

The Status and Implementation Suggestions for Labor Education in Kindergartens

Zeren Xu*

Zhejiang Vocational College of Special Education, Hangzhou, Zhejiang, China

**Corresponding Author.*

Abstract: Labor education, as a crucial component of the holistic development encompassing five educational aspects, plays a significant role in fostering children's physical and mental health, social skills, and team spirit. This study employs a combination of literature review and field research with the aim of exploring the status, challenges, and implementation strategies of labor education in kindergartens under the new era's context. The research identifies several issues faced by kindergartens in the practical execution of labor education, including educators' cognitive biases towards labor education, limitations in the content and forms of labor education, and a shortage of utilizable resources. Based on these findings, the study proposes three suggestions: institutional safeguards and enhanced publicity to raise the importance of labor education in kindergartens; resource development and content innovation to stimulate children's interest and participation in labor; and strengthened planning and feedback attention to leverage the full-process advantages of labor education.

Keywords: Kindergarten; Labor Education; Status; Implementation Suggestions

1. Introduction

Following the release of the "Opinions on Comprehensively Strengthening Labor Education in Primary, Secondary, and Higher Education in the New Era" by the government, labor education has become an integral part of China's comprehensive educational development. The core of labor education is the development of individual labor literacy. Although there is no specific document at the national level regarding labor education in the preschool stage, as a crucial component of basic education, many kindergartens are

actively exploring and vigorously implementing labor education for young children^[1].

Labor education in kindergartens primarily manifests through the labor activities of preschool children. This refers to the activities where children, through interactions with people, events, and objects around them, actively use their strength, demonstrate their capabilities, and solve problems. It is an active practice of preschool children in both natural and social relationships^[2]. Based on the living environment of the children, labor education in kindergartens mainly divides into self-service labor and service to others. Self-service labor refers to activities where children meet their needs, manage their lives, and maintain the cleanliness of their learning and living environments within their capabilities. This includes activities such as eating independently, dressing and undressing, washing, using the toilet, and tidying up toys, which are the foundational content of labor in childhood and the simplest, most basic form of labor. Service to others refers to altruistic labor where children help and serve others, their class, or the kindergarten to meet others' needs, such as being on duty, distributing dishes and utensils to peers, tidying up toys for the class, caring for plants, and cleaning public areas.

This study aims to delve into the actual implementation of labor education in kindergartens to identify existing problems and offer targeted suggestions. Combining literature review and field research, the study explores the relevant theories and practices of labor education in kindergartens, visiting multiple kindergartens for in-depth interactions with educators, parents, and children to gather firsthand information. Through this research, it hopes to accurately reveal the challenges and difficulties in the implementation of labor education in kindergartens, providing robust theoretical support and practical guidance for

its effective implementation. This aims to promote the healthy development of labor education in kindergartens in the new era, laying a solid foundation for the comprehensive development of young children.

2. The Significance and Value of Labor Education in Kindergartens

2.1 Promoting the Healthy Development of Children's Minds and Bodies

Engels pointed out that "labor created man himself," emphasizing that labor is the essence of humanity. Labor education plays a significant role in promoting the physical and mental health development of young children. Firstly, from the perspective of physical health. The "Guidelines for Learning and Development for Children Aged 3-6" states that "the preschool stage is a period of rapid physical growth and functional development for children," and kindergartens should promote the development of "a well-developed body, robust physique, and coordinated movements" through effective education^[3]. A healthy physique is an important foundation for the growth of young children, and labor is one of the practical activities that strengthen the body^[4]. When children use various parts of their body for labor, it can promote muscle development and improve coordination abilities, as well as enhance cardiac and pulmonary functions, increase endurance, and flexibility. Additionally, thinking about how to perform labor tasks better can also promote brain development, cultivate observational skills, thinking abilities, and creativity, thereby improving intellectual levels^[5].

