

Strategies to Promote the Professional Growth and Development of Preschool Teachers

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Abstract: Nowadays, with the continuous deepening of quality-oriented education in China and the increasing demands of parents, especially the implementation of the new curriculum design concept, tremendous changes have taken place in teaching methods, teaching contents, teaching means, and learning approaches, which pose new challenges to the professional growth of preschool teachers. At present, preschool teachers are not only required to have a sense of responsibility and love, but also to have rich professional knowledge and skills, as well as new creative thinking and research ability. Even if the preschool teachers who have performed very well in traditional education are now struggling to adapt to the actual needs of educational development, which requires preschool teachers to continuously develop in the direction of specialization. This article will focus on how to promote the professional growth and development of preschool teachers to analyze and elaborate.

Keywords: Preschool teachers; Professional growth; Development

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1. Introduction

Childhood is the most important period for the formation of personality and the development of mental health in young children. Children aged 3–6 are still a blank slate, and it is crucial to guide and shape them^[1]. Early childhood education aims to help children develop good habits from a young age and is an important stage in promoting their overall development and cultivating their moral qualities. It directly influences the personality of children as they grow up and significantly affects their learning attitudes and future development directions. Therefore, enhancing the professional quality of preschool teachers is of utmost importance. In today's education system, the establishment of a team of kindergarten teachers plays an important role in early childhood education and kindergarten development. A high-quality preschool team not only needs to possess professional teaching knowledge and abilities, but also needs to have noble moral qualities and behaviors that care for young children. This is not only a requirement for preschool teachers, but also an important way to help them achieve long-term professional development^[2,3].

2. The necessity of professional growth and development for preschool teachers

2.1. Requirements for the development of quality education

Under the modern education system, the educational function of schools has undergone changes. This is because relevant departments in our country emphasize that education is not only about imparting knowledge, but also about cultivating students' comprehensive literacy and achieving all-round development. On this basis, deepening education reform has become the main task at present. To cultivate creative students, it can only be achieved through creative education and teachers. In early childhood education, the purpose of implementing educational reforms and new curriculum plans should not be limited to the single thinking of imparting knowledge and skills to young children. More importantly, it is necessary to enable young children to establish sound ideological consciousness and establish correct values, cultivate their exploratory desire and creative potential. Teachers should also interact and communicate with young children as companions and guides, carry out creative work, and help them obtain correct guidance during their early childhood, achieve comprehensive development and healthy growth ^[4]. If preschool teachers want to play such a role well, they must have sufficient capacity and professional quality. Therefore, preschool teachers not only need to play the roles of explorers, researchers, and learners in front of children, but also need to constantly research, learn, and grow in their daily work.

2.2. Help preschool teachers to improve their social status and strengthen the construction of preschool teachers

There is a close relationship between the attractiveness of a profession and its social status and academic reputation. When seeking higher social status, the degree of specialization in the profession is one of the most important factors. Objectively speaking, preschool teachers are a professional position that assists in the healthy growth of young children, requiring teachers to possess professional theoretical knowledge and skills. However, in terms of the current influence of preschool teachers in society, it is difficult to compare them with other professions, including doctors, lawyers, workers, etc. Their academic status and reputation are far inferior. In the eyes of most people, teachers cannot be considered experts, but merely disseminators of knowledge. Even some teachers themselves may think so, whether in terms of technology or scientific creation. Moreover, the positioning of the role of teachers in traditional education and the low proportion of social resource allocation have posed significant obstacles to the professional growth and development of teachers. Therefore, only by constantly improving their professional level and skills and improving their reputation in society can preschool teachers gain social recognition and respect, and ultimately improve their social status ^[5].

3. Specific measures to promote the professional growth and development of preschool teachers

The professional growth of teachers needs to be gradually improved. Everyone is an independent individual with different ways of thinking, and each teacher's research direction, interests, and strengths are different ^[6]. Based on the actual situation, each teacher should be able to improve at their original level and achieve different expected goals ^[7]. With the development of the times, the work of teachers is constantly numbered, so the professional growth of teachers requires long-term persistence. Soviet educator Lev Vygotsky once said, "The time that teachers spend on labor and creation is like a great river, nourished by many small streams. Teachers often have to read books, and the more knowledge they accumulate, the easier their classes will be."

3.1. Set clear goals and achieve self-planning

In the preschool teacher team, some teachers have just graduated from university, while others have been teaching for many years, possessing rich teaching experience and mature teaching achievements. Some teachers have also achieved professional development and obtained expert positions. In their teaching career, every preschool teacher needs to go through a period of growth to achieve a change from quantity to quality. As for the improvement and professional development of preschool teachers' own professional abilities, it also serves as a reference^[8]. Schools need to supervise and reflect on teachers' own professional growth and development, and design a grand blueprint for teachers' own professional development^[9]. Only when teachers have a full understanding of their own development goals, problems, advantages, measures and methods, etc., can they find the main direction and goals on the way forward and lay a solid foundation for their future development. As leaders of the kindergarten, they should also have an in-depth understanding of the growth needs of each preschool teacher through their personal development plan. We must accurately grasp the development characteristics and level of each teacher in order to better establish a high-quality and high-level preschool teacher team, mobilize the enthusiasm of each teacher's work and reform, and create a reliable platform for teachers' future professional growth and development.

