

A Study of Group Work Intervention on Children's Concentration in Lower Grades: A Case Study of Children's Concentration Enhancement Group in Elementary Schools

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Abstract: According to the survey on the concentration level of children in the lower grades, the results show that most of the children have concentration deficits. Concentration ability plays a crucial role in children's intellectual development. With the continuous development of science and technology, different types of electronic products are emerging, which will undoubtedly create a great temptation for children. This hinders the development of children's ability to concentrate, which not only affects the development of their own ability but also poses a threat to their future development. Therefore, it becomes an essential course to improve children's ability to concentrate. This paper adopts research methods such as participant observation method and interview method, based on social learning theory, social support theory, and other related theories, through the J City social work service agency selected six children in the lower grades who are not focused and voluntarily participate in this activity into group activities, analyzed the practical effect of group work intervention in the lower grades concentration and problems from the practical point of view. On this basis, corresponding countermeasures are proposed to improve the quality of group intervention services. This paper found that the practical effects of group work intervention on children's concentration in the lower grades include: improving children's concentration, promoting children's self-knowledge, and enhancing children's self-confidence. Problems include insufficient parental participation and insufficient peer group social interaction. The following countermeasures are proposed: building a platform for peer interaction to improve children's concentration; constructing a social support network for children with the participation of multiple parties; social workers clarifying their own role positioning and flexibly switching their roles; and enhancing their professional competence and strengthening their practical work skills.

Keywords: Younger children; Group work; Concentration

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1. Formulation of the problem and literature review

In today's fast-paced and information-explosive world, it is common for children in the early grades to lose their ability to concentrate, which seriously affects their learning and development, as revealed by the 2006 "Survey on the Attention of China's School-Age Children." Although the problem of concentration has existed for a long time and has attracted attention from society, most of the existing research focuses on the theoretical discussion of family and school education, and there is a relative lack of practical and theoretical research in the field of social work ^[1].

Given this, the purpose of this paper is to explore the potential of applying the social work developmental group model in enhancing children's concentration in the lower grades. Professional group work methods and techniques aim to enhance children's behavioral cognitive abilities and promote their healthy growth. This study expects to provide a set of practicable models for the enhancement of children's concentration in the lower grades and to fill the gap in social work in this field.

1.1. Current status of foreign research

In foreign countries, the important role of concentration on personal growth has long been recognized by many experts and scholars. The famous American psychologist Albert Bandura created the theory of "observational learning" in 1977, which clarifies the importance of concentration on learning ^[2]. Jerome Bruner's "cognitive learning" theory states that the process of learning is not mechanical, or straightforward, but through the subjective initiative of people to carry out specific implementation. Human perception, attention, understanding, and memory are important links in the acquisition of information.

Most of the research on strategies to improve concentration in elementary school students has provided sound recommendations for improving concentration in younger children from both pedagogical and psychological perspectives.

In the field of pedagogy, about homeschooling, Lucy Jo Palladino points out that the words and actions of parents are always a model for their children, and she promotes the idea that parents should be teaching their children to stay focused ^[3].

In the field of psychology, Jean-Philippe Lacha believed that "concentration" should be "effortless", with patience to listen and to read people's thoughts. As more training is given in this way, the easier it is for people to concentrate effortlessly. At the same time, the control of concentration will become a habit ^[4].

1.2. Current status of domestic research

1.2.1. Relevant research on influencing children's ability to concentrate in the early grades

In terms of the factors affecting children's concentration level: children's factors and environmental factors such as school, family, partners, and so on will have an impact on children's concentration level. Fai Zheng's research shows that the stability of an individual's mood over a certain time frame has an impact on the stability of concentration levels ^[5]. Ge Min Yun also found that children's physical condition is also an important factor that leads to lower concentration levels, such as headache, intestinal discomfort, and so on, which is the main reason for children's low concentration levels ^[6]. Meta-analysis results of Zhang Yefeng et al. showed that the disharmonious relationship between parents within the family can cause children's lack of concentration in learning, and children from single-parent families, due to the lack of cultural stimulation and learning resources, can directly affect the children's learning state, which can result in the children's low level of concentration in the classroom work ^[7]. In addition, some studies show that in the classroom, students' concentration will

change with the class time, the longer the class time, the less concentration. Zhang Lan et al. found through experimental methods that environmental noise not only has a direct effect on children's subjective irritability but also significantly reduces children's concentration levels ^[8].

