

Practical Thoughts on Preschool Family Education from the Psychological Dimension

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Abstract: Family education for young children at the preschool stage can build their emotional foundation and social skills, help with cognitive development, and promote good behaviour. Good family education should consider all aspects of a child's life, such as fostering a sense of belonging, developing good values, creating a stable environment and enabling close communication between parents and children. Theories of attachment, ecological development, family socialisation and positive parenting are applied to preschool family education in this paper. Therefore, it is proposed that practical family education should move away from experience-based intuition and be more psychologically informed, developmentally appropriate and relationally sensitive. Based on the above analysis, emotionally secure caregiving, stable boundaries, positive communication and a good home-learning environment can reduce behaviour risks and boost resilience. The paper puts forward some feasible paths for emotional attunement, non-violent discipline, parental modelling, family-school collaboration and early intervention awareness. Psychologically grounded preschool family education is required to promote the all-round development of children and to improve the quality of family education in modern times, as this paper concludes.

Keywords: Preschool Education; Family Education; Attachment; Parenting Style; Child Development; Psychological Wellbeing.

1. Introduction

Family education for preschoolers is to be done at the earliest stage of a child's life. Before formal schooling becomes the primary place of learning and socialisation, the family offers the first emotional support, behavioural model, communication environment and value system for a young child's all-round development. At this time, children are very sensitive to their caregivers' reactions, changes in routine, mood fluctuations, etc., and fear uncertainty. As a result, family education in the preschool years cannot be reduced to simple care and discipline. It is the way in which children begin to form trust, self-regulation, social expectations and basic orientations to the world.

Preschool family education in recent years has been under the combined pressure of many factors. Some families focus too much on early academic results; others have inconsistent discipline and digital distractions, and no one offers psychological guidance. At the same time, rapid changes in society have also altered the family's structure, work hours, exposure to media and parenting ideas. Given the above changes, preschool family education should no longer be viewed simply as a private family affair but as a development problem intimately related to psychology, public health and educational quality.

Psychologically, the purpose of preschool family education is to help young children develop a secure emotional foundation, advance in thinking, regulate behaviour and adapt well to society in the long run. Good family education is not about continuous discipline or deep study. It needs to be known how children grow through attachment, interaction, imitation, environmental support, and the gradual internalisation of norms. Thus, the two are intertwined to form a kind of family-centered practice and growth environment.

This paper presents practical ideas for preschool family education based on psychology. It believes that family

education for young children should follow the regularities of development rather than being driven by anxiety, comparison or punitive habits. Section 2 introduces the main psychological foundations supporting preschool family education. Section 3 shows some typical practical problems and the development trends of these problems. Section 4 puts forward feasible paths for improving family education practice. Then the conclusion considers the overall impact of psychologically-based family education.

2. Psychological Foundations of Preschool Family Education

All psychological reflections on preschool family education start with attachment. Bowlby thought that the first kind of attachment helps children feel safe, and it is a basic need for emotional support and protection [1]. Therefore, young children's learning in family education will not be solely based on instruction. They are learning how to be emotionally stable by observing the adult relationship. Regularly responsive care from parents gives children a sense of security, builds their self-confidence in exploring independently, and creates stable self-other relationships.

Attachment research has further elaborated on the quality of this early bond. Ainsworth and his colleagues have determined that the pattern of attachment is formed according to whether, when and to what extent caregivers can meet a child's needs [2]. Therefore, daily interactions within the family will serve as a form of education. Children form psychological expectations by repeatedly experiencing comfort, neglect, inconsistency or intrusion. The tone of response during feeding, play, conflict, separation and reunion gradually forms a sense of emotional security and later behaviour regulation.

A second type of foundation is ecological development theory. Bronfenbrenner proposed that a child's life occurs in a system of nested environments, and the family is one of the

closest and most influential of these systems [3]. Family education for preschoolers should not be viewed as the sole wish of parents. Work hours, living environment, neighbourhood security, media influence, family relations and other values in society also affect it. From this perspective, we can avoid simply blaming people and learn how to raise children in real life by observing their daily lives.

The third is the foundation of family socialisation theory. Maccoby and Martin believe that parent-child interaction is an early way of learning to be socialised; therefore, a child's sense of safety and belonging is also strengthened [4]. Darling and Steinberg later refined this idea by proposing that the function of parenting style is to create a context for altering the meaning and impact of particular parenting behaviours [5]. In preschool family education, this means that the rules are not effective simply by existing. The effect will be different depending on whether it is given in a warm environment that provides stability, explains clearly and shows respect.

