

Problems and Countermeasures of Education for Life in Kindergartens

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ABSTRACT

In order to know the current situation of education for life in kindergartens, the teachers from five kindergartens in different districts of Chongqing have been selected in the research, and the questionnaire survey method is applied to investigate the current situation of education for life in kindergartens. After analyzing the current situation, the actual problems of education for life in kindergartens have been disclosed: the faculty for education for life in kindergartens is weak; systematic planning lacks for education for life implemented in kindergartens; little importance has been attached to taking active advantage of family and community resources; and the traditional culture has brought negative influence. After comprehensive consideration, the solutions have been proposed that the high-quality teaching staff are built to implement the education for life in kindergartens; the kindergarten-based course system for the education for life is built in kindergartens; suitable surroundings of education for life are created in kindergartens; family and community resources are integrated and developed with cooperative education; and the support by social environment for the education for life in kindergartens is enhanced.

Keywords: *Kindergarten Education for life Problems Countermeasures*

1. FOREWORD

In 1968, an American J. Donald Walters first proposed the concept of education for life, and established the "Ananda Living Wisdom School" in California, America to initiate and practice the idea of education for life which has grown gradually since then. The education for life was introduced to China in the 1990s, and has grown fast in Taiwan and Hong Kong. With the issuance and implementation of schemes and regulations relevant to education for life in Liaoning, Shanghai, Hunan and other places, the education for life upsurged in the Chinese Mainland. At present, the education for life in China has focused on the learning stages in middle and primary schools and universities, which is relatively lack in kindergartens. In recent years, the hidden danger for the life safety of infants in the society has emerged in endlessly. The violence, suicide, murder and other unhealthy phenomena in the society have shown the younger-age trend, which have reflected the disregard to life in different degrees. Therefore, in the early stage of life, namely the preschool age, the education for life for the infants to understand, appreciate, respect and cherish life is of great significance regarding the harmonious and comprehensive development of infants' body and mind. By investigating the current situation of education for life in five kindergartens in different districts of

Chongqing, problems and countermeasures have been proposed in the research to provide the realistic reference and comparison for kindergartens to rethink own implement of education for life, convey the importance of infants' education for life to the in-service kindergarten teachers, and provide detailed exercisable suggestions for the implementation of education for life in kindergartens, so as to promote the development of education for life in kindergartens.

2. STATUS SURVEY AND ANALYSIS OF EDUCATION FOR LIFE IN KINDERGARTENS

2.1. Current cognition of kindergarten teachers for the education for life in kindergartens

The cognition for the education for life in kindergartens refers to the degree of cognition and understanding for it, including the cognition for connotation, objectives and contents. The cognition of teachers regarding the education for life in the research is shown below:

Table 1 Cognition of Teachers for the Education for Life in Kindergartens

		Percentage
Cognition for connotation	Known	11.30%
	Known to some extent	60.00%
	Not known	28.70%
Cognition for objectives	Life knowledge and survival skills	81.74%
	Process and methods of education for life	78.26%
	Establishment of correct outlook on life, values and world outlook	48.70%
Cognition for contents	Life-and-death education	73.04%
	Life safety education	66.96%
	Life and health education	49.57%
	Development of interpersonal skills	48.70%
	Correct recognition and self-acceptance	15.65%
	Life value education	6.09%
	Emphasis on surroundings	5.22%

Cognition of teachers for the connotation of education for life in kindergartens: only 11.30% of teachers have known it, which shows that the kindergarten teachers are relatively unacquainted with the education for life.

Cognition of teachers for the objectives of education for life: the objectives of education for life in kindergartens are divided into three dimensions, namely knowledge and skills, process and methods, and emotional attitude and values^[1]. Three options of such question in the questionnaire respectively represent these three dimensions. The data shows that the numbers of teachers selecting the first, second and third options respectively account for 81.74%, 78.26% and 48.70%, and only 28.69% of them have selected all. It is visible that teachers fail to thoroughly master the objectives of education for life in kindergartens.

Cognition of teachers for the contents of education for life:

the data shows that the life-and-death education and the life safety education account for the largest proportion, which are the most important in teachers' opinion. The life value education and the emphasis on surroundings account for the smallest proportion, namely 6.09% and 5.22% only. Teachers have paid little attention to spiritual life and environmental education. Thus, teachers are biased for the contents of education for life.

