

Original Paper

How to Promote the Integration of School, Family and Community of Children's Sex Education in China

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Abstract

This essay focuses on how to promote children's sex education in China through the cooperation of schools, families and communities. In the digital age, children are easily exposed to harmful sexual information, leading to increasingly prominent issues such as sexual assault and younger sexual behavior. Due to the constraints of long-term conservative beliefs, the development of sex education in China faces many challenges. Parents and teachers generally lack scientific knowledge and abilities in sex education, and families and schools do not pay enough attention to this issue. This article emphasizes the importance and necessity of multi-party collaboration by reviewing relevant literature and policy frameworks, and proposes multidimensional strategies such as family sex education guidance, school sex education teacher training, and community resource support to promote the scientific and systematic development of children's sex education. Combining international advanced experience with China's local cultural background, this article aims to provide practical and feasible suggestions for policy makers, educators, and parents to promote the improvement of children's sex education system.

Keywords

children's sex education, school-family-community integration, family-based sex education, policy implementation, teacher training, community engagement

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

As China has been influenced by Confucianism for a long time, people are ashamed to discuss sex. At present, most of the families, schools and teachers who are closest to children have a conservative attitude towards sex education. It is generally accepted that sex education is not necessary in primary school. They think more of sex education as gender education or adolescent sex education, mainly about sexual health knowledge, education methods are relatively simple, old-fashioned, did not pay attention to

children's "self-education". This is a deep-rooted obstacle to the development of sex education. Parents and teachers are also lack of scientific knowledge of sex and the ability to conduct scientific sex education for children.

In the current era of information technology, if we do not carry out scientific sex education, teenagers and children are likely to come into contact with a large number of abnormal sexual contents from the virtual world because of the spread of some negative, vulgar, obscene and pornographic culture, which will affect their sexual feelings, attitudes and behaviors and cause irreparable harm to their physical and mental development.

Nowadays, the popularization rate of sex education by the government has not been able to keep up with the growth rate of teenagers and children. This is also why the implementation of sexual crimes, sexual behaviors tend to be younger, and the phenomenon of unmarried pregnancy is common.

In addition, in recent years, cases of sexual assault on children have been exposed with a high frequency. According to the statistics of cases of sexual abuse of children in 2020 and the investigation report on children's anti sexual abuse education released by Phoenix Public Welfare Network, there are 332 cases of sexual abuse of children (under 18 years old) reported by the media in 2020, with 845 victims, and the youngest one is one year old. From 2013 to 2019, there are 125, 503, 340, 433, 378, 317 and 301 cases of child sexual abuse reported by the media each year (among them, children under 14 years old from 2013 to 2017 and children under 18 years old from 2018).

Moreover, on March 2, 2021, the Symposium of Representatives and members of the national two sessions on "protection of girls" was held in Beijing. 2021's two sessions also put forward proposals on sex education, several representatives suggested that children's sexual abuse prevention education should be included in the compulsory education curriculum.

However, according to the 2023 statistics, the implementation of the "China Children Development Outline (2021-2030)" is progressing smoothly, with the overall level of children's health significantly improved and safety effectively guaranteed. Despite these improvements, the issue of sexual assault on children remains a concern, with the "Child Protection" organization reporting that the proportion of acquaintance offenses in child sexual assault cases remains high, and the age of victims is getting younger. The situation of online sexual assault is also severe and needs to be paid attention to.

Although more and more attention has been paid to children's sex education, already putted forward proposals on sex education, due to the above factors, the implementation and popularization of sex education has not yet reached a mature stage compared with western developed countries. Sex education in China is still in the initial stage of exploration.

1.2 Significance

Most of the foreign sex education began in the 1960s and 1970s. After a long period of exploration, a systematic and scientific comprehensive sex education system has been established. Therefore, in the process of carrying out sex education, we should not only base on China's social environment and cultural

background, but also have an international perspective, refer to the international community's position and suggestions on sex education, so as to implement more effective and scientific sex education.

Sex education plays an important role in the healthy growth of children. Sex education can not only help children clearly understand their own physical and sexual development rules, but also form self-protection awareness and ability, and deeply reflect on how gender roles and gender temperament affect human development.

In particular, children's sex education is inseparable from the combination of family, school and community. Although there are more and deeper discussions on the responsibilities of parents and teachers, schools and methods of sex education, and it is mentioned that parents and teachers can not be bystanders of sex education, most of the current research only focuses on one aspect, and the research on community is even less.