3.2. Improve one's comprehensive literacy through multi-faceted learning

3.2.1. Familiarize oneself with books

With the continuous progress and development of early childhood education, documents such as "Professional Standards for Preschool Teachers," "Guidelines for Kindergarten Education," and "Learning and Development Guidelines for Children Aged 3–6" have gradually become an important subject of early childhood education theory and practice, and preschool teachers should also transform them into flexible understanding and application based on thorough reading and memorization. On the one hand, it can be transformed into flexible, open, and creative educational practice activities; On the other hand, it aims to transform the common educational practice activities of children and teachers into the comprehensive development of children. In order to have a correct understanding of the new educational concept in the shortest possible time, reading is the most effective way. It is also possible to draw on some specific examples in books as a framework for deeper exploration.

3.2.2. Interaction between teachers and students

Preschoolers themselves are a very vivid textbook. Preschool teachers can carefully observe children's every move in their daily activities and carry out game activities with them. In this way, teachers can have a deeper understanding of children's thinking mode and cognitive process, as well as their cognitive state and level of things. Inspired by the communication and interaction with children, it is convenient for teachers to better solve the problems encountered in the process of education.

3.2.3. Share more with colleagues

In daily work, teachers can find the advantages of colleagues in the process of preparing lessons, reflecting, and discussing with colleagues. Colleagues can also promptly provide solutions to problems encountered and point out deficiencies. Preschool teachers can learn from their colleagues' strengths and apply them to themselves, and finally improve their professional level.

3.3. Encouraging continuous growth of preschool teachers through appropriate policies and platforms

3.3.1. Continuously broaden the professional vision of preschool teachers

Currently, most of the teachers in kindergartens are graduated from vocational colleges, and some teachers who are slightly older are basically transferred, their cultural foundation is relatively weak and their theoretical vision is not broad enough. It is such a situation that makes it difficult for these preschool teachers to grasp and deal with diversified educational ideas. Professor Ye Lan ^[10] once put forward the relevant content of the ideal teacher's literacy: "Love for humanity and broad mindedness, care for students' growth and a noble spirit of dedication, good cultural literacy, a composite knowledge structure, educational and research abilities guided by the spirit of the times and scientific educational concepts, and the educational wisdom generated in practice." Therefore, only by constantly broadening the professional vision of preschool teachers can we promote their professional growth and development.

3.3.2. Stimulate preschool teachers' love and dedication with emotion

Among the current shortage of preschool teachers, a large proportion are female teachers. Compared to other positions, kindergarten is a relatively special educational battlefield. Female teachers have a great responsibility and need to shoulder both family and career responsibilities. Moreover, women themselves have delicate emotions and strong self-esteem. Therefore, kindergarten management should be people-oriented, using emotions to handle things, empathizing, and using emotions to stimulate teachers' educational enthusiasm, so that their hearts can be deeply moved. They must show care, consideration, and respect for preschool teachers ^[11]. Furthermore, it is important to understand their urgent needs and thoughts, provide sincere guidance in their work through kind language and assign tasks with an amiable tone. This approach can enhance the cohesion of the team. Lastly, if there are teachers with differing opinions, it is important to maintain unity and tolerance, avoiding conflicts that could disrupt collective cohesion.

3.3.3. Encourage teachers' progress through a reasonable system

We often say that "nothing can be accomplished without norms or standards," which is the same for kindergartens. Regulations play a critical role in standardizing and motivating the behavior of all staff members in kindergartens. Every modification to the kindergarten's rules must be based on the collective needs of preschool teachers. Only then can the established system be consciously followed by each teacher and serve to motivate them. Kindergartens can offer various awards such as "Learning Progress Award," "Special Teaching Award," or "Detailed Parent Communication Award" based on each teacher's performance. They can also encourage every preschool teacher to actively participate in organized competitions to enhance their comprehensive quality and showcase their professional levels. Depending on teachers' specific performances, awards such as "Paper Publication Award" or "Art Guidance Award" can be established ^[12,13]. The system aims to clarify the goals of professional growth and development for preschool teachers and provide a reliable platform while encouraging each teacher to actively participate in their professional growth activities, continuously improving their cultural level and professional skills ^[14].

3.4. Establish a team of teachers and gather the strength of teachers

Effectively integrating the professional knowledge, teaching experience, and professional development abilities of every kindergarten teacher will result in an unparalleled team strength. According to the concept of "human-oriented management" practiced in kindergartens, we need to regard kindergarten teachers as an important part

of the kindergarten and give them the management power of the kindergarten. Only in this way can we promote the unity of the teaching staff and encourage them to actively contribute to the development and education of the kindergarten. In kindergarten, the overall ability of teachers can be well utilized, and the collective consciousness of teachers can be maximally stimulated. When a kindergarten holds a large-scale event, kindergarten teachers can be involved to showcase their abilities and encourage them to gather their strength. Only then can the overall intelligence and strength of the team be discovered, and the strength will be endless and radiant. When teachers participate in every competition activity in the kindergarten, the power of the team through their own maximum efforts will inspire every preschool teacher to strive for collective honor, jointly safeguard collective interests, and maintain collective image.

4. Conclusion

At present, China is in the stage of deepening the development and reform of early childhood education ^[15]. The professional growth and development of every preschool teacher plays a key role in the reform of early childhood education. The establishment of a high-quality, high-capacity preschool teacher team is not only the main way to improve the quality of early childhood education and teaching, but also can improve the quality of kindergartens. To achieve this, a broad group of preschool teachers should continuously liberate their minds, enhance their professional qualities, and realize their professional growth and development.

Disclosure statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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