

The Optimization Pathway for Promoting Young Children's Self-efficacy Through Teacher Evaluation

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Abstract

Fostering a strong sense of self-efficacy is of paramount importance for the comprehensive development of young children. Through cultivating self-efficacy, children can better enhance their self-control abilities, elevate their self-awareness, and establish positive interpersonal relationships, laying a solid foundation for their future growth. This article aims to explore and optimize the pathway of teacher evaluation in promoting the development of young children's self-efficacy. By conducting a questionnaire survey with 100 children and employing interview and observation methods, the practical challenges in the development of children's self-efficacy are analyzed. Building upon these findings, an optimized pathway for teacher evaluation to enhance children's self-efficacy development is proposed, aiming to provide guidance for relevant educators.

Keywords

Teacher evaluation; self-efficacy; educational evaluation; optimization pathway.

1. Introduction

In the "Guidelines for Learning and Development of Children Aged 3-6," it is mentioned that fostering children's adaptability and guiding them to actively regulate their emotions to adapt to new interpersonal relationships quickly are important. The development of children's adaptability is closely linked to the development of their self-efficacy. The early childhood period is a crucial time for the development of individual self-efficacy. Teacher evaluation permeates through a child's daily life and is an important source for promoting their self-efficacy. This study aims to analyze the practical challenges in the development of children's self-efficacy and propose suggestions and recommendations that facilitate its development.

2. Young children's self-efficacy and its developmental characteristics

2.1. Young children's self-efficacy

Self-efficacy was introduced as a concept by A. Bandura in 1977. It refers to an individual's perception or belief in their ability to effectively control various aspects of their life. MARSH, H, W found a significant correlation between children's self-efficacy and teacher evaluation. Y. F. Bian believes that children's self-efficacy refers to the perception or belief of individuals in childhood to effectively control various aspects of their lives. Combining the results of previous studies, this research defines children's self-efficacy as: the confidence and belief of children in their ability to successfully complete specific tasks.

2.2. Characteristics of the development of young children's self-efficacy

2.2.1. Formation at the primary stage

During early childhood, individuals are in the primary stage of developing self-efficacy. Young children are gradually becoming aware of their abilities and potential. At this stage, their confidence and belief in their ability to complete specific tasks are not yet fully developed. They require proper guidance and opportunities for practice and experience accumulation to gradually form their self-efficacy.

2.2.2. Influenced by environmental and sociocultural factors

The development of young children's self-efficacy is greatly influenced by external environmental and sociocultural factors. Children typically evaluate their own abilities and performances based on the surrounding environment and the evaluations of others. Positive affirmation and encouragement from the external environment can enhance children's self-efficacy, while criticism and negative feedback may lower it. Additionally, there are differences in the definition of success and failure, perspectives on competition and cooperation, and understanding of individual and group relationships across different regions and cultural backgrounds. These differences can affect children's perceptions and evaluations of their own abilities and performances.

2.2.3. The role of emotional experiences and affective factors

Emotional experiences and affective factors play a crucial role in the development of young children's self-efficacy. Positive emotional experiences, such as joy, excitement, and satisfaction, can enhance children's confidence in their abilities. When children succeed or have positive experiences in learning or activities, they feel pleased and satisfied, which strengthens their recognition of their abilities and boosts their self-efficacy. Conversely, negative emotional experiences have the opposite effect.

Furthermore, children's emotional states also play a critical role in the formation and development of self-efficacy. Positive emotional states, such as feelings of security, closeness, and trust, contribute to strengthening children's confidence and belief in their abilities, promoting the development of self-efficacy. Conversely, adverse emotional states, such as fear, anxiety, and loneliness, may affect children's evaluations of their abilities and lower their level of self-efficacy.

3. The Real Challenges in The Development of Young Children's Self-efficacy

3.1. Unfavorable social comparison

Festinger, L pointed out in "Social Comparison Theory" that everyone tends to compare their views and behaviors with others in a certain social environment, and this comparison becomes an inherent driving force for people to understand and transform the world. Correct social comparison can help young children find proper role models and imitation targets, enhance their interest in games, establish correct concepts of interpersonal competition and cooperation, and thus form a positive sense of self-efficacy.

Social comparison is an integral part of young children's daily lives and is one of the significant factors influencing their psychology and behavior. Children naturally compare themselves with their peers within their classroom. However, incorrect social comparison can be harmful to young children. Firstly, children lack comparison experience and standards. When children compare themselves with others, they may set different comparison gaps, which may not suit their current developmental stage. Without proper guidance from teachers, using a uniform mechanical standard as a reference may damage children's self-esteem. Secondly, excessive comparison can increase children's psychological pressure. Without correct guidance from

teachers, children may experience a significant amount of anxiety, worrying that they cannot surpass others or will be easily surpassed by others, thus losing interest in play activities.

3.2. Inappropriate language use in teacher evaluation

Educational evaluation is an essential component of daily work in kindergarten, serving as a tool for teaching assistance and permeating every aspect of teaching. Teachers timely assess children's behavior during activities, identify their strengths and weaknesses, and provide appropriate and effective feedback based on this evaluation, thus offering beneficial learning experiences and expanding children's learning and development channels.

However, there are instances of inappropriate language use in some teachers' evaluations. On one hand, some teachers use overly general language in their evaluations of children. Some may overly generalize every quality and progress shown by children as "you're great." This approach can have a negative impact on children's self-awareness. Children may understand that they are being praised by the teacher but may not comprehend the specific meaning of "you're great," making it difficult for them to understand activity goals and strive towards specific objectives in subsequent activities, which clearly contradicts the purpose of educational evaluation. On the other hand, some teachers may use negatively labeled evaluation language. For example, some teachers may label a mischievous child as "annoying," or in extreme cases, some kindergarten environments may even have extreme negative labels like "bad kid." Over time, children in such environments may internalize these labels, and these labels will accompany their growth, negatively affecting their self-efficacy and overall development.