Although some scholars mentioned that family, school and community should be connected with each other, they did not elaborate too much. In view of the fact that sex education in schools, families and communities is relatively weak in China, I think it is important and necessary to strengthen the research and discussion in this field.

We need to focus on how to promote the implementation of school, family and community three integration of sex education in China, further clear analysis of its related ways, methods and principles, so that the three aspects of mutual cooperation, common education, play a joint role. It is urgent to carry out scientific and comprehensive sex education. This is also of some significance to the establishment of sex education policy and the improvement of child sexual abuse prevention education law and family education law.

2. Literature Review and Concept Analysis

2.1 Literature Review

Through reading a large number of literature, I found that since the mainland of China promulgated the "guidelines for health education in primary and secondary schools" (referred to as the "guidelines") in 2008, the research on sex education in primary and secondary schools has gradually increased. It proves that people are paying more and more attention to it, and they are beginning to explore how to build scientific sex education.

The outline is mainly composed of five parts: healthy behavior and lifestyle, disease prevention, mental health, growth and development and adolescent health care, safety emergency and risk avoidance. The text of the outline introduces in detail the contents that primary and secondary school students should learn at different stages and the goals they are required to achieve.

Wang Rui and Wu Daishu (2019) summarized and classified the research results of China's primary and secondary Sex education development from 2009 to 2018 in three aspects: theoretical research, investigation research and textbook research.

This article mentions that we should build a sex education system, and talks about two views of scholars: one is that the sex education system should be jointly established by families, schools and society. The other emphasizes the construction by academic stages. In the primary stage, the school should be the first priority, and the family should be the second. In the middle school stage, the education of family, society and school should be combined to build a three in one sex education system. However, scholars believe that school education is the main channel for sex education in adolescence, family education is the necessary way, and social education is a strong support system. The three complement each other to build a mutually supportive sex education system. But there is no many discussions about the primary school stage.

Cao Jiazhen and Shi xuerui (2020) reviewed the research on Chinese children's sex education from 2015 to 2019. It is mentioned that the current children's sex education in China is limited to children, parents and teachers, and its teaching content lacks theoretical support, as well as systematic education methods and legislation research.

Chen Mingying (2016) compared domestic and foreign children's sex education and found that many foreign countries have advanced or are preparing to advance the time of sex education to children's stage due to the current low age of children's sexual awareness.

Li Xiaona (2014) compared and summarized the characteristics of adolescent sex education abroad. Related to children's sex education include younger education objects. In Sweden, sex education starts from young children. In the United States and the Netherlands, children begin to receive sex education at the age of six. Every country attach great importance to the training of full-time teachers of children's sex education.

Liu Wenli (2018, 2021) stressed that attention should be paid to children's sex education, as well as key family sex education, believing that sex education can help prevent children's sexual abuse. He also put forward two effective ways, that is, to provide children with correct sexual information and sincerely answer children's sexual questions. He also advocated the rapid promotion of the establishment of home school sex education system.

Xu Fengqin (2021) suggested that sex education should be included in the family education law. She believes that good family sex education can promote family school cooperation and prevent children from being sexually abused.

2.2 Define Concepts

So what is the real Children's Sex Education? That is not what people think is only about the sexes. More should include providing scientific and comprehensive sex education for minors, in order to ensure the healthy growth of minors in a safe environment.

At present, there are quite abundant researches on the content of children's sex education at the international level.

In 2010, the WHO Regional Office for Europe and the German Federal Center for health education jointly published the European standard for sex education, in which 20 items of children's sex education were

specified, including not only the knowledge of body organs and gender identity, but also the technical and emotional knowledge of interpersonal communication, social norms and emotional regulation. In 2018, UNESCO's "guidelines for international sex education technology" stipulates six basic contents of comprehensive sex education, including: interpersonal relationship; values, attitudes and skills; culture, society and human rights; physical development; sexual behavior; and sexual and reproductive health. These international guidance documents can provide scientific guidance for children's sex education in China, and make us more clear what is children's sex education.

3. Analytical Discussion

3.1 Promoting Family Sex Education for Children

The formation of sexual cognition and consciousness begins in early childhood. If parents lack correct guidance and education, it is likely to lead to sexual psychological distortion and obstacles in adulthood. Liu Wenli (2018) mentioned parents are the first headstrong enlightener of children's education, and they have an important responsibility for their healthy growth. If children can get timely sex education from their parents, it will bring an irreplaceable positive role for their life growth and happiness.

