Shaping Education Policy of Home-School Cooperation in China’s Preschool Education: Trends and Strategies

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Abstract

Preschool education is the beginning of individual development, which directly affects the subsequent primary education, secondary education, higher education and even the lifelong development of individuals. This study explores the education policy development of China’s home-school cooperation in the field of preschool education. The trends and strategies of home-school cooperation in China’s preschool education are also investigated in this study.

Keywords

home-school cooperation – China’s pre-school education – education policy

1 Introduction

Since the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China (CPC) in China, the CPC and the government have attached great importance to the development of preschool education, increased efforts to expand pre-school education resources for the benefit of all, made great efforts to improve the quality of childcare and education, and made great efforts to build a public service system for preschool education. It has become a focus of attention in the field of preschool education to focus on improving the quality of preschool education.
education. Family system has its own educational advantages. Family education is lifelong, permeable and timely, which is the starting point of children's socialization. Kindergartens also need to guide parents to better understand kindergartens and children's development, properly express their interest demands, reach educational consensus with kindergartens through consultation, and eliminate the resistance to cooperation between them.

2 Education Policy Development of Home-School Cooperation in China's Preschool Education

Since the reform and opening up, China's Party and government have also attached great importance to cooperation in the preschool education and issued a series of policies to regulate and guide it, so as to promote the improvement of education quality. In 1989, Chinese central government promulgated the Kindergarten Work Procedures (trial) and this document clearly put forward the kindergarten has responsibilities to organize and guide the parents work, require kindergarten teachers to maintain frequent contact with parents, understand the children's family education environment, to discuss the education measures in accordance with children's characteristics, together with education task. The participants of home-based cooperation, including kindergarten principals, kindergarten teachers and parents, put forward specific requirements for home-based cooperation, and clarified the responsibilities of kindergarten managers and teachers to guide parents. At the same time, it is further stipulated that the system of connecting kindergartens with parents should be established the kindergartens can implement the Open Day system for parents. It should be institutionalized and brought into the regular work managed by the kindergarten. The above provisions play a landmark role in the institutionalized and standardized development of preschool education cooperation in China, laying the foundation for the follow-up home cooperation. Since the beginning of the 21st century, the preschool education has been developing in depth, which has further enriched the exploitation and utilization of parents' resources in terms of home cooperation and gradually established more diversified forms of cooperation (Bian and Zhou, 2019; State Education Commission of the People's Republic of China, 2020).

The basic education system attaches increasing importance to home-school cooperation. The 2004 Guidance on the Work of National Parent Schools clearly defined the policy path of promoting home-school cooperation with parent schools. The administrative departments of education shall be responsible for giving specific guidance to parents' schools in primary and secondary schools
and kindergartens, and the women's federations shall be responsible for coordinating and promoting schools run by all sectors of society and participating in guiding the work of communities and other parents' schools. The Outline of the National Plan for Medium and Long-term Education Reform and Development (2010–2020) contains five references to parental involvement and home-school cooperation. In 2012, the Ministry of Education issued a policy document specifically regulating parent committees in primary and secondary schools and kindergartens. The Key Tasks of the Basic Education Department of the Ministry of Education in 2019 clearly mentioned that the close home-school cooperation and create a good environment for collaborative education. Home-school cooperation in the basic education system has become one of the priorities of the policy, including the home-school cooperation in kindergartens (State Education Commission of the People’s Republic of China, 2020).

The status of parents' participation in preschool education is transformed from a partner to a cooperator. In 1985, the Health care System of nurseries and Kindergartens stipulated that kindergartens take various forms, strengthen contact with parents and strive for parents' cooperation. At this time, kindergartens are in the dominant position in home cooperation and parents are in the cooperative position. The Kindergarten Work Regulations (2016) clearly put forward that parents' professional and resource advantages should be brought into play to support the work of kindergarten care and education. At this time, the policy is more fully aware of the subjectivity and dominant position of parents, more effectively attaches importance to and uses parents' resources, promotes the in-depth development of home-school cooperation, and promotes home-school cooperation to form a good interactive mode.