Secondly, labor education also has a positive impact on the psychological health of young children. Children may face difficulties and experience failure in their firsthand labor practices, requiring continuous patience, carefulness, and responsibility. The presentation and sharing of the outcomes of their labor can further lead to recognition and joy, enriching experiences that help strengthen self-discipline, control, and willpower, thereby forming a well-rounded personality and good psychological qualities.

2.2 Cultivating Children's Social Skills and Team Spirit

Labor education provides children with a good

platform for interaction and communication with others. The "Guidelines for Learning and Development for Children Aged 3-6" mentions improving children's social skills through labor^[3]. In the process of labor, children need to participate with peers, teachers, or parents in completing various tasks. This interaction encourages children to learn to listen to others' opinions, express their own ideas, and gradually understand and respect others' perspectives and feelings in communication, forming good interpersonal relationships.

Secondly, labor education helps cultivate children's spirit of teamwork. In labor activities, children often need to cooperate with others, including division and implementation of tasks, coordinating different opinions, and jointly solving problems and conflicts. The experience of cooperation allows children to feel the power and joy of teamwork, and helps them recognize their unique talents and contributions, as well as their value in the team. This nurtures their team spirit, which is of significant importance for their future social interactions.

2.3 Laying the Foundation for Children's Future Development

Labor education not only enables children to learn some basic life skills but also helps them develop good habits. For example, children who frequently participate in cleaning and organizing tasks learn the importance and methods of maintaining personal and environmental cleanliness, developing good hygiene and living habits. During the labor process, children need to complete tasks according to a specific sequence and steps, fostering good habits of planning and time management. When communicating with others or working in a team, children need to be polite, respectful, good listeners, and expressive, gradually forming good social habits.

At the same time, labor education also helps children establish correct values and outlooks on life. Through labor, children can experience the hardship of work and the value of achievements, gradually understanding that the value and meaning of labor not only lie in pursuing material enjoyment but also in creating social value and realizing personal worth. They learn to cherish and respect the fruits of labor, truly embodying and promoting

the spirit of "admiring labor, loving labor, diligent labor, and honest labor."

3. Problems and Shortcomings in Labor Education in Kindergartens

3.1 Educators' Misconceptions about Labor Education

The original intent of labor education is to fully engage children in life situations, involving various sensory organs in labor, and experiencing the happiness and joy of labor through serving themselves and others, thereby achieving the goal of comprehensive education through labor. However, in reality, there are many misconceptions about labor education. For instance, many educators have a weak awareness of labor education, considering it a "waste of time" and preferring to spend time on developing children's intelligence, language communication, artistic expression, and physical health. Some educators believe that children in kindergarten are too young for labor education, considering it as "suffering and toiling," neglecting the richness of labor education content and the full emotional experience it can provide for children. Furthermore, some educators view labor education as a means of "exchange" or a form of "punishment," where children might be tasked with cleaning or organizing as a penalty for misbehaviors or unformed habits. This instills a negative and burdensome definition of labor in young children, diminishing their longing and enthusiasm for labor^[6]. These biased educational concepts hinder the realization of the essential goals of labor education, overlooking its value in comprehensive education.

3.2 Limitations in the Content and Forms of Labor Education

Children are naturally inclined to engage in labor. However, in reality, due to the fact that children are in a period of physical development and their motor skills are not yet mature, educators often assign them relatively simple tasks, primarily focusing on basic, life-oriented physical labor without integrating the content of labor education with children's interests. This results in a lack of richness, interest, and creativity in content. At the same time, the forms of labor education are too monotonous, stuck in fixed and repetitive

patterns, which fail to inspire children or offer new insights. Often, children become mere "tools" in labor education, a "show" put on for others to see, without the opportunity to express their unique personalities or diverse labor literacy. They lack personalized educational support and developmental evaluation to promote further reflection and progress. This neglect of children's agency also affects the value of labor education.

