

# The Way to Carry Out Scientific Early Children Gender Education

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## ABSTRACT

As an indispensable part of the socialization of children, the development of gender roles is an important foundation for early children to form a healthy personality. Scientific early children gender education can promote the healthy development of individuals throughout their lives. There are still many problems in early children gender education in schools, society and families in China. To alleviate these problems in early children gender education, it is a must to start from the aspects of preschool teacher training, kindergarten environment construction, gender role balance, mass media orientation, education concept update, etc., to explore the strategy of scientifically conducting early children's gender education, and strive to bring together schools, society, and families to continuously create a good environment for early children's growth.

*Keywords: early children, gender education, gender roles*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Early children gender education mainly involves two aspects: physical gender education and social gender education. Early children gender education requires educators to correctly grasp the law of the development of early children's gender concepts and promote the stable development of preschool gender concepts; early children gender education requires educators to constantly update gender education concepts and promote the acquisition of early children's gender roles and the development of gender behavior. The process of blending physical gender and social gender into the individual's self-perception and behavior is the process of gendering of early children.

The acquisition of early children's gender concept, the formation of gender roles, and the development of gender behaviors are part of their social development, and are important cornerstones for early children to form a good self-awareness and complete the process of gendering. Early children receive various gender information from different channels every day and always unconsciously imitate the gender behaviors that appear in the environment. It is inevitable that there are many potential unfavorable factors for their gender roles and behavior development. Carrying out scientific early children gender education, breaking the fixed framework of gender patterns, helping them understand and mastering gender concepts, and providing them with opportunities to freely choose gender activity resources, can promote early children to form correct gender concepts and gender role behaviors, and make

them acquire relatively mature gender role concepts, and form gender role identification to prevent gender role dislocation, which has an important influence on the formation of healthy psychology, the establishment of good social relations, and the acquisition of good social adaptability of early children.

## II. PROBLEMS IN EARLY CHILDREN GENDER EDUCATION

### A. Preschool teachers lack gender education awareness and ability

Preschool teachers' education and teaching attitudes, behaviors and class management methods in daily life have a great impact on early children's understanding of their own gender. Nowadays, many preschool teachers are influenced by traditional education, their views on gender education are rigid and conservative, and they lack the awareness and ability of gender education for early children. Preschool teachers themselves do not have a deep understanding of gender concepts and gender roles, and are affected by gender stereotypes in traditional culture, and they have fixed concepts on gender. In an interview with preschool teachers, when they need to answer the question "Do you know what is androgyny education?", most teachers said that they have only heard about androgyny education, but they are not clear about its specific conceptual connotations and education implementation methods. Preschool teachers inadvertently reveal gender stereotypes in teaching activities, game interaction and daily communication. For example,

teachers adopt different standards for boys and girls when evaluating feedback, carry out different interactions between boys and girls in game activities and teaching activities, and implement inconsistent requirements for boys and girls in class management, and so on. These intentional or unintentional behaviors reflect that teachers lack awareness, concepts, methods and methods in early children gender education.

*B. The kindergarten environment creates implicit gender stereotypes*

The kindergarten is one of the main places for children to grow up. The environment creation of the kindergarten will penetrate all aspects of children's life in the kindergarten and have an invisible impact on them. If observing carefully, people will find that kindergartens often cannot go beyond traditional gender settings in environmental creation, and gender stereotypes are implicit in many places. This may be reflected in the kindergarten's wall decoration, teaching materials and picture book resources, daily necessities and toy materials.

When the design of the theme wall includes characters, there will be an uncle policeman reminding children to travel safely and a female nurse who demonstrates the steps of washing hands. In the presentation of characters in kindergarten textbooks or picture books, the character of female characters is mostly described as gentle and kind, considerate and virtuous, beautiful and generous, and the character of male characters is mostly described as persevering, brave and adventurous. In daily life, the towels and water glasses used by boys and girls are marked with colors. The blue signs mostly represent boys, and the pink signs mostly represent girls. In the performance area or doll house, grass skirts, there are often fairy magic wands, aprons and other props that show a feminine tendency been put in, making the performance area or doll house often exclusive to girls.