Wu Jianzhong (2010) mentioned family is an important place for children aged 3 to 12 to contact and identify gender differences, and it is also an important source for children to receive sex education.

First of all, parents should examine their attitude towards sex, their value orientation towards sex, and their attitude towards children's sexual problems. Family sex education should treat sex with a positive and good attitude, and pass this good attitude to children, so as to establish a sincere parent-child relationship. Parents should refuse shyness, encourage children to ask sexual questions with admiration, and answer every sexual question with sincerity. This helps to communicate with children, and can quickly focus on children's needs for sex education.

Parents don't know enough about sex education, so they should first accept sex education and learn scientific knowledge about sex. They can actively make use of all kinds of parents' schools and TV lectures run by the society to increase their knowledge of sex education, strengthen their self-cultivation, master the necessary communication skills of sex education, and don't be "sex blind". Schools or communities should also hold more relevant lectures to provide parents with scientific learning channels. Family sex education does not need to let children sit and listen as they do in school. Instead, in daily life, the content of sex education should be learned imperceptibly through the form of parent-child games or reading picture books with children.

For example, when conducting sex education for young children, parents can teach their children to protect themselves by teaching them body parts and their private parts through the "know your body" game or guiding them to learn how to dress themselves.

In addition, the way of reading picture books with children can not only deepen the impression, but also help parent-child interactive learning, forming a positive learning environment. Children's sex education

books on the market are full of stories and pay attention to graded reading, which plays an auxiliary role in children's sex education in China.

For example, a set of picture books that I have known, namely "cherish life - picture books for children's sexual health education" (full 9 volumes), edited by Liu Wenli and published by Beijing Normal University Press in 2018, can help parents pass on sex education knowledge, values and life skills to their children in the form of reading picture books together or guiding their children to read picture books independently.

3.2 Promoting School Sex Education for Children

For a long time, the content of sex education is lack of planning, the methods of education are monotonous and backward, and the teachers in sex education are insufficient. Most of the teachers have not been exposed to professional training, or are not professionals, and they have not enough knowledge of sexual physiology, and they have a half understanding of "sex", which is limited to life experience and experience, and have not high enthusiasm for sex education. Some physiological health classes can not be considered, even to complete normal teaching tasks can not be guaranteed. How to carry out primary school education is a difficult problem for teachers in primary and secondary schools in China, which has become the bottleneck of normal Sex education in schools.

At present, a large number of teachers in their daily teaching activities, when they teach primary school students about sex knowledge, sex morality and sex psychology, just copy the contents of the course in the textbook.

There are even some teachers who have briefly talked about sex education knowledge when they teach students sex education knowledge, and they seldom or basically don't think about how to make the class lively. The education method is rigid and monotonous, lacking of vividness. Besides, there is no proper and reasonable education strategy to make students better accept sexual physiology knowledge and establish scientific sexual morality and values. Therefore, there is a serious shortage of sex education teachers in China, which affects the quality of sex education. The professional standards for primary school teachers (Trial) issued by the Ministry of education in 2011 also proposed that primary school teachers should understand the knowledge and methods of adolescent and sexual health education for primary school students.

Due to the serious shortage of professional sex education teachers, as well as make children's sex education more standardized and more scientific, China needs to cultivate a professional education team. The education department and universities should fully cooperate to strengthen the training of sex education teachers, so as to provide a strong guarantee for the development of sex education in China. At present, the potential obstacles are the lack of relevant professional courses and the failure to implement relevant training programs, as well as the absence of demonstration courses from professional model teachers. To overcome these problems, we can develop teaching courses for sex education, and universities can improve talent development programs by offering relevant courses to students majoring in teaching. We can also contact experts and professors in this field to develop courses or textbooks.

More importantly, we can train prospective teachers on how to apply theory to practice. For example, students majoring in preschool education or teaching can simulate courses in groups and discuss how to do better in practice. This can better explore practical operations in diverse educational environments, deepen the impression of prospective teachers, and improve their practical teaching abilities.

Encourage teachers to use diverse teaching methods and interactive learning, such as picture books, videos, role-playing, and discussions, to make sex education more attractive and effective. This method not only makes the content easier to understand, but also encourages open dialogue among students.

Foreign countries attach great importance to the training of full-time teachers of children's sex education. American Sex education is carried out by specially trained teachers. They usually graduated from the sexual health education major of higher education institutions, have systematic knowledge of human sexology, have received the training of philosophy and methods of sex education, and understand and accept sex education of different cultures.

