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Current Situation and Improvement of Home Co-Education in Kindergartens in China

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Abstract

In the process of educating children, making full use of family education and early childhood education can effectively help children grow up healthily [2]. The research object of this paper is the current situation and improvement strategies of Chinese kindergarten home co-parenting. Through the discovery of existing problems in Chinese kindergarten home co-parenting, and in-depth research, the relevant optimization strategies are put forward. First of all, this paper analyzes and discusses the concept of home co-education in kindergartens in China, the main cooperative forms of home co-education and its current situation. According to these contents, the paper puts forward the main problems existing in the home co-education of kindergartens, including the comprehensive quality of preschool teachers to be improved, the differences in the education concept of the home and the lack of effective communication between the two sides of the home. Finally, it analyzes these problems and puts forward relevant strategies.

Keywords: Kindergarten; Home Co-education; Home-school partnership

Introduction

With the opening of China's two-child policy, the demand for early childhood education has been steadily increasing, and the expectations for its quality have also been on the rise. The concept of 'home-school partnership' in kindergartens effectively raises parents' awareness of the importance of family education and their role in it, while also enhancing their sense of responsibility towards cooperating with teachers in educating their children [3]. The main focus of home-school partnership is to strengthen the connection and communication between families and teachers, facilitating the exchange and feedback of information related to early childhood education. This ensures that both families and schools have a comprehensive understanding of a child's behavior,

enabling personalized education tailored to the child's specific needs. This, in turn, establishes a positive feedback loop between family and school education, ultimately improving the effectiveness of education.

Simultaneously, home-school partnership also provides a platform for parents and teachers to exchange educational experiences and share information about the child, thereby enhancing the quality of education received by the child. While home-school partnership has made significant progress compared to the past, and the level of communication between teachers and parents has greatly improved, there are still some optimization issues that need to be addressed in current kindergarten home-school partnership.



Concept, Main Forms of Cooperation, and Current Situation of Home-School Collaboration in Chinese Kindergartens

Concept of Home-School Collaboration in Kindergartens:

Home-school partnership, as the name suggests, involves parents and kindergartens jointly educating children to fulfill the educational mission for young children [4]. Family education, one of China's three major pillars of education, is a way in which parents teach children skills through words, deeds, and behaviors within the family [5]. The family serves as a factory for shaping human character and is the first environment where children learn and imitate. Parents are the primary role models for children, thus exerting a significant influence on their development. Kindergarten education in China primarily focuses on behavior regulation, imparting basic knowledge, teaching etiquette, and nurturing children's abilities [6]. The educational content in kindergartens encompasses not only fundamental knowledge but also social knowledge. By providing diverse educational content, children's overall quality can be enhanced. In summary, family education and kindergarten education are indispensable elements in the education of young children. Effective integration of family education and kindergarten education is essential to ensure comprehensive child development.

Main Forms of Home-School Collaboration in Chinese Kindergartens:

In Chinese kindergartens, collaboration between homes and schools primarily involves proactive communication from the kindergarten to parents and includes the following four key aspects. Firstly, kindergarten teachers make full use of the time when parents drop off or pick up their children to report on the child's activities at school, ensuring that parents have a clear understanding of their child's life at the kindergarten [7]. Secondly, teachers and parents need to engage in empathy, understanding education from the parents' perspective, and what kind of education they hope their children will receive at kindergarten. This approach ensures the quality of early childhood education [8]. Thirdly, parents and teachers can communicate through the internet, such as creating parent-teacher groups, facilitating seamless communication between parents and teachers, and serving as a bridge for cooperation [9]. Fourthly, parents should actively make friends with teachers, demonstrating trust in them. This support provides teachers with the mental strength they need and allows them to carry out standardized and rationalized education for children, laying the foundation for high-quality education.