*C. There is absence of male roles in early children's growth*

The gender ratio of teachers in kindergartens, as well as teachers' gender positioning and cognition of early children's gender education have an impact on whether the children can receive scientific early children gender education. From the perspective of gender balance, male kindergarten teachers play an important role in early children gender education. Zhang Zonglin is the first male college student to be a kindergarten teacher in China, and is also a well-known early childhood educator in China. He once pointed out: "In the preschool education team, a reasonable allocation of male and female teachers will benefit the physical and mental development of children." However, the field of preschool education in China has

been seriously lacking "male" for a long time, and its influencing factors are various, among which the main factors include traditional education concepts, social public opinion guidance and male career choices. The pre-school education majors of colleges and universities present a situation that the students are almost all girls. It is difficult for kindergartens to recruit male kindergarten teachers in sufficient quality. The daily life of children in the kindergarten is basically organized and looked after by female kindergarten teachers. Even if male kindergarten teachers are recruited, there will be a loss of male teachers due to various reasons after a period of time. The long-term absence of male kindergarten teachers in children's gender education affects the formation of children's healthy personality. There are no male models who have rational thinking, innovative spirit and courageous and resolute will in the early children's growth. There are too many female teachers and lacks male teachers. In addition, affected by the traditional concept of "male dominates outside, female dominates inside" and fathers' lack of parenting experience and lack of parenting knowledge, the absence of the role of father is common in early children's families. As a result, early children are even more unable to obtain sufficient gender cognitive enhancement in practice and form a typical preference for gender.

*D. The mass media has gender bias*

Mass media mainly includes two categories: electronic and printing, which are the main means of cultural communication. Some researchers have found that the ratio of male to female in cartoon characters in Hong Kong children's TV is 2:1. These characters show obvious gender stereotypes. Among them, men are more capable of leadership, adventurous and aggressive, and women are more beautiful, virtuous and generous. A survey of the use of instructional videos in children's educational and teaching activities found that male characters tend to show more masculine and courageous characteristics, while female characters show more kind and tender characteristics. At the same time, there are more male roles than female roles appeared as leaders.

Early children's books contain a wealth of content about gender awareness, gender roles, and gender expectations. It is an important way for children to understand gender concepts and obtain gender role identification. The character characteristics in early children's books have a subtle influence on the formation of correct gender cognition. A large number of empirical studies have observed that children will imitate characters in the picture books, story books, comic books they read. The gender model of "male dominates outside, female dominates inside" is still widespread. This is evident in the survey and research of simple books, children's literature and other works

since the mid-1990s: the father's role as a caregiver appears less frequently in the books than the mother's role, and the probability of a male as a leader in the book is three times that of a female. Men appear more frequently on the cover of kindergarten textbooks than women. In science textbooks, whether on the cover or in the content, there are fewer female roles and female roles more appearing as supporting roles. There are obvious gender biases and fixed concepts of gender. This is undoubtedly will affect girls' positioning and expectations of themselves, and is not conducive to the shaping of their gender self. However, preschool teachers who have long been influenced by traditional gender education concepts are less sensitive to gender stereotypes, and rarely raise objections or make improvements.

#### *E. Traditional family gender education concept*

Social learning theory believes that the establishment of early children's gender role identity is accomplished by imitating adults. The gender education concepts and behaviors of parents in the family directly affect the formation and development of early children's gender roles. However, in the process of raising children, parents have gender stereotypes and even gender prejudice and gender discrimination. They will unconsciously follow traditional gender concepts. For example, when parents are buying toys for their children, they always unconsciously buy dolls or plush toys for girls, and toy guns or various types of transportation for boys. Affected by the idea of "raising a son poorly and raising a daughter richly", the parenting style of boys is more "bold and unconstrained" compared to girls. Parents usually expect boys to be brave, persevering, and adventurous, and girls to be gentle, virtuous, and considerate. Some parents lack the guidance of scientific gender education methods, and even raise children of the opposite sex according to their own desires for a certain gender. While these behaviors promote the formation of gender attitudes in children, they also lead to gender stereotypes in children to a certain extent and limit the development of their diverse personality qualities. Coupled with the influence of the division of labor between parental roles in traditional families and unilateral oversubstitution, they will interfere with children's understanding of gender roles.

### **III. STRATEGIES FOR SCIENTIFICALLY CARRYING OUT EARLY CHILDREN GENDER EDUCATION**

#### *A. Incorporating early children gender education in the pre- and post-employment training of preschool teachers*

Preschool teachers play a leading role in gender education in kindergartens, and their own quality and professional level directly affect the effective development of early children gender education activities. Therefore, it is necessary to pay attention to the improvement of preschool teachers' gender education literacy, update preschool teachers' gender education concepts, and continuously improve their gender education knowledge and skills, so that preschool gender education can develop in a professional direction. First of all, it is necessary to strengthen the pre-employment education of kindergarten teachers and incorporate the gender education of college students into the curriculum system of preschool education majors in colleges and universities, so that preschool teachers themselves have the correct gender education concepts and behaviors. Secondly, it is also necessary to add content related to early children gender education to the content of professional learning to improve teachers' ability to design early children gender education activities. Thirdly, for in-service preschool teachers, they can improve the gender education concept of preschool teachers by setting up gender education related training and conducting teaching and research activities that combine preschool gender education theory and practice, so as to transmit gender role information to early children through various channels, and promote early children to form correct gender recognition and healthy personality.