3.3 Insufficient Utilizable Resources

Despite increasing attention to labor education in recent years, there still exists a lack of emphasis on labor education in kindergartens in current practice^[7], especially since national standards for labor education in the preschool stage are relatively absent^[8]. Kindergartens lack clear goals for labor education, leading to deviations from the overall educational objectives when implemented. Compared to primary, secondary, and higher education institutions, which mostly have dedicated labor education teachers, kindergartens lack professional teaching staff in this area. The shortage of human resources results in unsatisfactory quality and effectiveness of labor education. Additionally, labor education in kindergartens is mainly conducted within the premises, with very limited space and resources available. The learning and development of young children are unique, requiring real listening, real observation, real feeling, and real practice. Without the involvement of families, communities, and society, the educational outcomes are significantly diminished.

4. Implementation Suggestions for Labor Education in Kindergartens

4.1 Institutional Guarantees and Enhanced Publicity to Increase Attention to Labor Education in Kindergartens

Labor education is a vital carrier for implementing the fundamental task of morality and people cultivation, and its unique value in education must be fully recognized. Efforts should be made to nurture a new generation that understands, is capable of, and loves labor. Therefore, the state should extend the implementation of labor education to the preschool stage, and, based on the developmental characteristics of young

children and the curricular features of labor education, formulate targeted implementation plans and institutional mechanisms, accelerating the construction of an appropriate curriculum system for labor education in kindergartens^[9]. Under the guidance of policies and systems, kindergartens should establish special leadership groups, plan and implement labor education curricula, develop evaluation schemes, and flexibly conduct labor education activities for children.

It is crucial for kindergartens to enhance publicity to elevate educators' emphasis on labor education and correct cognitive biases. On one hand, kindergartens can regularly organize frontline teachers to participate in training sessions through expert lectures, case analyses, etc., to deeply interpret the connotation and value of labor education, expand professional knowledge related to labor education, and improve teachers' literacy in labor education^[10]. At the same time, teachers with rich experience could be invited to share their practical experiences in labor education, stimulating other teachers' interest and enthusiasm for it. On the other hand, kindergartens can use WeChat public accounts, bulletin boards, theme class meetings, and other channels^[11] to positively promote the importance of labor education to parents and enhance their understanding of labor education.

4.2 Developing Resources, Innovating Content, and Stimulating Children's Interest and Participation in Labor

Addressing the current lack of resources for labor education in kindergartens, it's crucial to fully exploit educational resources, enrich the venues for conducting labor education, and innovate the forms and content of labor education to stimulate young children's interest and participation.

Firstly, in terms of developing educational resources and venues, it's important to fully utilize the advantageous conditions of kindergartens, families, and society. Kindergartens can integrate labor education into the daily life of children^[12], creating favorable labor environments and opportunities. Through collaboration between home and kindergarten, strengthen parent-child labor activities, encouraging children to continuously participate in household chores, fostering a sense of family responsibility.

Additionally, it's essential to explore the rich opportunities for labor practice in the community and society, such as organizing children to participate in community environmental protection activities, agricultural experiences, factory visits, and learning, and even developing specialized labor bases for children.

Secondly, in terms of innovating the forms and content of labor education, it's important to pay attention to the age characteristics, interests, and learning styles of young children. Beyond traditional tasks like cleaning and planting flowers, design more interesting, interactive, practical, and experiential labor activities. For example, organizing children to do crafts, such as making small toys, allows children to experience the joy of labor during the hands-on process; designing fun labor games, like "I am a little chef," enables children to learn labor skills while also enhancing their identification with professions and labor; sharing simple and understandable children's stories or role model stories, such as "The Hardworking Little Ant," "The Amazing Cleaner," "The Story of Grandpa Yuan Longping," etc., to help children further understand the essence of the labor spirit; also, combining festivals and themed activities, like "Labor Day" and others, to conduct related labor education activities, allowing children to feel the significance and value of labor in the festive atmosphere.

