

# Exploration of a Pre-Service Training System for Childcare Teachers Based on Job Competency

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**Abstract:** The proposal and in-depth advancement of policies such as “affordable childcare” and “quality childcare” have quietly accelerated the development of the childcare service industry, putting forward higher requirements for professional and high-quality childcare talents. As an important base for cultivating professional childcare talents, preschool education majors in higher vocational colleges should, on the premise of deeply understanding the current market demand for childcare talents, systematically construct a pre-service training system integrating knowledge impartation, ability training and quality improvement based on the job competency model. It aims to open up paths for the growth and development of students majoring in preschool education and promote their magnificent transformation from the role of “students” to “professionals”. This paper first briefly expounds the importance and necessity of pre-service training for childcare teachers based on job competency. On this basis, relying on the job competency theory, it summarizes and proposes the construction path of the pre-service training system for childcare teachers, hoping to specifically break through the current predicament of pre-service training for childcare teachers and promote the high-quality and sustainable development of preschool education majors in higher vocational colleges.

**Keywords:** Job competency; Childcare teachers; Pre-service training; System construction

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## 1. Introduction

With the implementation of the “two-child policy” and “three-child policy”, childcare services for infants aged 0-3 have become one of the important people’s livelihood issues concerned by society. To effectively solve the problem of infant care, the relevant industry is in urgent need of high-quality childcare teachers to meet the growing demand for childcare services. However, parents’ willingness to send their children to childcare institutions depends largely on the quality of childcare services. It can be seen that only by attaching importance to the whole-process training of childcare teachers before, during and after employment can we build a high-level team of childcare teachers. Preschool education majors in higher vocational colleges shoulder the arduous mission of cultivating high-quality childcare teachers. This requires higher vocational colleges to build a systematic and scientific pre-service training system with job competency as the core orientation, so as to cultivate more high-quality childcare talents who meet the actual job needs and have good professional literacy,

and effectively escort the high-quality development of the relevant industry.

## **2. Importance and necessity of pre-service training for childcare teachers based on job competency**

### **2.1. Importance**

First of all, job competency-oriented pre-service training can systematically improve the adaptability of future childcare industry practitioners to their positions, output more high-quality childcare talents for the industry, thereby fundamentally solving the problem of uneven quality of childcare services, promoting the childcare industry to gradually move towards connotative development, improving the level of industrial standardization and institutionalization, effectively meeting the urgent demand of families for high-quality childcare services, and finally injecting a steady stream of momentum into the sustainable development of the childcare industry. Secondly, as we all know, the main service objects of childcare teachers are young infants; the work is characterized by fragmentation, and they shoulder the dual mission of care and education. If they lack a solid professional foundation or have a weak professional identity, it is easy to cause improper care or occupational burnout. The core goal of pre-service training is to cultivate students' "hard skills" and shape their "soft literacy" <sup>[1]</sup>. On campus, students will systematically learn theoretical knowledge related to childcare, such as the laws of infant physical and psychological development and childcare ethical norms, which can provide solid knowledge support for students to engage in childcare work in the future. Moreover, pre-service training focuses on cultivating students' practical job abilities. Through case analysis, situational simulation, institutional training and other methods, students can quickly familiarize themselves with the overall process of childcare and grasp the key points of work, which not only improves students' service level but also promotes their rapid role transformation from "students" to "professionals" <sup>[2]</sup>. Of course, pre-service training also pays attention to the cultivation of students' "soft literacy", aiming to enhance their sense of identity and belonging to the childcare profession through the introduction of role models and other ways, effectively escorting the long-term development of childcare teachers' careers.