2.2. Life-education view of kindergarten teachers

The life-education view refers to the concepts and attitudes of kindergarten teachers for the education for life. The survey results for teachers' life-education view in the research are shown below:

Table 2 Life-education View of Teachers

		Percentage
Attitudes towards the necessity of education for life	Necessary	34.78%
	Necessary to some extent	52.17%
	Unnecessary	13.04%
How to deal with the problems of life and death raised by infants	Subject sidestepping or changing	79.13%
	Scientific and reasonable information of factors to infants	15.65%
	Aversion to infants' questioning, and rebuke	5.22%

Among the attitudes of teachers for the necessity of education for life, 52.17% of teachers deem that it is necessary to some extent to implement the education for life for infants, accounting for a half approximately. For the problems of life and death raised by infants, only 15.65% of teachers have selected the scientific and reasonable information of factors to infants, and 79.13% of them have selected to sidestep or change the subject, reflecting their negative attitude for the education for life.

2.3. Status analysis for implementation of education for life in kindergartens

2.3.1. Frequency to implement the education for life in kindergartens

The frequency to implement the education for life in kindergartens has manifested the degree of emphasis for the education for life in kindergartens and the existence of implementary plan. The survey results of implementation frequency in the research are shown below:

Table 3 Frequency to Implement the Education for Life

	Percentage
Randomly	43.48%
Once a month	24.35%
Once a week	23.48%
Often	8.70%

The data indicates that the random and frequent implementation of education for life in kindergartens accounts for 43.48% and 8.70% respectively. It can be seen that there is no regular time for the education for life in kindergartens, short of course planning.

2.3.2. Contents for the education for life implemented in kindergartens

The contents to implement the education for life in kindergartens have manifested the existence of implementary plan as well. The survey results of implemented contents in the research are shown below:

Table 4 Contents to Implement the Education for Life

	Percentage
Life safety education	67.83%
Life and health education	53.04%
Development of interpersonal skills	40.00%
Life-and-death education	26.09%
Correct recognition and self-acceptance	25.22%
Life value education	13.91%
Emphasis on surroundings	96%

The data shows the life safety education accounts for the largest proportion, following the life and health education and the development of interpersonal skills, among the contents of education for life implemented by teachers. The life value education and the emphasis on surroundings have been ignored relatively, reflecting the lack of integrity for the contents of education for life in kindergartens.

2.3.3. Current status of education for life implemented in kindergartens by external resources

The development of external resources from families and communities in the kindergartens is necessary and of great significance for the implementation of education for life. The survey results of using the family and community resources by kindergartens in the research are shown below:

Table 5 Education for Life Implemented with External Resources

	Percentage	
Propaganda for education for life to parents	Yes	29.57%
	No	70.43%
Activities regarding education for life carried out with community	Yes	31.30%
	No	68.70%

According to the data, 70.43% of teachers said there was no propaganda for the education for life to parents in kindergartens, and 68.70% of them said there was no propaganda for the education for life carried out with community. Regarding the education for life implemented in the kindergartens, the use of social resources is relatively weak.

3. PROBLEMS EXISTING IN KINDERGARTENS REGARDING THE EDUCATION FOR LIFE

3.1. Weak faculty

3.1.1. Insufficient scientific life-education view of kindergarten teachers

The life-education view refers to the concepts and attitudes of kindergarten teachers towards the education for life. The scientificity and rationality of teachers' life-education view affect their education behaviors and achievements. Teachers' attitudes towards the necessity of education for life and the way for teachers to deal with the problems of

life and death raised by infants have been surveyed in the research, and their answers have reflected their intrinsic life-education view. In the survey, almost half of the teachers deem the education for life necessary to some extent, showing that teachers are not firm enough regarding the necessity of the education for life, resulting in the unscientific and unreasonable reply to the problems of life and death raised by infants. Therefore, teachers lack of scientific life-education view and the consciousness of education for life, and have failed to understand the necessity and importance of education for life for the infants' harmonious development of body and mind, which is an important factor to restrain the infants' education for life.

3.1.2. Inadequate speciality accomplishments of kindergarten teachers for the education for life

The kindergarten teachers' speciality accomplishments for the education for life are divided into intellectual accomplishment and ability accomplishment. The intellectual accomplishment of education for life refers to the knowledge reserve of teachers for the education for life. From the survey, most of teachers are ambiguous for the concept of education for life in kindergartens, and lack the integrality for objectives and the comprehensiveness for

contents, as results of low quality of teachers and the lack of the contents related to education for life in the education accepted.

The ability accomplishment of education for life refers to the skills and ability level of the education for life. According to the survey, the paths and approaches of teachers to implement the education for life are not diversified enough. Teachers have deficient comprehensive application for the implementation of education for life, and shall keep exploring and practicing. It reflects that the quality of teachers is lower in comprehensive utilization of various approaches, methods and principles, and they lack the ability accomplishment adaptable to changing circumstances upon the time and local conditions according to different contents of education for life.

