

# Effective Strategies for Implementing Character Education in Kindergartens

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**Abstract:** Character education occupies a core position in the growth of young children and is an important cornerstone for their comprehensive development. Character education can help young children develop good moral values, promote mental health, and have a positive impact on their academic performance. However, character education in China still faces many challenges in both theory and practice. In terms of theory, the character structure model and measurement tools are not perfect, and there is a lack of localized theoretical construction. At the practical level, the educational content and form are single, the teaching staff is insufficient, and the role of families and society has not been fully utilized. To effectively promote character education in kindergartens, we can start from the following aspects: Firstly, integrating character education into daily activities, through forms such as “virtue theater” and role-playing games, allowing children to experience the connotation of virtue in interaction. The second is to strengthen home-school co-education, establish effective communication mechanisms, and organize regular parent-teacher meetings, use online platforms for communication, and carry out home-school interactive activities. Thirdly, targeted educational activities can be carried out through various means, such as combining traditional festivals and utilizing picture books. These strategies help create a favorable educational environment, promote a good development of children’s character, and lay a solid foundation for their lifelong development.

**Keywords:** Kindergarten; Child; Character education; Strategy

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## 1. Introduction

The “Guidelines for Learning and Development of Children Aged 3–6” issued by the Ministry of Education of China in 2012, although not directly named “character education,” also contains the core concept of character education. For example, the document proposes educational recommendations in the “interpersonal communication” section, including actively approaching and caring for young children, frequently playing games or activities with them, allowing young children to feel the joy of interacting with elders, and establishing close parent-child or teacher-student relationships. Encourage young children to make independent

decisions, work independently, and enhance their self-esteem and confidence. These suggestions essentially cover core elements such as friendliness and autonomy in character education <sup>[1]</sup>. Early childhood is a crucial stage for individual character formation and value shaping, and character education plays a pivotal role in the comprehensive development blueprint of early childhood education. Therefore, it is necessary to attach great importance to and effectively strengthen early childhood character education.

## **2. Character education is the cornerstone of early childhood and social development education**

There is currently no unified definition of the concept of character education. Thomas Rickner in the United States believes that character education is an attitude that refers to the process of cultivating human virtues through cognition, emotion, behavior, and other aspects. It can be widely obtained through various aspects of school life, including teachers' role models, conflict resolution solutions, storytelling, curriculum content, and application skills. Marvin Berkowitz defined character education as any conscious form of education adopted solely to promote the development of moral abilities. In Ding Jinhong's definition, character education mainly refers to the education of good personality traits and other personality psychological qualities, including civility, politeness, honesty, tolerance, etc. It is mainly through the mutual and educational activities between educators and learners, guiding and promoting learners to acquire or form core values, and the process of forming the above-mentioned moral qualities <sup>[2]</sup>. The viewpoints on character education, although expressed differently, collectively emphasize that character education is a conscious and comprehensive educational process aimed at promoting the development of individual moral abilities and virtues through various means <sup>[3]</sup>. The early childhood character education refers to the continuous dynamic process of educators purposefully, systematically, and systematically educating, guiding, and regulating the ideological qualities and moral behaviors of preschool children. It is the internalization process of preschool children's independent character construction and the externalization process of moral consciousness.

The character traits that should be emphasized in the early childhood stage mainly include integrity, friendliness, sense of responsibility, courage, creativity, autonomy, perseverance, and social skills. Character education plays an irreplaceable role in individual growth and social development. From the perspective of individual development, character education can help students form good moral concepts and behavioral habits, promote mental health, reduce problematic behaviors, enhance happiness, and even have a positive impact on academic performance. This has also been proven in specific empirical research. Ma Weidong pointed out that cultivating good socialist moral qualities among college students is not only the purpose of moral education in higher education institutions but also a requirement of the times for college students. Zhang Xin takes character education as her philosophy and adopts a practical and exploratory approach to provide character education to six children with mild behavioral problems. Through the close integration of kindergarten, parents, and community, it is concluded that character education can improve or eliminate children's behavioral problems and enhance their social communication skills <sup>[4]</sup>. Jiang Yajuan's "Action Research on Character Education for Large Class Children Using Picture Books as a Carrier" uses the paradigm of action research to study the character of large class children. After more than three months of research, it has been proven that using picture books as a carrier and corresponding extended activities to carry out character education activities for children does indeed have significant improvements in their moral cognition and moral emotions, and some children's

behaviors also have corresponding changes <sup>[5]</sup>.