### **2.2. Necessity**

Research shows that in recent years, although the development pace of the childcare industry has been accelerating, it still faces prominent problems such as insufficient supply of childcare teachers and uneven service quality, which invisibly restrict the sustainable and high-quality development of the industry. Childcare work is not just simple "baby-sitting", but should be scientific, professional and special. This puts forward higher requirements for the abilities and literacy of childcare teachers. Only systematic pre-service training can improve the adaptability of practitioners to their positions and ensure that they can work with ease. On the contrary, it may further aggravate the problem of uneven service quality, which is difficult to meet the expectations and needs of society and families for high-quality childcare services. Thus, attaching importance to the pre-service training of childcare teachers can effectively make up for the talent gap in the childcare industry. Moreover, as an important training base for childcare teachers, preschool education majors in higher vocational colleges assume the important mission of pre-service training. However, at present, the teaching of this major has a series of problems, such as relatively traditional teaching models and relatively scarce training resources, which may lead to students' inadequate skills and mismatched literacy, thus affecting their employment and development after graduation. This requires higher vocational colleges to attach more importance to the pre-service training of

students majoring in preschool education and increase reform efforts to specifically make up for the shortcomings of traditional education, build a bridge for students to smoothly transition to “professionals”, and ultimately transport more qualified talents for the industry<sup>[3,4]</sup>.

### **3. Construction path of the pre-service training system for childcare teachers based on job competency**

#### **3.1. Ideological and political navigation, integration of morality and profession**

Research shows that when recruiting staff, childcare institutions first pay attention to the candidates' moral character and professional philosophy, while ranking their professional abilities and work experience in secondary positions. Therefore, higher vocational colleges should pay attention to implementing the core concept of “equal emphasis on care and education, people-oriented” in the pre-service training link, especially focus on the construction of curriculum ideological and political education, and give full play to the enabling role of ideological and political education in cultivating high-quality childcare talents. Only in this way can we cultivate more professional childcare talents who are “caring, professional and law-abiding”, and provide strong talent support for the development of the childcare industry. The following specifically expounds effective measures to shape professional ethics from three levels: cognition, emotion, and action<sup>[5]</sup>.

First of all, higher vocational colleges should optimize the curriculum system, especially add a series of specialized courses related to professional ethics and laws and regulations. By in-depth interpretation of industry standards and professional norms, guide students to deeply recognize the professional value of childcare work and have a more thorough understanding of the social significance of the work. In addition, teachers should find appropriate opportunities to flexibly and effectively integrate ideological and political elements into the teaching of professional courses such as “Infant Nutrition and Feeding” and “Responsive Care for Infants”, promoting the in-depth integration of professional education and ideological and political education. Taking the course “Infant Nutrition and Feeding” as an example, teachers can guide students to think about and discuss the differences between traditional parenting methods and modern parenting methods, so as to cultivate their scientific parenting concepts<sup>[6]</sup>.

Secondly, teachers can actively introduce industry resources, such as inviting senior front-line childcare workers or outstanding alumni to the school to give special lectures and share real cases. Through vivid and touching stories such as “caring for young infants with love” and “guarding special children with care”, stimulate students' professional identity and sense of mission, change their work concepts, and help students achieve long-term development with the active awareness of “I want to do it”.

Finally, teachers can carefully design simulated situational tasks such as “dealing with unreasonable demands from parents” and “handling sudden health problems of infants” around the teaching content and combined with the actual childcare work. Let students analyze and judge moral dilemmas in real situations from the perspective of professional ethics, and incorporate soft indicators such as professional emotions, communication skills and sense of responsibility into the curriculum assessment system. Finally, understand the changes in their values through the process data such as students' learning logs and reflection reports, draw the growth trajectory of students' professional values, and dynamically evaluate their professional ethics<sup>[7]</sup>.

#### **3.2. Integrated training, competency chain reconstruction**

To promote sustainable development, teachers should attach importance to the cultivation of students'

