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## An Effective Management Model for Chinese Parental Involvement

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### Abstract

Parents are children's first teachers, and the way of family education will affect the shaping of children's personality in a subtle way. In China, due to the need to face work and financial pressures, when children start to study in kindergartens, parents hand over all the teaching and learning to teachers, and they are less and less truly involved in their children's education. In recent years, through home-school joint activities and other means, parents have realized the importance of participating in their children's education. This article analyzes the degree and situation of Chinese parents' participation in their children's education from the perspectives of kindergartens (educational institutions), infant (children) and family (parents). And combined with previous research on Chinese family education, I concluded how to more effectively allow parents to participate more in early childhood education, instead of blindly sending children to kindergartens, and then handing over all teaching tasks to teachers.

**Keywords:** Early Childhood Education, Parent Involvement

### Introduction

In today's Chinese-style family education, there are still shadows left by Confucianism. For example, in the education of parents to their children, the status of parents is elevated, which leads to an unequal relationship between parents and children. Not only that, but parents can use their identities to be authoritarian, especially when it comes to personal privacy. Parents will take it for granted that she, as the guardian of the child, has the right to look through all the items of the child. Just as the above phenomenon is influenced by the "Three Cardinal Guidelines and Five Constant Principles" in



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Confucianism (2015). "Three cardinal guides and five constant principles" refer to the moral standards between people advocated by feudal ethics, and it is also an ideological tool for stabilizing the rule of feudal dynasties. In addition, the parenting policy of the older generation of Chinese parents has a very feudal and backward thinking - patriarchal. It is mainly reflected in that when a baby is born, if it is a boy, the parents will feel that they have a future; but if it is a girl, the parents will think that they have been cut off. Moreover, in such a family environment, daughters will be ignored by their parents, while sons will be doted on by their parents. This phenomenon is due to the filial piety emphasized in Confucian culture: if there is no son, the blood lineage of a family will be broken, and the only way to continue the family incense is to have a son. In general, Chinese-style family education is used to refer to some educational disadvantages and problems in the education of Chinese parents to their children.

In recent years, with the development of home-school cooperation activities, more and more people realize the importance of parents participating in their children's education. However, due to the influence of traditional family values as well as social and economic pressures in China, the participation of parents in their children's education is still a minority. Moreover, Chinese parents have completely different goals for their children's education (2015). Most of them only care about whether their children have a future, a good job, and a good life, rather than whether their children's character and ability can adapt to society. Even if the child has just started kindergarten, the race among parents to 'win at the starting line' has already begun. Dai (2021) proposed that although many parents attach great importance to family education, they emphasize the supervision of their children's learning. Attaching importance to education is not spying on children. The most fundamental and effective method in family education is to teach by words and deeds. The behavior of parents will affect the present and future behaviour of their children.

Ho (1995) believed that parental participation is a multi-dimensional construction, which is divided into four types: 1. Family discussion 2. Family supervision 3. School communication 4. School participation. Not only that, but he also suggested that the degree of parental involvement can be influenced by the family's social status, family structure, and race. It can be seen that parental participation is not only the unilateral participation of parents, but also the cooperation of schools. And this is one of the reasons why more and more people pay attention to the activities of home-school cooperation in recent years.

The subjects of this study are children aged 3 to 6 years old and the participation of Chinese parents in their children's education at this stage. This stage is not only the initial



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beginning of children's education from home to school (especially China's unique examination-oriented education), but also a crucial step in preparing for primary school education. For the children themselves, the kindergarten period is also an important period to cultivate children's interest and intellectual development. For parents, it is also a critical period for the formation of children's character and interest. During this period, the degree of parental participation will affect the physical and mental development of children to a great extent.

### Background of Parent Involvement

Children's education is closely related to the words and deeds of parents. Parents are the most important educators for their children, and they are the first and most lasting and influential teachers for young children. Research and practice have proved that families have many decisive factors that directly or indirectly affect children's learning and growth. Parents' participation in guiding and helping children's learning and growth will have a profound and long-term impact on children's cognitive, language, emotion, behavior, attitude, social communication and personality and their lifelong growth (Liu & Pang, 2008). We know that from birth to early childhood, he imitates and learns from parents. That's why there is a saying in China: like father, like son. Ho (1995, p. 40) in his research, there are two different ways to define "Parent Involvement": first, parent involvement is usually established in school or family. In the past, parental Involvement usually emphasized the participation of parents as guardians or helpers in the school. In the new era, the meaning of parental involvement is seen as moving from school to home, such as supervising their children's studies at home. However, both claims are one-sided, so eventually some researchers come up with a more comprehensive definition of the process by which parents mobilize their potential at home and at school for the benefit of themselves, their children and the school. Considering that the object of parents' involvement in this study is children, it is from the perspective of kindergartens and parents. This is just like the point of view put forward by Dong (2017): the definition of parental participation is that parents participate in some educational and teaching activities in kindergarten in different ways to assist teachers in their work, so as to enrich their children's learning experience.

