

## Investigating the environmental criteria of the ideal kindergarten from the children's point of view (Case study: Kindergartens in Urmia)

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Received: 26 October 2024  
Revised: 11 December 2024  
Accepted: 07 January 2025  
Available Online: 1 February 2025

Article type: Research Paper  
<https://doi.org/10.82394/SBEA.2025.140308051188283>

### ABSTRACT

#### Research Problem:

Today, one of the most important manifestations and concerns of society is the growth, excellence, and dynamism of humans. According to many education experts, the personality of every human being is formed in the first seven years of their life. Therefore, this stage of every human being's life plays a decisive role in their future, and inattention and negligence towards it can have irreparable consequences. The world of children is the most unspoiled and purest, colorful world in the life of humans. Therefore, artists must identify their mental and emotional states and present works that are appropriate for them to establish an effective connection with this beautiful and simple world. Children need their own colorful works and environments for their growth and development. Children are valuable assets of society, and many factors affect their optimal growth. One of the most important factors is the environment in which the child learns. In the meantime, architectural knowledge, to improve the quality of children's environmental spaces, can play a significant and constructive role in revitalizing and empowering the spaces needed by children. Architectural knowledge, with aesthetic, social, and environmental approaches, tries to create joyful, lively, and efficient environments in children's environmental spaces. Therefore, considering that kindergartens in Urmia have not been studied in any research so far, and children's views on the environmental criteria of a desirable kindergarten have not been addressed. This research aims to find the ideal environmental standards of a desirable children's kindergarten from the children's point of view for use in architectural design.

#### Research Question:

What are the characteristics of a desirable kindergarten from the perspective of children? And which of these characteristics are the environmental criteria for a desirable kindergarten from the standpoint of experts?

#### Research Method:

The current research consists of two parts. In the first part, through a descriptive qualitative method, it examines the characteristics of children in terms of mental perception and also analyzes children's drawings. The statistical population in this research is all the children of the four-star kindergartens in Urmia, 192 boys and girls aged 4 to 6 years, and the research tool is children's drawings under the title "Drawing of their favorite kindergarten". The second part of the research is fundamental

in terms of purpose and quantitative in terms of method. After getting to know the factors children expect, a semi-structured questionnaire was prepared as a Likert scale and given to 10 experts in this field to measure the research's reliability. Then it was investigated by the Delphi technique in three rounds.

**The Most Important Results and Conclusion:**

Children are valuable assets of a country, and paying attention to the environments in which children spend a large part of their time, as well as considering the wishes and interests of children in designing these environments, is very effective in shaping their personality, creativity, and interests. Therefore, according to previous research and the results of the analysis of this study, open space, resting place, connection with nature, play facilities, color diversity, space diversity, collective space, lighting, easy access, furniture, security, music, flexibility are the environmental criteria of a desirable kindergarten from the perspective of children and experts. Also, according to the results of the analysis of the questionnaires, the most important environmental factor in kindergarten from the perspective of experts is children's play facilities. Because all experts have given the highest score to this factor. After the factor of play facilities, factors such as connection with nature, collective spaces, security, and lighting have obtained the highest score from the perspective of experts. Space diversity and color diversity are the effective factors after these factors. After them are the flexibility and legibility of the spaces, then the geographical location of the kindergarten (in terms of proximity to the child's home), and the variety of furniture. The child's resting place in the kindergarten is important after all the aforementioned factors, and finally, music can also be one of the effective environmental factors in the kindergarten. Therefore, play facilities have the greatest impact and music has the least impact on the position of effective environmental factors in kindergartens. Also, experts have considered other factors to be effective in a desirable kindergarten in addition to environmental factors, but given that the purpose of this research was on the effective environmental factors in kindergarten spaces, the study of other factors mentioned in this article has been avoided. These factors include: the personality of the instructor, the instructor's thinking and life style, the instructor's teaching style and specialized training, the instructor's appearance, the instructor's education, the kindergarten management, the staff's relationships with children, the governing rules and the lenient or strict implementation of these rules on children, the content of the program, and the type of game. These factors can be topics for future research.

**KEYWORDS**

Child, Environmental criteria, Ideal kindergarten, Environmental psychology, Architecture.