3.2. Lack of systematic planning for the activities of education for life

Upon the current situation, there is no regular time interval for kindergarten teachers to carry out the activities of education for life. Most of teachers select the activities randomly, including random teaching in daily life or penetration teaching in the activities relevant to the education for life. Among the contents of education for life implemented by teachers, the life safety education and the life and health education have accounted for a large number, and there are less other contents. The frame is deficient for the contents of education for life in kindergartens. Above situations have manifested that the education for life has not been separately listed as a subject in kindergartens, lacking the term plan, and monthly and weekly plans with irregular time and incomplete contents. It can be seen that less attention has been paid to the education for life in kindergartens, and the systematic planning and overall framework are insufficient to implement the education for life with the shortage of kindergarten-based course system in kindergartens.

3.3. Lack of development and utilization for external resources

The education for life relates to the lives and livelihood of infants completely. The communities in which infants' families and kindergartens are located are closely linked to their lives and livelihood, with the existence of abundant resources for the education for life. The active development of kindergartens can be regarded as the extension of education for life in kindergartens, which will really integrate the education for life into the infants' daily life, so as to promote the sustainability of education for life. However, in the survey of this research, most of teachers have said that there is no propaganda in kindergartens to parents and no activity of education for life in cooperation with communities. The reasons include that insufficient attention has been paid by kindergartens as a whole with the shortage of the essential knowledge for the education for life, and the kindergartens have failed to know that the education for life is to experience the vivacity of lives and reserve energy to celebrate life and realize the value of life in livelihood instead of understanding the life and

mastering the skills to protect life in the kindergartens. Therefore, the effect of educational resources except for kindergartens, namely the families and communities contacted by infants every day, has been ignored.

3.4. Negative influence of traditional culture

The Chinese culture has a long history, and traditional concept of life and death has been retained enduringly. Particularly, such topics as sex and death have been rejected for the infants with inadequate knowledge and experience. These ideas have not been eliminated in the contemporary era with rapid development of science and technology. When the teachers are asked by infants about the problem of life and death, 79.13% of kindergarten teachers have selected to sidestep or change the subject, and they agree to sidestep the sensitive topics about the birth of life and death. In the meantime, regarding the cognition of teachers for the contents of education for life in the kindergartens, the proportion of life-and-death education is 73.04%, which however accounts for 26.09% only among the contents implemented. The contradiction between such cognition and the behaviors has reflected that the idea of teachers to sidestep the birth, death, illness and old age has hindered the education for life. Therefore, the traditional culture has influenced and constrained the education for life.

4. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES OF KINDERGARTENS FOR THE EDUCATION FOR LIFE

4.1. Construction of quality teaching staff to implement the education for life in kindergartens

The systematic pre-service cultivation and the later on-job retraining are basis to cultivate the quality teaching staff. The courses regarding education for life can be added in the talent development program for the preschool normal colleges. The pre-service cultivation mainly aims at: firstly, master necessary knowledge and skills of education for life; secondly, establish a scientific life-education view; and thirdly, develop teachers' values for implementing the education for life. In the meantime, the preschool normal colleges may establish the "government - university - kindergarten" cooperative culture mechanism with local governments and kindergartens. Under the support by governmental policies, the universities can cooperate with kindergartens for the subjects related to cultivating the normal university students of education for life. Meanwhile, the practice and learning platforms for the teaching activities concerning education for life shall be provided in the kindergartens for normal university students. Moreover, the training for teachers in the on-the-job training center aims at optimizing and improving the teachers' life-education view and the ability accomplishment for education for life. Teachers are possible to go out of the kindergartens, and into universities or related institutions for retraining about the education for life, or the experts of education for life may

be invited for activities of education for life in kindergartens to improve the ability of teachers in independent educational and teaching evaluation. In the meantime, the research activities themed at kindergarten-to-kindergarten education for life can be carried out for mutual exchange, cooperation and resource sharing among kindergartens to promote the high-quality implementation of education for life in kindergartens.

4.2. Establishment of kindergarten-based course system for the education for life in kindergartens

4.2.1. Establishment of scientific and systematic course contents and objectives

Nowadays, it is generally agreed that the education for life includes four dimensions in the field of infants' education for life, namely life and self, life and others, life and society, and life and nature^[1]. It is possible that the contents and subjects of education for life are integrated with the courses in five fields based on such framework in kindergartens to build the kindergarten-based system on a basis of physical and mental development characteristics of infants combining the hot topics of current politics and the details of local resource development. The following three matters shall be noted when formulating the course objectives of the system: first, the law of somatopsychic development of infants shall be followed to formulate the overall objectives of primary class, mid-class and top class. Second, detailed objectives containing four dimensions including perception, consciousness, attention and memory shall be formulated. The education for life finally aims at recognizing, respecting and loving life. Therefore, the cognition, experience and practice must be organically integrated for the objective formulation. Third, it is required to respect the individual variation of infants while formulating the objectives, and avoid the "one-size-fits-all approach" by all means.