### Definition of Organizational Parent Involvement

Sha (2008) The United States is recognized as one of the countries with developed preschool education in the world. With the development of many preschool education



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programs and the emergence of related scientific research achievements, the American government is increasingly aware of the important role of parents' involvement in children's growth and education. As the main caregivers and educators of children, parents are one of the most dynamic factors to promote children's development, and participation in education is their basic right. (Tekin, 2011) As parents began to set foot in kindergartens in the early 20th century, parent-cooperative nurseries began to flourish. However, the efforts of these parents are limited to middle-class families. During the second World War, a certain degree of development was achieved through programs to support self-development training and learning activities participated by parents. Families were required to participate in all aspects of the educational planning process for their children in 1997 as amended into the Persons with Disabilities Act. In addition, the 2000 goal, which has been passed into law, focuses on the participation of parents and aims to actively involve parents and families in partnerships to support children's studies at home. Finally, the law gives parents more rights, for example, schools are instructed to provide training for parents to enhance the participation of other parents. In this regard, in the United States, parents' involvement in their children's education has become more important to themselves and other stakeholders.

### The importance of Parent Involvement

With the development of more and more home-school cooperation activities or projects, 'parental involvement' has become a hot topic. While people participate in family and campus joint activities, they also begin to pay attention to the impact and significance of parental involvement. A Family Impact Seminar (2004) found that when parents participate in their children's education, students get better grades, drop out less, have higher ambitions, and have a more positive attitude towards school and homework. It can be seen that parental involvement is beneficial to children to improve their learning efficiency. In addition, different scholars have put forward a similar point of view: parents are not only the primary factor affecting children's development, but also quite important educational resources (Johnson, 2004; He, 1999). In his research, Sapungan (2014) briefly describes the reasons why parents participate in children's education, in addition to providing children with many opportunities for success, but also mentioned that parents regularly come to school to participate in teaching activities, which imperceptibly reinforces the children's point of view that school and family are one, and school is an integral part of family life. In the West, scholars attach great importance to the participation of parents,



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believing that parents should provide opportunities for curriculum advice in all areas of early childhood education, as well as opportunities for schools to better communicate with parents (Yu, 2006). It is divided into four levels: the first is to seek parental participation. The school strives to make parents realize that the education and future of each child is based on the joint efforts of parents and the school; the second is to implement the curriculum system. Preschool schools use many ways to make parents participate in curriculum activities, such as communicating children's interests and expectations at parent meetings, applying parents' opinions, and third, communicating with parents. The Children's World Learning Center has produced a series of brochures aimed at parents of students of different ages. These brochures not only tell parents and their children's what activities and goals they will do, but also provide conditions for effective communication between parents and teachers. The fourth is to modify the curriculum system. In many children's education schools, the curriculum system is modified by the teachers' committee. The Teachers' Committee believes that timely communication and coordination with parents and parent representatives is very important. Generally speaking, the more time and attention parents put into their children's education, the more likely they will be to succeed in school. For school-age children, parents' participation in kindergarten teaching activities or games can not only strengthen the parent-child relationship, but also promote the development of children's cognition, language, emotion, behavior, attitude, social communication and personality and have a far-reaching impact on their lives (Liu, 2008).

**Parent Involvement in Chinese school**

In China, the model of parental participation is classified into four models (Ho, 1995): home discussion, home supervision, school communication and school participation. In addition, he (1995) suggested that parental participation should be conceptualized by focusing on places (home and school). School-based participation means that parents are required to have practical contact with the school, such as participating in parent-teacher meetings and school activities, volunteering in the school and so on. On the other hand, family-based participation is related to child development and usually occurs at home, such as assisting children with homework, talking with children about issues and involving children in intellectual activities or games. In the process of fulfilling their responsibilities, many Chinese parents habitually regard participation in the curriculum as an obligation to teachers rather than their own to their children (Yu, 2007). Only when parents really regard participating in the curriculum as fulfilling their responsibility as parents to their children, can



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they give full play to their enthusiasm and initiative in the process of participation and fully feel what their children really need and what the problems facing teachers are. Not only that, but parents' also real development is realized in the process of participation and feeling. In the process of participating in kindergarten curriculum practice, parents really understand the educational needs of young children, understand the efforts made by teachers for their children, and understand what the role of parents is. In addition, the development of parents is also realized in the process of dealing with practical problems. One is the problem of young children, and the other is the problem of participation. In order to solve these problems, we must develop parents' own communication skills through learning and thinking. It is in this process that parental participation has been developed.

