggests that preschool-family-community collaboration is not an optional addition but an integral part of how values and life skills are strengthened over time. At the same time, teachers should respect the diversity of family circumstances and avoid placing heavy additional demands on parents, so that collaboration remains supportive and realistic.

DISCUSSION

The study's findings indicate that integrating life values and life skills education with socio-emotional development aligns with the integrated approach trend in early childhood education. This perspective is consistent with the views of the WHO (1997), UNICEF (2019), and CASEL (2020), all of which emphasize the role of values, attitudes, and skills in an individual's adaptability, social interaction, and decision-making capabilities.

This consistency across frameworks is notable because the frameworks differ in origin and purpose: the WHO framework emerged from a psychosocial perspective on life skills, UNICEF's from lifelong learning, and CASEL's from research and practice on social and emotional learning. Their shared emphasis on practice, context, and the interplay of values, attitudes, and skills lends support to the integrated approach proposed here. Empirical work such as the meta-analysis of Durlak et al. (2011) and the preschool curriculum trial reported by Domitrovich et al. (2007) shows that the effects of structured social and emotional programs have been examined at both school and preschool levels, although the evidence base cited in this article comes mainly from outside Vietnam.

Furthermore, research by Sigurdardottir et al. (2019) and Lin et al. (2025) demonstrates that values in young children are shaped not only through intentional educational activities but also through daily interactions, teacher modeling, and the educational environment. This reinforces the need to implement

life values and life skills education within contexts that are familiar and meaningful to children, rather than relying primarily on isolated lessons.

These findings have practical implications for how teachers understand their own role. If values are shaped through daily interaction, then every routine, transition, and conflict is a potential educational moment, and the teacher's own conduct becomes part of the curriculum. This does not imply that teachers should never plan values-related activities; rather, planned activities are likely to be more meaningful when they are connected to, and reinforced by, what children encounter throughout the day. The emphasis on play in the work of Yogman et al. (2018) supports this connection, since play offers children a natural setting in which to rehearse cooperation, negotiation, and self-regulation with peers.

Within the context of the pilot Early Childhood Education Program, this approach enables teachers to flexibly leverage educational opportunities arising from play, experiential activities, and daily routines. However, as the proposed framework was developed based on a literature review, its suitability and practical applicability within the Vietnamese early childhood education system require further validation.

Finally, the flexibility that the pilot curriculum grants to educational institutions (MOET, 2026a, 2026b) is an important condition for applying the proposed framework. Because preschools differ in their resources, children's characteristics, and community contexts, the five orientation groups are best treated as a reference for teachers' planning and observation rather than as a fixed list of outcomes. The need for validation noted above can be addressed through classroom-based studies in which teachers apply the framework in play, routines, and problem-based situations and reflect on how children respond, and through the further examination of how families and communities can support these efforts.

CONCLUSIONS

Education on values and life skills plays a crucial role in shaping the character foundation and social adaptability of preschool children. However, values, life skills, and socio-emotional competencies should not be viewed as separate systems. Values guide what children prioritize and choose; life skills provide the means to act; and socio-emotional competencies represent the ability to mobilize values, attitudes, knowledge, and skills in real-life situations.

Based on this, the article proposes an approach to values and life skills education that follows a progression—recognizing values, forming attitudes, demonstrating behaviors, practicing skills, and applying them in situations—thereby gradually developing socio-emotional competencies. This approach is organized around five orientation groups: self-awareness and self-respect; autonomy and adaptability; caring for and respecting others; cooperation and relationship building; and responsible choices and actions.

In the context of implementing the pilot preschool education curriculum, values and life skills education should be integrated primarily through play, experiential activities, daily routines, and situations meaningful to the children. Simultaneously, it is essential to leverage the teacher's role as a role model, establish a consistent educational environment, and strengthen collaboration with families. This approach shifts the focus from merely "teaching children about values and skills" to creating opportunities for them to experience, practice, and gradually embody those values and skills—an approach better aligned with the nature of preschool education and the direction of curriculum reform.

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