The parents should be regarded as one of the subjects of preschool education quality evaluation. The Guidelines for Kindergarten Education (Trial) issued in 2001 clearly states that the evaluation of kindergarten education shall be based on teachers' self-evaluation, with the participation of principals, administrators, other teachers and parents. The Guidance on The Reform and Development of Early Childhood Education (2003) stipulates that the education sector should establish a mechanism for community and parents to participate in the management and supervision of kindergartens. At this time, parents become one of the main bodies of preschool education quality evaluation, and they have not only the right to participate, but also the right to evaluate and feedback (Bian and Zhou, 2019; He and Deng, 2009; Huang, 2008; Yu and Huang, 2013).

We need further clarify the governance function of home cooperation and co-education. In 2011, The Notice on Standardizing kindergarten care and Education to Prevent and correct the phenomenon of “Primary School” points out that kindergartens should take various forms to carry out family education
guidance, realize home-based co-education, and form a good social atmosphere where the whole society cares for and supports. In 2018, The Circular on the Special Governance of “Primary School” in Kindergartens emphasizes that the long-term mechanism of “de-primary” is to create a coordinated educational environment for parents, society and kindergartens. At this time, home cooperation and co-education as an important way to manage kindergarten “primary school”, and in the policy to give a clear provision.

3 The Trends and Strategies of Home-School Cooperation in China’s Preschool Education

3.1 Strengthen Policy Support for Home-School Cooperation

Under the dual role of school education reform and parental responsibility, home-school cooperation has gradually become a historical trend of education reform in the world since the second half of the 20th century. The home-school cooperation is one of the important ways to solve the outstanding problems of preschool education equity and quality. Strengthening home-school cooperation has become one of the common points of education policy. In 2017, the General Office of the CPC Central Committee and The General Office of the State Council issued the Opinions on Deepening The Reform of The Education System and Mechanism, proposing to strengthen the organic combination of school education, family education and social education, and to build a pattern of joint education among Party and government organs, social organizations, enterprises and institutions, streets, communities, towns and villages, and families at all levels. In addition to constantly paying attention to the importance of home cooperation and making provisions in principle, the policy guarantee for strengthening home cooperation can be improved from the following aspects. We need to make clear the funding input for preschool education cooperation. Funds are one of the important educational resources to ensure the cooperation between homes in various forms and channels. Increasing financial investment in home-school cooperation of preschool education can provide more security requirements and guarantees for both sides to give full play to their educational resource advantages, so that home cooperation can develop continuously and deeply in a stable and predictable environment (Bian and Zhou, 2019).

3.2 Establish National and Regional Cooperation Organizations

Organizational development is one of the important forms of the modernization development of home-school cooperation, which is conducive to the
mutual cooperation, resource sharing and model learning among the members of the organization, and exerts extensive and in-depth influence on kindergartens and parents, and further plays an important role in the governance of preschool education. The formation of equal dialogue organizations with kindergartens and other preschool education institutions is conducive to the in-depth development of cooperation between the home and school. At present, China’s policy requires kindergartens to set up a parent committee, which has become the main organization carrier of home-based co-education. However, the parent committees led by kindergartens are one of the school organizations, and most of them become subsidiary components of school work. As a result, they are weak in equal participation and difficult to widely mobilize and promote parent participation. At the same time, as it is directed to the educational institutions where children live, it focuses more on the care and education activities of a single kindergarten, but it fails to exert a wide range of influence on regional and national preschool education issues such as the “primarization” of kindergartens, which to some extent is not conducive to the promotion of preschool education reform and development at the macro level. Therefore, it is necessary to form national and regional organizations that engage in equal dialogue with preschool education institutions such as kindergartens, explore the formation of excellent experience models in home cooperation, and at the same time reflect the overall and regional demands, so as to serve for educational decision-making (He and Deng, 2009; Huang, 2008).