3.3. Insufficient teacher support and encouragement

As the most closely involved figures in the daily life of a kindergarten, teachers' every word and action have a significant impact on young children. Teacher support and encouragement are crucial for the development of children's self-efficacy. However, some early childhood educators lack care for children in the evaluation process of activities and fail to provide timely encouragement and support for children's good performance.

Firstly, some teachers fail to establish a good teacher-child relationship. A positive teacher-child relationship is essential for children's healthy development. If teachers fail to establish a good relationship with children, it may lead to children gradually distancing themselves from teachers and being unable to establish trust. This emotional detachment may spread to other aspects, thereby negatively impacting children's learning and social interactions.

Secondly, some teachers cannot maintain stable emotions. As an early childhood educator, maintaining stable emotions when interacting with children is a fundamental requirement. This is not only to ensure the quality of daily teaching and care but also to provide children with good emotional models for imitation and demonstration. If teachers cannot maintain stable emotions in front of children, children may have difficulty recognizing teachers' emotions, forcing them to continuously modify their existing mental schemas. Over time, this may lead to emotional cognitive disorders in children and increase the likelihood of depressive reactions.

4. The optimization Pathway for Promoting Young Children's Self-efficacy Through Teacher Evaluation

4.1. Establishing the concept of "child-centered" evaluation

4.1.1. Valuing individual differences and developmental needs of young children

The "Guidelines for Kindergarten Education (Trial)" states, "Recognize and pay attention to the individual differences of young children, avoid using uniform standards to evaluate different children, especially avoid horizontal comparisons in front of young children." Teachers should

fully understand that each child is a unique individual with different characteristics, interests, and abilities. When evaluating young children, personalized evaluations and feedback should be given based on their individual differences and developmental needs, avoiding excessive emphasis on grades and comparisons, and providing each child with ample care and support.

4.1.2. Emphasizing process-oriented evaluation and the development of comprehensive qualities

When teachers evaluate young children's education, they should not only focus on the completion of activity objectives but also pay attention to their performance during the activities, emphasizing process-oriented evaluation. In evaluating young children, attention should be given to their activity processes and attitudes, focusing on their development in various aspects such as their ability to participate autonomously in activities, their creative thinking skills, and their teamwork abilities. This approach lays a solid foundation for the development of children's comprehensive qualities and lifelong learning abilities.

4.2. Optimizing evaluation language to emphasize specificity and inspiration

In the evaluation process of kindergarten education, optimizing teacher evaluation language is crucial. Effective evaluation language is an indispensable way to guide children's behavior. When used appropriately, it can effectively promote children to expand their language space in their activities and enhance their developmental abilities.

On one hand, teachers should enhance the specificity of evaluation language. In the evaluation process, teachers should not only focus on surface phenomena but also delve into children's potentials and strengths. For example, in game activities, teachers should not only assess the completion of objectives but also emphasize summarizing children's excellent qualities to enhance their confidence and activity enthusiasm.

On the other hand, teachers should emphasize guiding children to reflect on and summarize their own successful experiences, analyzing the reasons for success and their own strengths. Through reflection and summary of successful experiences, children can actively attribute their successes, enhancing their confidence and belief in their abilities. For instance, teachers can encourage children to willingly summarize and share their successful experiences. When children make progress and achievements, teachers can review successful experiences with them, summarize valuable lessons, and encourage children to believe in their abilities and potential.

4.3. Creating a positive emotional atmosphere for teacher-child interactions

4.3.1. Establishing a fantastic teacher-child relationship and a foundation of trust

A fantastic teacher-child relationship and a foundation of trust are prerequisites and guarantees for effective evaluation. Teachers should establish a fantastic relationship with children, care about their growth and development, respect their individual needs and opinions, and create a positive atmosphere of mutual trust and communication. This atmosphere guides children to express their thoughts and feelings boldly and truthfully, as well as to listen to others' advice and accept teachers' evaluations and guidance. Over time, as children enhance their self-efficacy, they also gradually recognize their own shortcomings and work towards correcting them, achieving more comprehensive growth.

4.3.2. Providing a stable emotional atmosphere and emotional climate

When evaluating young children, teachers should maintain a stable emotional state, avoiding overly harsh or overly critical evaluations, which may undermine children's positive attitudes and hinder the enhancement of their self-efficacy. Teachers should use gentle language and a positive attitude to provide timely evaluations and feedback to children. When children complete tasks or make progress, teachers should immediately offer positive feedback and

encouragement, allowing them to feel that their efforts are recognized and appreciated, thereby enhancing their confidence and activity levels.

Additionally, teachers should consciously create a positive emotional atmosphere in their daily interactions with children, actively signaling love and care to them. Together with children, teachers should explore the most appropriate ways of interaction, promoting the enhancement of their self-efficacy in a relaxed and positive emotional atmosphere.

5. Conclusion

In summary, teacher evaluation is crucial for the development of children's self-efficacy. In the daily life of kindergarten, teachers' appropriate use of positive evaluations can effectively promote the development of children's self-efficacy. However, teachers must remember not to prioritize positive evaluations at the expense of problem awareness, thus overlooking the issues that children may have. This approach not only goes against the goals of educational evaluation but also hinders the development of children's self-identity. By implementing the above recommendations, teachers can establish correct evaluation concepts and better utilize evaluation methods in the teaching evaluation process, promoting the enhancement of children's self-efficacy, fostering positive attitudes, and laying a solid psychological foundation for their comprehensive development.

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