The fourth foundation is the early-development science foundation. Shonkoff and Phillips have collected many data to show that early childhood development results from the interaction of genes and environment, and that relational experiences in early life affect later learning, behaviour and health [6]. Therefore, it can be concluded that preschool family education should not be viewed as an auxiliary addition to later schooling. It is the basic unit that makes up all other emotions and cognitions. Therefore, psychologically grounded family education starts with respect for the timing of development, quality of relationships and accumulated experiences.

In short, the above theoretical views suggest that preschool family education should not be based on intuition alone and should go beyond academic preparation. It is a type of development that combines emotional closeness, behaviour modification and a good environment. Thus, a psychologically informed family should be viewed as both a secure emotional base and a living educational environment. At present, many families are in a hurry to achieve certain results without fully understanding the process of development.

3. Practical Problems in Preschool Family Education

A typical problem in preschool family education is that control is mistaken for guidance. Some caregivers believe that good education involves many commands, corrections and obedience training. However, parenting research indicates that children react differently to discipline based on the general emotional environment in which it takes place [5]. When control is removed from warmth, explanation and secure attachment, it may lead to compliance in the short run but anxiety, resistance or passivity in the long run. Young children in preschool are still learning to regulate their own emotions and need more assistance in this regard.

The second is that the punishment will be indefinite. Gershoff's meta-analytic review has found that corporal punishment is associated with a number of negative outcomes for children, not good mental health [7]. Punitive discipline at home may stem from parental stress, learned behaviour, or the mistaken belief that fear is effective. Punishment may curb behaviour temporarily but fails to help children learn emotional awareness, self-regulation or pro-social behaviour. Therefore, preschool education in the family should replace

violence and humiliation with firm, calm and developmentally appropriate guidance.

A third problem is the increasing pressure of education anxiety and developmental appropriateness. The Handbook of Parenting suggests that the various forms of care, stimulation, communication and regulation among parents all count as good parenting [8]. Many families are investing heavily in early literacy, numeracy and performance training, but overlooking the psychological importance of play, attachment, sleep habits and emotionally supportive relationships. If families shorten preschool education due to competition or advance children prematurely, they may fail to provide sufficient emotional and behavioural support for later learning.

The fourth is a lack of support and evidence-based guidance from parents. Sanders proposes that the Triple P-Positive Parenting Program is a public health approach to improving parenting through skill-based, supportive and preventive interventions [9]. Therefore, many problems in family education are not caused by a lack of interest but by uncertainty and stress. Parents know that shouting, inconsistency and overprotection are not effective ways, but they have no other choice. Therefore, the improvement of preschool family education should also include readily available psychological support for parents and families.

Another problem is that the focus is on children's behaviour, and the emotional reasons behind that behaviour are not considered. Preschoolers often show their discomfort, tiredness, jealousy, fear or overstimulation through tantrums, clinginess, withdrawal or opposition. If caregivers only respond to the surface behaviour, they may miss the underlying relationship and emotions in a child's reaction. Therefore, a psychological perspective needs to consider what the child is not only doing but also what the child may need, be afraid of, or be unable to express.

Family education problems will be exacerbated if the wider environmental risks are ignored. The center on the developing child at Harvard University has proposed that a science-based approach should take into account the circumstances in which families raise their children and any barriers to caregiving capacity [10]. UNICEF also believes that the results of early childhood depend on whether children receive nurturing care, safety, stimulation and supportive conditions in their early years [11]. Therefore, it can be seen that improving preschool family education cannot be achieved by having parents do better. There is a lack of social recognition for stress and inequality, and support from family members is often unavailable.

4. Practical Paths for Improvement

The first practical way is to start with the emotional security of the family in preschool education. According to attachment theory, young children need regular care and timely emotional support from caregivers to feel safe in their play and exploration of the world [1, 2]. At home in daily life, it means paying attention to the children's cues, reacting calmly rather than getting angry, and building a regular life that makes the home feel safe emotionally. Emotional safety is not weakness. It is a state in which children can feel frustrated but are still safe.

The second is to build an authoritative model of behaviour rather than a punitive one. Research on parent-child interaction and parenting styles indicates that effective family education should be warm, reasonably structured, consistent,

and explanatory [4-5]. Preschoolers need boundaries, but they also want to know why there are boundaries and how they fit in. Clear routines, simple choices, calm repetition and age-appropriate explanations are generally more effective for teaching than threats, shaming or sudden anger. Thus, discipline will be the result of self-discipline rather than external coercion.