4.2.2. Establishment of reasonable and effective course evaluation system

Reasonable and effective evaluation plays the roles of inspection and improvement for the education for life. The following two matters shall be noted while establishing the evaluation system: first, the subject of evaluation shall be diversified. The teachers shall be self-reflective after activities, and invite the infants, parents and other teachers for evaluation. The diversified subject evaluation is beneficial to provide new ideas, and improve teachers' level of education for life and the quality of education for life in kindergartens. Second, the process evaluation shall be focused. The education for life emphasizes the process experience and understanding. Only after whole-heartedly get involved in activities and interacting with activity context, the infants will experience the value and significance of live, which will finally act on their ideas and behaviors. Therefore, teachers shall pay more attention

to the process evaluation while concerning the result evaluation. They shall keep a watchful eye on the participation degree of infants, investigate their understanding level in different stages, and adjust the subsequent activities at the right time.

4.3. Establishment of suitable environment for the education for life in kindergartens

Suitable environment for the education for life includes physical environment and psychological environment: first, establishment of physical environment. Safety and comfortable environment shall be built in kindergartens for the infants to experience the beauty of lives and livelihood. Teachers shall prepare the environment diligently, provide rich environmental stimulus for the education for life, and attract the infants to explore the life information in the environment by environmental creation and playing with training aids. Second, establishment of psychological environment. The psychological environment will influence the infants for perception and practice of lives intangibly and imperceptibly. The loose and positive atmosphere shall be kept as a whole in the kindergartens. Teachers shall respect the personality traits of infants, teach them in accordance of their aptitude, pay attention to humanistic care for their lives, get along equally with them, care for them, and particularly insist on "being model with good moral quality" and show the attitude of loving lives and livelihood, so that the infants will feel the vitality and strength of lives.

4.4. Integrated development of external resources and cooperative education

4.4.1. Use of social resources

The policy support and social support play an important role for the effective education for life for the infants. At present, the domestic preschool education lacks special policy documents or laws and regulations of education for life. Relevant governmental departments may accelerate the research and formulation of preschool education method, and include the education for life in it. In the meantime, the practice of education for life shall be standardized. Universities and related research institutions shall provide the theoretical and practical guidance, intensify the research on education for life, develop the courses regarding education for life, prepare the courses of education for life, and establish the kindergarten-based course system, to provide the theoretical and practical reference for the education for life.

Humans in the communities in which the kindergartens are located have abundant resources of education for life with natural environment and have close life contact with infants. It is possible to invite the professionals related to education for life in the communities in kindergartens for educational activities and to lead the infants into the communities to visit and experience abundant contents and modes of education for life. In the meantime, the positive guidance takes effect with the assistance of social

institutions. For example, museums, nursing home, science and technology museums, etc. may provide resources to help kindergartens, and collaboratively carry out the activities of education for life. The media industry shall actively spread the information of education for life for the society to deepen the cognition of the public for the education for life, guide them to change traditional ideology, build the atmosphere that the public pay attention to the education for life, and gradually relieve the constraint for the education for life by traditional culture.

4.4.2. Use of family resources

The education of original family will directly influence the growth of infants and the formation of their outlook on life and values. During the education for life for infants, the family resources can be developed from two dimensions: first, the kindergarten is regarded as the primary site. The propaganda for education for life is carried out in the kindergarten. Parents' awareness of education for life is mobilized by such means as open day for parents and environment creation to cultivate the positive life-education view. The principles, approaches, methods and other contents of education for life are studied in daily life to lay a solid foundation for the education for life integrated in the family life. Second, the family is regarded as the primary site. The family serves as a place of extending the activities for education for life in kindergartens. The parents shall exert their professional specialty and advantages, build good environment for the education for life based on own family features, closely follow the information about education for life in daily life for incidental education, and feed back the education achievements in time, to properly complete the education for life for infants under the mode of family-kindergarten cooperative education.

5. CONCLUSION

This study explores the current situation of life education in kindergartens, finds some difficulties and problems in the implementation, and puts forward some suggestions to solve the problems. Create a suitable environment for kindergarten life education, integrate and develop family and community resources, coordinate education, and improve the social environment to support kindergarten life education. The hope can discover for the kindergarten, the Solution Life Education existence question provides the reference.

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