Current Situation of Home-School Collaboration in Chinese Kindergartens:

As of the present, home-school partnership in China has made effective progress compared to previous years. Communication and exchanges between teachers and parents have greatly increased. However, there are still some issues in furthering home-school partnership for young children. For instance, some parents believe that once they have entrusted their children to kindergartens, the responsibility for managing them should be solely with the teachers. This misconception about kindergarten education has led to a separation between home education and kindergarten education. It has also hindered normal communication

between teachers and parents, making it challenging to ensure that parents fully understand their child's life at kindergarten. To address this issue, teachers need to actively engage parents in discussions to help them understand the relationship between home education and kindergarten education. This will improve parents' awareness of the completeness of the education their child receives and ensure the free flow of information between home and school, providing a foundation for children's development. This requires teachers to actively coordinate and guide parents on how to effectively educate their children, integrating scientific education into family education.

Existing Issues in Home-School Collaboration in Chinese Kindergartens

Need for Improvement in Comprehensive Qualities of Early Childhood Educators:

Home-school partnership requires full cooperation and support from both families and kindergartens, and the quality of early childhood educators is a critical component. Kindergartens in China are divided into public and private sectors. Public kindergartens generally have well-qualified teaching staff, strong teamwork, standardized management, and affordable tuition fees, but they often face resource constraints. As of December 28, 2022, there were a total of 294,832 kindergartens in China, with 108,700 being public kindergartens, accounting for 36.86% of the total [1]. This means that over half of the children in China attend private kindergartens for their education. In other words, only a minority of families have access to kindergartens with strong teaching staff and well-regulated management.

Public kindergartens possess excellent resources and sufficient funding, but their teaching staff often follows a very systematic teaching philosophy. The curriculum primarily adheres to teaching outlines, and the classroom environment may lack liveliness. This can be detrimental to children with weak interpersonal skills and introverted personalities, as it hampers their ability to practice speaking and expressing themselves. In contrast, private kindergartens often offer a rich and engaging curriculum. Unlike public kindergartens, they are not restricted by enrollment quotas. When student numbers become excessively high, they hire new teachers. However, widespread enrollment leads to increased operating costs for private kindergartens, resulting in higher tuition fees. Consequently, the teaching quality of educators in private kindergartens can vary significantly.

Overall, enhancing the comprehensive qualities of early childhood educators, regardless of whether they work in public or private kindergartens, is essential to improve the quality of home-school partnership and early childhood education in China.

Inconsistencies in Parental and Kindergarten Educational Philosophies in Home-School Collaboration:

During the process of implementing home-school partnership for young children, it can be observed that some parents still adhere to the educational philosophies of previous generations [10]. These parents, upon gaining an understanding of their child's situation at the kindergarten, may attempt to educate their child based on the issues they perceive in the kindergarten environment. However,

due to their outdated educational beliefs and methods, they tend to respond to their child's mistakes in a harsh and primitive manner. They resort to violent forms of discipline such as physical punishment and verbal abuse when the child makes errors. Their focus is often on achieving obedience in the child's behavior rather than promoting genuine psychological growth and understanding.

While it cannot be denied that this primitive and violent form of education may yield some immediate results, it is highly prone to recurrences. The child may repeat the same mistakes they made initially, without developing a normative thought process. In the long run, this type of education can cause emotional harm to the child. It can make the child afraid to make mistakes and, after committing an error, instill a fear of admitting wrongdoing to the family. Furthermore, it may exacerbate the child's anxiety and apprehension towards teachers and parents, leading to a reluctance to express themselves, self-isolation, and even issues such as poor expressive abilities and low self-confidence. These outcomes are detrimental to the child's future development.

Lack of Effective Communication Between Home and School: Throughout the process of home-school partnership, it becomes evident that although teachers and parents engage in communication, the educational impact on young children is not very pronounced [11]. Upon analysis and deeper consideration, it is found that participants in the home-school partnership include parents, teachers, and the child being educated. However, during the communication process, both parents and teachers tend to focus solely on their perspectives and ways of thinking as educators, often overlooking the child's feelings. This situation leads to the child passively receiving education rather than actively seeking the education they require.