1.2.2. Research on strategies to improve the concentration of children in the lower grades

Regarding the research on strategies to improve concentration in primary school students, Yingping Zhang, guided by cognitive-behavioral theory, conducted cognitive-behavioral exercises on students with low concentration, and the results of the study showed that the method was effective in improving their concentration level. In addition to this, some researchers believe that if executive functions are trained, the neural network system of attention can be optimized, which can significantly improve children's learning concentration ^[9]. Zhang Yan found that the improvement of parents' literacy and education, the optimization of family upbringing, the smooth communication in the family, and the creation of a good learning environment for the children are all important factors for the improvement of children's ability to concentrate ^[10].

1.2.3. Studies related to social work intervention in improving concentration in lower-grade children

When researching children's concentration levels, Wu Jinman combined group work and casework to not only enable parents to understand the causes of children's low concentration ability in learning, but also to help parents find ways to improve their children's concentration ability. Du Wenjie conducted a study on the causes of ADHD and children's lack of concentration in the classroom. The results showed that the use of different teaching methods when training focus for ADHD children can effectively improve the focusing problems of ADHD children. Minna Liu et al. implemented structured play therapy on 24 ADHD children. The effects of ten prevention methods were assessed by the quality of life questionnaire and the parent symptom scale before and 6 months after the therapy, respectively.

After the above analysis, the author believes that most of the research on "concentration" focuses on both psychological and educational aspects. At present, most of the psychological studies on the improvement of school-age children's ability to concentrate are conducted from the perspective of sports psychology. In social work, the emphasis and intervention on "concentration" is relatively weak. Therefore, for social work researchers, the intervention and research of group work are necessary.

2. Practical exploration of group work intervention on children's concentration in lower grades

In this chapter, the interview method and participant observation method were mainly used to collect research data, and through a brief introduction to the basic information of the lower grades children's concentration enhancement group and the status of the group's implementation, the effectiveness of the group's activities was systematically summarized, thus laying the foundation for the subsequent in-depth analysis of the problems encountered by the group's intervention in the lower grades children's concentration enhancement.

2.1. Process of implementation of the group's work

2.1.1. Preliminary phase of the work of the group

During the initial stage of the group, the social worker is the core guide, planning the activity process according

to the established program to ensure smooth operation. At the same time, the social worker creates a relaxed and harmonious atmosphere, encourages members to participate, establishes a foundation of trust, relieves anxiety, and shapes a positive behavioral environment through the development and implementation of group norms, which promotes members' ability to improve. Social workers combine leadership, organization, planning, and motivation to drive the team toward the set goals. However, at the initial stage, there is also the problem of passive participation of members. In this regard, the social worker plans to optimize the game design in the middle of the group to enhance communication and interaction among members, deepen the group's sense of identity, and promote members' active integration into the group to overcome this challenge.

2.1.2. Mid-term phase of the group's work

In the middle of the group activities, to activate the members, the social worker planned three special training sessions: sound discrimination, auditory concentration, and visual concentration exercises. The game "Catching Dragonflies" was used to enhance listening acuity and habits. "Listening to Sentences to Recognize Differences" and "Reading Texts to Answer Questions" strengthened listening memory and concentration. Visual training games such as "Find the Difference" and "Elimination" enhanced members' ability to observe and focus on details. These activities not only improved individual skills, but also promoted interaction and trust among members, and enhanced group cohesion. At this stage, member communication was significantly enhanced, and social learning theory was skillfully applied to set positive role models and guide members to improve their behavior. Members generally felt a sense of self-improvement and a deeper sense of team identity, which contributed to the realization of the group's goals. In the face of the initial conflict, the social worker quickly intervened to mediate and ensure the smooth operation of the program. In future activities, it is recommended that the difficulty of the game be lowered to avoid intimidation. At the end of the group, social workers should pay close attention to conflict resolution and cohesion enhancement to ensure a healthy end of the group.