From the above, we know that parental involvement is conducive to children's cognition and development, as well as a strong resistance to kindergarten teaching. In this regard, some kindergartens in China have also carried out a lot of school-school cooperation activities to allow parents to participate in campus teaching activities. In the study of the current situation of parents' involvement in kindergarten, Yu (2006) draws some conclusions: there are various forms of parents' participation in kindergarten teaching activities, such as directly approaching the teaching scene of kindergarten, preparing materials for teaching activities, and helping children consolidate what they have learned in kindergarten at home. At the same time, almost all parents are concerned about their children's life and study in kindergarten and will tutor their children at home to cooperate with kindergarten teaching. However, the level of parents' participation in kindergarten teaching activities is still at a low level-lack of initiative. (Lu, 2008) in China, due to the limitations of traditional cultural concepts and educational level, many parents think that after sending their children to educational institutions, the education and development of their children is the responsibility and task of the school, or even if they realize that parents still have educational responsibility for their children, they are often in a passive position and do not have a strong sense of subject. This universal social phenomenon and lagging educational concept are the main obstacles that hinder parents' participation, active cooperation and communication with schools. In the study of Yu (2006), most parents come to the teaching site only at the invitation of the kindergarten. And even in parent-child activities, parents mostly play supporting roles. As we all know, parents are the most important educators for children, the enlightening teachers for their first class, and the earliest imitators and learning objects for children in life. At present, in the practice of preschool education in China, parents' participation in institutional education (kindergarten / nursery) is still at a superficial



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level, and the degree of participation is not high (Pang, 2006). The significance reason is that there are some obstacles to participation and communication among parents, such as lack of understanding and attention to their role in children's growth and education, lack of initiative and educational ability to participate, low level of education and lack of self-confidence. Plagued by work and family conditions, lack of time to take care of, and limited knowledge of school needs, policies and ways to assist schools in their work. In view of this problem, some scientists have put forward their own opinions. They (Li & Chen, 2002) believe that the role of parents should shift from supporters to participants and decision makers. In the activities participated by parents, the school usually dominates the activities, and the specific ways for parents to participate are parents' committee, parent-teacher meeting, family education consultation and so on. The purpose of parents' participation in school education is to obtain parents' support for their children's education. Secondly, the communication between parents and teachers is a kind of two-way participation. The role of parents is to pay attention to both the education of their children and the affairs of the school. Besides, to a certain extent, the participation of parents can directly affect the implementation of the curriculum. In this process, the role of parents has shifted from supporters of traditional school education activities to partners of school education. At present, the role of parents in home-school cooperation is still the supporters of school education activities in the traditional sense, and parents still regard supporting and maintaining education as their bounden duty (Chen & Sun, 2002). There are three reasons for this situation: 1, parents' own reasons. In the process of educational development, school education and family education have always been separated from each other and independently. Many Chinese parents generally believe that as long as they enter the school, teachers should be fully responsible for their children's education in the school, and they are only responsible for their children's food, clothing, housing and transportation. Most parents are unable to participate in school education because of their low cultural quality and do not understand the relevant educational theories. 2. Chinese traditional social behavior orientation affects parents' sense of participation. In the long-term historical development, the Chinese people have formed a unique and traditional social behavior orientation. The Chinese respect and rely on authority, pay attention to harmony, avoid imbalance and attach importance to the collective and despise the individual. Therefore, in the minds of Chinese parents, they regard teachers as authority and schools as collectives, and think that if they participate in school educational activities, they will challenge authority and destroy harmony.



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## Conclusion

Consequently, it is better to let professional educators educate their children in school while they themselves bear the responsibility of family education. 3, the reason of the school. Based on the closed and traditional education system formed for a long time in our country, schools are prevented from adopting parents' suggestions. Some schools have not formed a channel for parents to reflect reasonable opinions to the school and fight for their legitimate rights and interests. This objectively hinders parents from participating in school decision-making. In addition, similar views are also mentioned in the study of Rao (2011). In China, although Chinese parents attach great importance to education and are eager to participate in their children's education, many of them may feel that they do not have the professional knowledge to help schoolteachers, which leads to their low level of participation in the school environment. Mainly can only support children's study at home. Consequently, Chinese parents are still in a relatively passive position in school-based parental participation.

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