The third way is to respect the order of development and adjust expectations according to early childhood abilities. Developmental science shows that learning, self-discipline and behaviour regulation gradually emerge and are formed through cumulative interactions rather than immediate correction [6]. Therefore, families should refrain from requiring emotional restraint, prolonged attention or social maturity that is beyond the stage of preschool children. If the expectation is reasonable, the child will see what the teacher teaches as help, not repeated failures. Therefore, it will also reduce conflicts caused by a lack of development.

The fourth way is to avoid strict punishment and strengthen positive behaviour support. Gershoff's studies show that serious punishment is harmful to development [7]. Therefore, parents can use models, redirection, praise for specific positive behaviour, and proportionate and understandable consequences to guide young children in their development. The above strategies do not reduce parental authority. On the other hand, they are more trustworthy because children perceive adults as regular, fair and emotionally stable.

The fifth way is to build a home environment that supports all-round development of children. Ecological theory and parenting studies both indicate that a child's development is the result of interactions between the child and its environment [3, 8]. In addition to study materials, families can also arrange time for sleep, play, talk, exercise, screen-free hours and other bonding activities. A psychologically healthy home is a place where there is a balance of stimulation and rest, a combination of guidance and affection, and expectations that are appropriate for one's stage of development rather than social comparison.

The sixth way is to enhance parental education and family-school cooperation. Research has shown that the evidence-based parenting support program improves parents' sense of self-efficacy in parenting through systematic instruction, moving away from a trial-and-error approach [9]. At the same time, preschools should inform parents of a child's progress and emotional regulation, behaviour habits, peer relationships, etc., as well as developmental risks. When home and preschool work together, children will be better supported in their learning at both places.

Finally, the promotion of preschool family education needs a stronger support system. Science-based and child-oriented reports indicate that young children and their families benefit most from caregiving support early on, proactively, and systematically [10, 11]. In other words, in actual family education, there should be an awareness of parental stress, the use of community resources, a willingness to seek advice when problems persist, and respect for the individuality of each child. The aim is not to create ideal parents or perfectly optimised children. To create a relational condition that allows children to grow safely, with support, dignity and space for development.

The third is parental self-assessment. Many educational conflicts in families stem not only from children's behaviour but also from the impatience of adults, unresolved stress, inconsistent beliefs, and the inheritance of parenting patterns

from previous generations. Therefore, a psychological approach to preschool family education has asked parents to reflect on their own emotional regulation and communication habits. As adults are more conscious of their own behaviour, the children will experience a more stable and less conflicting learning environment.

Help parents apply the psychological knowledge they have learned in daily life instead of keeping it as abstract theory. A regular bedtime routine, fixed rules for using screens, joint reading, brief talks after arguments, and frequent free-play time can all be employed effectively to offer emotional support and behavioural guidance. These regular routines help children associate safety with structure and gradually learn what to expect through repeated experience. They also reduce the demand for sudden punishment because children are less likely to be confused or inconsistent in their demands. Families with work pressure may be unable to implement the ideal parenting plan and can only carry out small-scale, regular practices. A few minutes of attention from me can help calm a child who is frustrated; after misbehavior, I can calmly talk to them again. Therefore, psychological family education does not need to use difficult-to-understand professional language. Parents should be able to apply the theory of development to their children's behaviour, be consistent in setting boundaries, communicate warmly, and flexibly adjust according to changes in the children. This consistency in daily life will make psychological education more practical, regular and convenient for both parents and children to learn.

5. Conclusion

Preschool family education is one of the first and most influential environments for the development of the mind. Family education should also consider the psychological needs of children and prepare them for life outside of school. It refers to the all-around development of attachment, emotion regulation, self-concept and communication skills, etc. Therefore, the effects of psychologically uninformed parenting may be felt long after a child reaches preschool age.

Based on developmental understanding rather than anxiety, coercion or inherited habits, the practical preschool family education proposed in this paper should be implemented. Attachment quality, parenting style, relational climate and environmental support all affect how children are guided and how they learn norms over time. Therefore, good family education needs to be psychologically sensitive, consistent and responsive rather than high-intensity from the parents.

The application value of the above is to link family education more closely with the process of child development. When parents create a good home life and set some rules, exercise positive discipline, provide emotional support, etc., preschool education at home can be very beneficial. It is a form of development that protects children's well-being and helps them prepare for life in society later on.

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