As the one being educated, children should have a stronger right to participate in their own education. However, in the context of home-school partnership, the child's role is often confined to that of the one being educated, and they are unable to have their educational needs adequately met. This hinders the potential for personalized education tailored to the child's specific circumstances. Furthermore, relevant authorities responsible for assessing and reviewing kindergartens do not place a high emphasis on home-school partnership. There is no specialized department for inspection and assessment in this regard, and there is a lack of dedicated individuals to impart knowledge related to home-school partnership to kindergartens or parents. Consequently, both homes and schools suffer from a lack of effective communication, and there is a situation where no guidance is provided between the two parties.

Improvement Measures for the Existing Issues in Home-School Collaboration in Chinese Kindergartens

Regularly Assessing Preschool Teachers to Improve Teacher Quality: To address the issue of varying teacher qualifications and the need for improvement, we can start by raising standards for teacher recruitment, thereby enhancing the overall quality of the teaching team. At the same time, regular assessments of both the teaching team as a whole and individual teachers during their

tenure can be implemented and integrated into their performance evaluations. This ensures the quality of teaching and the personal qualities of teachers. Through assessments, teachers can be motivated to continuously learn and improve, enhancing their professional knowledge and educational skills. Assessments help teachers identify their weaknesses and provide targeted training and development, thus continually improving their educational and teaching abilities. This guarantees that children can develop comprehensively while receiving better educational content and a more effective educational experience in kindergarten. Furthermore, it promotes home-school partnership in the process of early childhood education by enhancing teacher quality, ensuring the quality of home-school partnership. The assessment of preschool teachers should be based on a fair, objective, and scientific evaluation system, taking into full consideration the characteristics of preschool children and educational objectives, while integrating it with the personal growth of teachers. Transparency and openness in the assessment process should also be ensured, providing teachers with opportunities for appeal and improvement to ensure the fairness and effectiveness of the assessment.

Shifting Parental Education Beliefs: Shifting parental beliefs about education can lead parents to recognize that early childhood education is a shared responsibility that requires cooperation between families and schools. Parents will be more willing to work closely with kindergartens, participate in educational decision-making and activities, and actively support their children's learning and development. To address the issue of parents holding outdated educational beliefs and resorting to rough methods when dealing with children's mistakes, kindergartens should actively promote scientific educational concepts to parents, strengthen interaction and communication between families and schools. This will encourage parents to engage in open communication with teachers, share their children's learning progress and growth experiences, and accept guidance and advice from teachers. This close home-school connection helps to establish a shared parenting philosophy, promoting effective and high-quality family education within the context of home-school partnership. Simultaneously, kindergartens can invite experts in early childhood education to conduct special lectures for parents, teaching them effective and efficient ways to educate their children, changing traditional parental educational beliefs, raising parents' awareness of education, and discouraging the use of violence or rough methods in educating children. This helps parents create a positive and healthy atmosphere for family education, focusing on cultivating children's autonomy, creativity, and responsibility, encouraging exploration, experimentation, and learning, and creating a conducive environment for children's growth.

Innovating Communication Methods to Improve Effectiveness: Innovating communication methods can enhance the effectiveness of communication and promote closer and more active interaction between families and kindergartens. In the process of implementing home-school partnership, children should be given more participation rights in home-school partnership. They should be empowered to voice their own needs

and preferences, allowing teachers and parents to obtain real and reliable information directly from children. To facilitate this, real-time online communication tools, such as instant parent-school communication software and online meeting platforms, can be used to enable parents and teachers to communicate at any time, ensuring accurate information dissemination. This also allows parents to stay informed about educational policies and curriculum arrangements. Furthermore, it enables real-time notification of children's learning progress, activity schedules, and important information, facilitating issue resolution and question answering. In addition to online communication methods, regular home visits and parent-teacher conferences are essential communication forms. Home visits help teachers better understand a child's home environment and build a closer relationship and trust with parents. Parent-teacher conferences provide face-to-face opportunities for teachers and parents to engage in in-depth communication, share information, address questions, and collectively discuss children's development and educational matters. Furthermore, relevant authorities should actively conduct inspections of home-school partnership to enhance their emphasis on this aspect. They should establish a top-down approach for transmitting the importance of home-school partnership, ensuring that both kindergarten teachers and parents fully recognize its significance and implement home-school partnership in daily education.

Acknowledgment

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Conflict of Interest

No conflict of interest.

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