#### *B. Creating a good gender education environment in kindergartens*

The creation of a kindergarten environment has a silent impact on children. The kindergarten should create a good gender education environment for early children, so that they can obtain scientific gender role education through the environment and establish a sense of gender equality. In the creation of the theme wall, in the painting and design of professional characters, the gender difference in role selection need to be reduced, but the gender role in the occupation need to be emphasized to avoid gender prejudice, so that the content of the theme wall is more reasonable and scientific. Kindergartens should pay attention to the choice of early children's reading books. When purchasing textbooks and picture books, they should pay attention to whether the reading content is suitable for early children to read, whether there are gender stereotypes, especially gender bias or sex

discrimination, and choose healthy reading books that can demonstrate the good characteristics of both genders. It is also a way to reduce the differences between male and female divisions in the setting of activity areas, and teachers can encourage boys and girls to try different gender role activities. For example, in the selection of game roles, children of different genders can be encouraged to actively participate in the role-playing activities of the opposite gender to obtain different emotional experiences. It is necessary to avoid curing children's gender awareness in daily activities. When distinguishing children's personal items, they can be distinguished by some stickers or small ornaments that children are interested in. For example, when distinguishing water cups, towels, etc., teachers can allow children to stick their favorite stickers on their items instead of using solid gender identification signs to distinguish them.

#### *C. Making up for the lack of male roles in early children education*

There are significant differences in the educational styles and methods of male and female roles. The education of male role participation can better reflect "rational beauty". Male role models play an important role in the development of early children's gender roles, and early children's growth requires the return of male roles to education. First of all, the improvement of the quantity and quality of male teachers in preschool education requires a top-down correct social opinion orientation, increasing funding, and continuous improvement of salaries. Secondly, normal colleges should make overall plans for the enrollment ratio of male and female students majoring in preschool education, and strengthen the training of male students to ensure their professional loyalty and professionalism. Thirdly, kindergartens must balance the strength of teachers, continuously improve the environment of the kindergarten, gradually increase the number of male kindergarten teachers, and minimize the loss of male kindergarten teachers. In addition, men themselves should treat traditional educational concepts correctly, establish correct employment concepts, and actively devote themselves to preschool education.

In the family, fathers play an irreplaceable role in the growth of children. Children who have been looked after by their mothers for a long time will lack male role models because of their father's too little participation. As a father, it is a must establish a correct view of family and parenting, correct the dominance of maternal education in the family, take the initiative to build a good parent-child relationship, set aside time to accompany and take care of children, and make corresponding changes in the details of life. At the same time, it is necessary to continue to enrich the childcare knowledge and experience, learn to educate and guide

children in a scientific way, and accompany them to only one precious growth.

#### *D. Strengthening the correct guidance of the mass media on early children gender education*

Mass media permeates all aspects of people's lives, and the information culture spread through mass media has an intangible impact on children. Children's correct recognition of gender roles requires mass media to correctly spread gender culture.

The mass media should pay attention to whether the content is appropriate when disseminating gender cultural information. Authors of publications should actively create reading materials that are suitable for early children and can be accepted and understood by early children. It is very important to disseminate scientific gender education through content such as gender cognition and gender equality in readings. It is also very important to strengthen the review of early children's cartoons to avoid gender stereotypes of animated characters. According to statistics, men and women with androgynous characteristics have excellent performance in social adaptability, collaboration ability, frustration resistance and innovation ability. Therefore, the dissemination of the concept of androgyny education can enhance the public's correct understanding of gender education, promote people's correct guidance of gender education in early children, and infiltrate androgyny education in early children gender education in a timely manner to enable children to correctly recognize their gender during the growth process, so that boys and girls have healthy personalities.

#### *E. Establishing a scientific concept of family gender education*

Whether it is a boy or a girl, they will gradually realize the different expectations of their parents and teachers. Early children will receive various gender-related behaviors, and on this basis will establish the initial gender cognition. In the family, parents themselves must first show the correct gender role image, set a correct gender role model for children, reflect equal family status, maintain positive family member relationships, and create a good family education atmosphere. Secondly, parents should avoid solidified gender stereotypes, update traditional parenting concepts, actively practice intersex parenting, encourage children to continuously learn the excellent characteristics of both genders, and help them form correct gender awareness and develop correct gender roles and gender behaviors.

## **IV. CONCLUSION**

In the context of the rapid development of modern education, the constantly updated concept of gender

education requires the acceptance of the public, the dissemination of the media, the practice of the family and the implementation of schools to solve various problems encountered in preschool gender education. Scientific preschool gender education can not only allow children to correctly recognize their gender, enable them to acquire good gender awareness, develop reasonable gender roles and behaviors, and promote the process of gender socialization, but also enable families, schools and society to be aware of the importance of gender education, and make them continue to jointly promote the development of gender education.

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