Some countries even require parents to receive a certain period of sex education training, so that school education and family education can form a joint force and receive better education effect.

In the past two years, China has also begun a series of measures and policies to promote sex education. The Chinese Ministry of Education issued the "Guidelines for Life Safety and Health Education in Primary and Secondary School Curriculum Textbooks" in 2023, emphasizing the importance of sex education in school education and providing specific implementation suggestions.

The National Guiding Policy on Incorporating Health and Safety into School Curriculum proposes age appropriate content, suggesting that sex education should start with early childhood education and be tailored to different age groups. For example, elementary school focuses on basic anatomy, personal boundaries, and consent. Middle school: Introduce topics related to adolescence, sexual health, and prevention of sexual abuse. High school: covers advanced topics such as reproductive health, interpersonal relationships, and sexual rights.

According to the age characteristics of children, psychological teachers and school doctors systematically teach the content of sex education in this age group. For example, in the lower grades, teachers can teach through picture books, videos and other intuitive ways. Schools and teachers need to pay great attention to the observation of students' emotional and psychological changes, and provide individual counseling and guidance for all students. In addition to classroom teaching and class meeting, sex education can also be carried out through extracurricular activities, campus culture construction and other forms.

Teachers can organize parents to participate in the activities of children's education, such as regularly recommending relevant sex education books, knowledge to parents' WeChat group for parent-child reading activities. The school can also invite experts of related majors outside the school to give lectures on sex education to students and parents.

Finally, in order to ensure the effective implementation of the guidelines formulated by the Ministry of Education in all schools, schools regularly monitor and evaluate the impact of sex education programs. A feedback mechanism should be established to collect opinions from students, teachers, and parents,

and continuously improve the quality of sex education. By implementing these strategies, schools can play a key role in providing comprehensive and effective sex education, helping students develop the knowledge and skills necessary for healthy relationships and sexual health.

3.3 Promoting Community Sex Education for Children

First of all, community workers should improve the level of sex education and strengthen the learning of relevant contents. Social workers should contact with children's sex education experts to carry out sex education training lectures for residents, so as to expand the sex education volunteer team. The community can also create a mode of interaction between social workers and parents, such as open day of sex education and summer camp.

Secondly, the spread of pornographic culture will affect children's sex education, such as pornographic vulgar advertisements in residential areas. Therefore, community workers must purify the community environment, eliminate unhealthy sexual information, create a healthy and good community environment for children's growth, and give special psychological counseling to children with sexual deviation.

Zhao Yanan (2020) mentioned that both international and RTHK have adopted this kind of education mode of community theater. In the form of performance, community theater provides a learning platform for children. Through visualized performance, children can think and gain relevant experience. Social workers use the way of educational theater to educate children, help children acquire correct sexual knowledge, improve children's awareness of self-protection, help children establish the concept of gender equality, form correct sexual values, correct attitude towards sex, and provide a platform for parents to carry out sexual education knowledge and skills for children, so as to enhance their sexual education.

Many left behind children in rural areas are left unattended and unable to get sex education from their relatives. Therefore, community social workers need to pay more attention to these children, contact with their families and strengthen their sex education. The community should actively establish cooperative relationships with faith-based organizations and non-governmental organizations, parents, media and health service providers.

3.4 Promoting the Integration of School, Family and Community of Children Sex Education

We should implement the strategy of "family school combination" and advocate the principle of joint efforts. In order to achieve good results in children's sex education, we must attach importance to the joint role of school, family and community in children's sex education, coordinate the relationship among school, community, family and other educational forces, and strengthen communication and education among all parties, so as to achieve the ideal results.

All primary schools should compile practical teaching materials, develop local curriculum and promote the development of sex education according to the level of teachers and local conditions, referring to international sex education guidance documents.

In addition to experts in sex education and related teaching theories, parents, family members and other community stakeholders should participate in the evaluation of sex education, put forward suggestions

and opinions, and continuously promote the integration of school, family and community in children's sex education.

4. Conclusion

In a word, the general trend of sex education in China is that the educational object is all-round, the educational content is systematic, the educational staff is professional, the educational method is scientific and the research method is localized. Sex education runs through one's whole life. We can't let children's sex education get stuck in the way.

It is very important to establish an effective system of children's sex education which is in line with China's national conditions. The imminent need to integrate schools, families and communities to promote Children's sex education in China is urgent.

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