professional abilities. Surveys show that current childcare institutions attach great importance to the practical application abilities of candidates. This requires higher vocational colleges to optimize and reconstruct the training system and focus on the cultivation of students' job adaptability and the strengthening of comprehensive practical skills, to specifically solve the structural problem of "loose in the early stage and concentrated in the later stage" commonly existing in traditional training teaching links. To this end, higher vocational colleges should establish and improve a progressive training mechanism of "three-stage progression, full-process integration", that is, focusing on career cognition and basic care skills training in the first year; carrying out rotational training and home-kindergarten collaborative communication practice in the second year; and focusing on on-the-job internship and comprehensive activity organization and implementation in the third year, to form a full-process practical path from entry to proficiency and from single to compound. Regarding the innovation of training models, teachers can actively introduce diversified forms such as project-based training, situational simulation training, typical case discussion and action review, aiming to create diversified and compound training scenarios for students, allowing them to immerse themselves in skill training and deepen theoretical cognition<sup>[8,9]</sup>. More importantly, under the background of the integration of childcare and kindergarten education, higher vocational colleges should pay attention to cultivating students' integrated abilities. Taking the course "Design and Guidance of Infant Game Activities" as an example, teachers can add a game activity module for children aged 3-6 to broaden students' horizons and help them have a broader career development space. For another example, teachers can integrate the module of identification and prevention of common diseases in children aged 3-6 into the course "Infant Health and Care" and independently offer a special course "Theory and Practice of Transition Education between Childcare and Kindergarten". Only in this way can we cultivate more compound and integrated talents needed by the industry under the background of the integration of childcare and kindergarten education<sup>[10]</sup>.

### **3.3. Digital intelligence empowerment, teaching innovation**

Since schools are the main positions for students to learn and practice, students may find it difficult to firmly grasp diversified childcare skills due to the lack of real service objects, leading to weak job adaptability. To specifically solve the problem, higher vocational colleges should actively introduce digital intelligence technology and strive to create a digital training environment with high simulation and quantifiable evaluation for students, so as to specifically exercise their practical skills and make them familiar with future childcare work as soon as possible.

First of all, higher vocational colleges can introduce intelligent simulated infant models equipped with biosensors and combine them with artificial intelligence-driven infant behavior simulation systems to establish core training modules covering various typical scenarios such as daily care, health care, emotional support and game interaction. It aims to support students in completing a series of repeated and standardized skill training in realistic scenarios, ensuring the safety and controllability of training while comprehensively improving students' practical skills. Secondly, actively introduce digital technology in the actual teaching process to build a smart classroom. Taking the course "Infant Health and Care" as an example, teachers can dynamically simulate the clinical manifestations and emergency treatment process of sudden infant diseases with the help of intelligent physical sign monitoring equipment and holographic projection technology, specifically exercising students' emergency response capabilities<sup>[11]</sup>. For another example, the course "Infant Behavior Observation and Analysis" can rely on an artificial intelligence-assisted analysis system to intelligently capture, segment, and mark infant behavior videos and extract main features, aiming to guide students to develop scientific observation habits<sup>[12]</sup>.

### **3.4. Integration of specialties, diversified development**

The sustainable development of childcare institutions needs to rely on “specialized and versatile” talents, which puts forward higher requirements for the talent training of preschool education majors in higher vocational colleges. Before students enroll, higher vocational colleges can systematically identify students’ potential advantages in fields such as artistic expression, sports guidance and language development support by using professional evaluation tools or psychological projection experiments. Based on the evaluation results, provide dynamically matched curriculum resource packages, and establish a major + minor certification system to promote students’ personalized development<sup>[13-14]</sup>. Moreover, higher vocational colleges should establish close cooperative relationships with local childcare institutions and jointly develop a variety of training projects such as “sensory integration training rooms” and “language rehabilitation workshops”, allowing students to not only complete the study of required courses on campus but also obtain as many vocational skill qualification certificates as possible, such as sensory integration trainers and language rehabilitation therapists. This can not only greatly improve their employment competitiveness but also promote students’ diversified development. Finally, higher vocational colleges can regularly organize characteristic activities closely related to preschool education majors, such as “infant picture book drama performances” and “physical fitness curriculum design competitions”, and actively invite childcare institution managers and industry experts to participate as judges, so as to provide a stage for students to show their specialties and build a bridge for childcare institutions to select talents, realizing the two-way connection between talents and positions<sup>[15]</sup>.

## **4. Conclusion**

In summary, to meet the diversified social demand for childcare talents, higher vocational colleges should build a systematic pre-service training system based on the job competency theory. Through measures such as ideological and political navigation, integration of morality and profession, integrated training, competency chain reconstruction, digital intelligence empowerment, teaching innovation, integration of specialties and diversified development, we can help students achieve comprehensive and long-term development, and strive to transport a steady stream of high-quality talents for the vigorous development of the childcare industry.

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