Character education is not only important for the development of young children, but also for the development of society. Character education emphasizes the cultivation of individual moral qualities and a sense of social responsibility, which helps to reduce negative behaviors and conflicts in society, thereby promoting social harmony and stability. For example, by cultivating core values such as integrity, respect, and a sense of responsibility among teenagers, the occurrence of juvenile delinquency, bullying, and other behaviors can be effectively reduced. In addition, good character education can help individuals better adapt to social life and enhance social cohesion. In the context of globalization, society is facing the impact of diverse cultures and values. Character education helps individuals maintain correct value orientation and avoid value nihilism in complex social environments by cultivating core values. This educational model helps individuals form stable values in a multicultural context, enhancing social inclusiveness and cohesion <sup>[6,7]</sup>.

### **3. The problems with character education in China at present**

There are some urgent problems to be solved in both theoretical and practical aspects of character education in China, which to some extent affect the effectiveness and promotion of character education. On the theoretical level, firstly, the imperfect character structure model and measurement tools. Different scholars have different understandings of the connotation and structure of character, which makes it difficult to form a unified standard and evaluation system in practical operation. This not only affects the scientific and systematic nature of character education but also makes it difficult to evaluate accurately the effectiveness of education in practice. Secondly, there is a lack of localized theoretical construction. The theoretical construction of character education in China is greatly influenced by the West, and it has not fully integrated traditional Chinese culture and practical needs to form a character education theoretical system with Chinese characteristics. For example, Western character education emphasizes individual autonomy and independence, while traditional Chinese culture places more emphasis on collectivism and family values. This difference needs to be reflected in theoretical construction.

At the practical level, the educational content and form are single. The current content and form of character education are relatively single, lacking timeliness and pertinence <sup>[8]</sup>. Some schools still adopt traditional preaching-style education, neglecting students' subjectivity and participation. For example, character education courses often focus on classroom teaching and lack practical activities that are integrated with students' actual lives, resulting in low interest in character education among students <sup>[9]</sup>. Secondly, the shortage of quality education teachers is a prominent problem in current practice. Many teachers lack systematic training in character education theory, and their teaching methods and tools are relatively outdated. In addition, teachers often lack effective incentive mechanisms and professional support when implementing character education, which affects teaching effectiveness. Finally, the role of family and society in character education has not been fully realized. Some parents do not attach enough importance to character education and lack correct educational concepts and methods. At the same time, there are many unfavorable factors in shaping the character of adolescents in the social environment, such as the erosion of negative social norms.

### **4. Effective strategies for implementing character education in kindergartens**

Faced with many challenges, kindergartens can actively create a good educational environment and carry

out targeted educational activities based on their conditions to promote the good development of children's character.

#### **4.1. Character infiltration in daily activities**

Integrating character education into the daily activities of kindergarten is the core of practice. Through interactive activities such as the "Virtue Theater," teachers can integrate core values such as honesty, bravery, and friendliness into stories, songs, and artistic creations, allowing children to feel and understand the connotation of virtues through interaction. For example, setting up a "Sharing Day" activity to encourage young children to donate toys or books, promoting the virtues of sharing and cooperation; Through role-playing games, children can simulate different social scenarios, experience the challenges of moral choices, and deepen their understanding of character traits such as justice and responsibility.

Teachers can also make full use of children's time in kindergarten to infuse character education into all aspects of their lives through small daily things. By regulating the daily behavior of young children, we aim to cultivate their awareness of rules, politeness, and frugality<sup>[10]</sup>. For example, guiding young children to consciously queue up while eating and washing their hands, cultivating their sense of order; Educate young children not to interrupt teachers when they are speaking, and cultivate good listening habits; Encourage young children to eat without leftovers and cultivate good habits of saving food; At the same time, remind young children to focus their attention during class, avoid looking around, and cultivate concentration and study habits. Secondly, teachers should infuse their character into their daily speech and behavior. If teachers take the initiative to say "good morning" to young children when they come to kindergarten in the morning, it will subtly cultivate a good habit of "greeting others proactively" in young children; If the teacher actively picks up the paper scraps on the ground, the children will gradually develop a good habit of not littering and maintaining hygiene. Through repeated practice and the guidance of these daily small things, young children can unconsciously form good behavioral norms and character cultivation, laying a solid foundation for their lifelong development.

#### **4.2. The character cultivation model of home-school co-education**

Implementing character education for young children in kindergartens is an important part of early childhood education, and homeschool co-education is an effective way to achieve this goal. Establish an effective communication mechanism

##### **4.2.1. Establish an effective communication mechanism**

Kindergartens should regularly organize parent-teacher conferences, parent schools, and other activities to convey the importance of character education and the educational philosophy and methods of the kindergarten to parents. Through these activities, parents can better understand the educational goals of the kindergarten and maintain a consistent educational direction with the kindergarten at home. Secondly, in today's era of advanced information technology, teachers can make full use of online platforms such as WeChat groups, QQ groups, etc., to communicate with parents promptly about their children's situation in the kindergarten, allowing parents to understand their children's dynamics. At the same time, parents can also share their children's situations at home so that teachers can adjust their teaching strategies promptly. In addition, the kindergarten can also use the official account as a platform to regularly push tweets related to children's character education to parents. On the official account setting, the tweet comment function is enabled so that parents can speak freely, express their

opinions on each tweet, and share their experiences and insights in the process of parenting. At the same time, if parents have any questions about character education for young children or wish to explore certain viewpoints in depth, they can communicate with the kindergarten through comments in the background to strengthen the interaction between home and school <sup>[11]</sup>.