2.1.3. Conclusion of the work of the group

At the end of the group activity, the social worker organized a post-test on concentration, comparing the data before and after using the Chinese children's attention scale, which showed a significant improvement in members' concentration. The social worker encouraged the members to continue to apply the methods learned for further improvement. Before the end of the activity, the social worker carefully planned to ensure a smooth flow and demonstrated professionalism. In the face of parting, social workers dealt with their emotions with an accepting attitude and applied social learning theory to compare the changes in concentration before and after the program to enhance members' sense of goal achievement and self-confidence. To consolidate the results, the social workers guided the members to plan their future vision and endeavors, to ensure that what they had learned would not be forgotten and that they would continue to grow.

3. Analysis of problems in the intervention of group work on children's concentration in the lower grades

3.1. Inadequate parental involvement

Families are crucial in children's development, but this study only focused on group members' concentration enhancement without exploring their family backgrounds in-depth and ignoring the role of parents. It was found

that parents did not recognize the importance of concentration and lacked support for their children's group activities, which affected their children's participation and motivation. At the same time, parents were busy with work and household chores, making it difficult for them to devote time and energy to group work, resulting in a lack of understanding of their children's performance and an inability to provide effective guidance. The low level of parental participation hinders social workers from grasping the children's family situation and is not conducive to the enhancement of concentration.

3.2. Inadequate support for social interaction in peer groups

The popularity of the Internet and social media has led to a preference for electronic device communication among group members and a decrease in peer interaction. Children are prone to be addicted to online games and neglect real-life socialization, which affects the improvement of concentration. Children in the lower grades are easily influenced by their peers, and peer concentration directly affects their personal concentration. Although group activities promote cognition and interaction among members, children's peer interaction support is still insufficient in daily life, which restricts the long-term improvement of concentration.

4. Countermeasure suggestions to enhance the quality of concentration services for children in lower grades with group intervention

4.1. Building a platform for peer-to-peer interaction to enhance children's ability to concentrate

To enhance the concentration of children in the lower grades, a platform for peer-to-peer interaction should be built, such as community activities and the intervention of social organizations. This platform promotes children's interaction and communication, building good interpersonal relationships and learning cooperation, sharing, and respect. At the same time, parents should reduce the addiction to video games and social media, and encourage outdoor and useful extracurricular activities to develop social skills and concentration.

4.2. Social workers clarify their role positioning and change their roles flexibly

In the group, social workers need to change their roles flexibly and take the lead as "peers." At the initial stage, they should guide members to know each other and make a contract; mediate in case of disagreement to enhance cohesion; observe and record when the operation is smooth, and adjust the content at the right time to ensure that the goal of concentration is enhanced. Flexibility, integration of social workers' professional strengths, handling of role relationships, and focusing on service are the keys to solving the dilemma of social workers' roles.

5. Conclusion

Using the Chinese children's attention scale, the author took the lower-grade children of an elementary school as the research object, conducted a needs survey on 61 students in the school, and then selected six students as the service recipients to carry out group activities to explore the effect of the group work intervention on the lower grade children's ability to concentrate. At the end of the activity, the author used the Chinese children's attention scale to test the group members' concentration again, interviewed the parents of the group members, and evaluated the effect of this group work intervention through the group members' self-evaluation. The author

found that the group work played a certain role in improving the concentration ability of children in the lower grades, but there were some problems in the process of group work intervention in children's concentration ability in the lower grades, namely, insufficient parental participation; the practical experience of the social worker needs to be improved; the role of the social worker is difficult to grasp; the social interaction in peer groups needs more support. Based on the analysis of these problems, relevant countermeasures are proposed to improve the service quality of group work intervention for children's concentration in the lower grades.

Disclosure statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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