3.3 Improve the Competence of Teachers in Home-Based Education

Family education and home-school cooperation is not only a communication between teachers and parents, but also a professional work with thresholds. Based on systematic work procedures and professional technical norms, it puts forward new requirements and challenges for teachers’ professionalism, which requires preschool teachers to be competent in home-school cooperation. Teacher competence refers to teachers’ professional knowledge, skills and values related to educational work. It is a necessary condition for teachers to engage in successful teaching and is also the main training goal of teacher education. Preschool teachers should master the basic principles, knowledge and skills of family education, integrate them with their daily work and home-school relationship, and make full use of the advantages of family education resources on the basis of good interaction with the family, so as to solve the problems of early childhood development and education and teaching. In order to meet the requirements of preschool teachers’ competence, a series of reforms such as teacher education, teacher education and professional training are needed. We should integrate the professional curriculum of home-school
cooperation in the pre-service training of preschool teachers. We also need to pay more attention to preschool teachers' pre-service training teachers in the education teaching of professional knowledge and ability to learn, but home-school cooperation directly affect the effect of education and early childhood development. We also need to provide home-based training for in-service teachers. Schools should fully understand the needs and problems of preschool teachers in home cooperation, so as to understand what support and training they need most, provide targeted suggestions for on-the-job training of teachers, improve the ability of preschool teachers, and solve their practical puzzles (Bian and Zhou, 2019; He and Deng, 2009).

3.4 **Strengthen Parents’ Knowledge and Guide Parents’ Participation**
The school gives systematic educational guidance to parents to help parents form a scientific educational view and improve the educational level in various forms. In 2015, *the Guidance opinions of the Ministry of Education on Strengthening family Education Work* clearly pointed out that the guidance of family education work in schools should be strengthened. In view of the current situation of insufficient family education ability and insufficient awareness and ability of parents to participate in children's education and cooperation with their families, preschool education institutions should make full use of educational resources in kindergartens and districts according to their own actual conditions. The development of parents’ educational concept and their cooperative ability should not only be completed through piecemeal and occasional communication and training, but also through systematic and scientific experience and learning. The educational guidance provided by schools to parents should set up serialized and stepped contents to make them grow step by step, so as to promote parents to treat children's development from a more general and rational perspective and to evaluate children's development more objectively. At the same time, school guidance to parents is not only a whole-person guidance, but also needs to provide targeted suggestions and solutions according to the specific situation and special problems of parents and children, so as to enhance parents’ enthusiasm and sense of acquisition. We should fully guide parents and families to understand and give play to their own advantages in educational resources to form a joint effort with kindergartens in educating people.

3.5 **Use Information Technology to Promote Home-Based Education**
Preschool home-based education requires kindergartens and parents to establish a new mechanism that enables kindergartens and families to communicate with each other in a timely and convenient manner, so that kindergartens and
families can seamlessly share information about children. The communication of information cannot be separated from the support of modern information technology, and the regulation and control of the system cannot be separated from the support of information technology. The openness, real-time and convenience of information technology well meet the needs of home co-education, and it has been proved effective in the practice of some countries and regions. We should use information technology to realize the sharing of children’s personalized information and promote the deep participation of parents. At the practical level, teachers use information technology to carry out collaborative education with parents in diversified ways, such as using QQ, WeChat and E-mail to open up new ways for home-school contact. We also need to develop online forums to solve problems and puzzles in class management, advocate online message for the class soliciting activity content, set up electronic file bag for student growth and track student growth track and use online resources to showcase students’ learning achievements. We should develop automatic or semi-automatic acquisition and analysis means, which is convenient for teachers to apply. The main obstacle to the low utilization of the existing home communication platform lies in its accessibility to teachers and ease of operation, and its practical effect is limited by teachers’ time and energy, as well as teachers’ information literacy (Huang, 2008; Yu and Huang, 2013).

References