Moreover, the efforts of parents are also worthy of being seen and recognized. Teachers should publicly commend parents who actively provide various resources such as books, handmade materials or share parenting experiences during the theme activities of character education. This can not only express the sincere gratitude of the kindergarten to the parents for their hands-on efforts, but also create a role model effect among the parent group, stimulate the enthusiasm of other parents to participate in home-school co-education, and work together to create a positive and conducive family and campus atmosphere for children's character development <sup>[12]</sup>.

#### **4.2.2. Carry out home-school interactive activities**

Kindergartens can design a series of parent-child activities, such as parent-child sports games, parent-child handicrafts, etc., for parents and children to participate together. In these activities, parents can personally demonstrate and guide their children, cultivating good qualities such as cooperation and sharing. Secondly, educational activities for home-school cooperation can also be carried out around the theme of character education, such as "gratitude" and "integrity." For example, organizing a "Gratitude Week" activity to teach children how to be grateful in kindergarten and completing gratitude tasks with their parents after returning home, such as doing a small thing for their family.

#### **4.2.3. Kindergartens implement character education through diverse carriers**

Kindergartens can use various means to achieve their character education goals. Traditional cultural festivals contain rich educational value. Kindergartens can combine the characteristics of festivals to carry out diverse activities and cultivate children's morality and cultural identity. Of course, when conducting activities, the developmental characteristics of children of different age groups should be fully considered, and targeted educational content and teaching methods should be selected. For young children in small classes, teachers can stimulate their interest and enthusiasm for holiday-related games or activities by telling vivid holiday stories, thereby cultivating their love for their country and hometown, as well as their affection for nature. Middle school children already have certain hands-on and language expression abilities. Teachers can guide them to make simple holiday crafts and organize poetry recitation activities to help children resonate emotionally during recitation. At the same time, they can focus on cultivating children's understanding of the origin of festivals and the traditional cultural connotations they contain. The moral sense of preschoolers in the senior class is gradually increasing, and teachers can help them improve their ability to distinguish right from wrong on this basis, guide them to shift from emotional understanding to rational understanding, and thus have a deeper understanding and inheritance of the cultural values behind traditional festivals <sup>[13]</sup>.

Picture books, with their vivid storylines and character portrayal, have become an important carrier of character education in kindergartens. There are significant differences in cognition, psychology, and many other aspects among children of different age groups, which determine that we must teach students according to their aptitude when carrying out character education. Among them, cleverly using picture books for guidance is an extremely effective way. Accurately selecting picture books that are suitable for young children based on their age characteristics can often achieve twice the result with half the effort in character education.

When we discover specific character "problems" in young children, we can focus on these issues and select

appropriate themes, and then choose corresponding picture books. Taking the common “problem” of young children not respecting others as an example, we should take “respect” and “friendliness” as the core themes to promote character education<sup>[14]</sup>. A picture book like ‘Don’t Mock My Friend’ is an excellent choice. With vivid and interesting story scenes and vivid character images, it cleverly integrates the principles of respecting others and treating them kindly, allowing children to naturally understand the true meaning of these beautiful qualities in a relaxed and pleasant reading atmosphere, helping them gradually change bad behavior habits and develop good character qualities.

During the teaching of picture book reading for young children, teachers play a crucial leading role. When teachers focus on teaching picture books, they should not just stick to telling stories from a script but carefully plan a series of colorful activities based on the specific plot and connotation of the picture book story<sup>[15]</sup>. In this way, young children are no longer passive listeners but can fully immerse themselves in practical activities. This not only helps them to deepen their understanding of picture book stories from the surface but also enables them to internalize the essence of the stories. At the same time, teachers should effectively seize opportunities in picture book reading instruction and skillfully integrate character education into it. Each picture book story contains a specific value orientation, and teachers organize activities closely related to picture books, such as role-playing, scenario simulation, group discussions, etc., so that children can be subtly influenced by character education through personal experience and interactive communication. For picture books with the theme of “sharing,” teachers can arrange for children to share toys, food, and other small activities in groups so that they can truly understand the joy of sharing in practice and gradually develop good character and literacy, laying a solid foundation for their future growth.

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