4.3 Strengthening Planning, Focusing on Feedback, Leveraging the Advantages of Full-Process Labor Education

Labor education should be a purposeful, conscious, and planned activity, and strengthening planning is the basis for ensuring orderly progress of labor education. Educators need to incorporate detailed labor education plans into semester plans, monthly plans, weekly plans, and daily plans based on educational objectives and the characteristics of young children, and clearly define the objectives, content, forms, and timing of labor education. Through planning, the continuity and systematic nature of labor education activities can be ensured, avoiding fragmentation and randomness, and helping educators anticipate potential problems and challenges and formulate corresponding solutions in advance.

Additionally, focusing on feedback is key to

enhancing the effectiveness of labor education. Educators need to establish an effective feedback mechanism, actively understand children's views and experiences of labor education, and objectively and comprehensively evaluate children's labor performance: promptly affirming children's labor outcomes and behaviors, providing encouragement and praise to stimulate children's interest in labor and confidence, allowing children to perceive the beauty created by labor^[13]; or promptly guiding and assisting children in addressing deficiencies and problems, promoting their comprehensive development. Reflections on the effects and issues of labor education in practice can also be conducted through surveys, interviews, teacher evaluations, parent feedback, and other means, allowing timely adjustments to educational strategies to ensure the continued development of labor education.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, the implementation of labor education in kindergartens is of utmost importance. In the process, kindergartens and educators need to fully recognize the complexity, systematic nature, and continuity of labor education, enhance the importance of labor education, coordinate with parents and all sectors of society, fully utilize resources, and transform concepts into practical actions to effectively improve children's labor literacy, thereby promoting the comprehensive development of young children in morality, intelligence, physical health, aesthetics, and labor.

References

- [1] Dongxin Chen. How to carry out labor education in kindergartens. Hubei Education (Government Publicity), 2023 (10): 30-31.
- [2] Qiang Zeng. Implications, characteristics, and promotion of labor moral qualities of preschool children. Survey of Education, 2023, 12 (12): 14-16.
- [3] Ministry of Education. Guidelines for the learning and development of children aged 3-6. Beijing: Capital Normal University Press, 2012.
- [4] Jing Wang. The important value, current dilemma, and improvement path of labor education for preschoolers in the new era. Journal of Baicheng Normal University, 2023, 37 (04): 27-34+62.
- [5] Shengfeng Zhang. Exploration of labor education in kindergarten education. Intelligence, 2022 (28): 179-182.
- [6] Lijun Chen, Miao Liao, Jiali Chen. Analysis of the dilemma of labor education for preschool children and research on feasible paths—Based on the perspective of embodied cognition theory. Journal of Guizhou Education University, 2023, 39 (08): 40-45.
- [7] Longyu Zhang, Yixin He, Yuyin Wang. Labor education in kindergartens in the new era: Can be done, difficult to do, and what to do. Journal of Inner Mongolia Normal University (Educational Science Edition), 2022, 35 (04): 37-42.
- [8] Limei Xiong. A practical study on the cultivation path of labor literacy for young children. Chengdu University, 2023.
- [9] Fang Yu. Labor education for young children in the new era: Essence characteristics, current situation, and implementation paths. Fujian Education, 2023 (34): 5-9.
- [10] Fei He, Danchun Chen, Jianhuan Tan. Research on the current situation and improvement strategies of labor education in kindergartens in Guangdong Province. Journal of Guangdong University of Education, 2023, 43 (04): 75-88.
- [11] Xiaoxia Lin. Some thoughts on carrying out labor education for young children under the background of home-school collaboration. Asia-Pacific Education, 2022 (22): 69-72.
- [12] Yuqin Gao. A practical study on the infiltration of labor education in daily life in kindergartens. Shaanxi Education (Teaching Edition), 2022 (Z2): 138-140.
- [13] Yiping Cai. The aesthetic infiltration of Labor Day in kindergartens. Fujian Education, 2023 (42): 38-40.