

# *A Study on the Implementation Issues and Strategies of Life Education in Primary Schools*

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**Abstract:** Life education is one of the important contents of children's mental health education in primary schools, and it is a key link in fostering children's all-round development. Through good life education in schools, children can establish a correct outlook on life, health, and safety, thus forming a positive attitude towards life. Good life education can also promote the development of student's mental health and make them stronger and more confident in facing the challenges of life, thus laying a solid foundation for their future. Although some achievements have been made in the current life education for children in primary schools, there are still many misunderstandings and practical misconceptions. To conduct school life education effectively and awaken the life consciousness of primary school children, it is necessary to propose effective problem-solving strategies to help students better recognize the meaning of life.

## 1. Introduction

Life education is education throughout one's life, and the development and implementation of life education is currently an important area of mental health education in schools. Life education has always been a strategic theme in China's educational development. Primary school children are at a critical stage in the construction of their worldview, outlook on life, and values, and the student's outlook on life and death and the value of life will have a direct impact on the healthy development of children. Students are guided to recognize the nature of life and develop a sense of life and reverence for life. Life education can motivate students to recognize and solve life issues, seek the value of life, and give them more confidence to face unknown challenges and difficulties.

Life education has been explored in Western countries since the 20th century. Initially, life education was presented in the form of death education, through which children were helped to pursue the value and meaning of life. In the 1960s, American scholar Jay Donnell Walters first explicitly put forward the concept of life education and established a school life education curriculum system [1]. At that time, American schools transmitted the correct concepts of life and death to students through life education, so that students would understand the value of life at an early age. As a result, life education has taken on a global scope. Mr. Xingzhi Tao, a famous modern Chinese educator, was the first to advocate "Education for All" in the world and put forward the concept of "Education of life, my life, for life". Professor Ye Lan first began to

emphasize the concept of life and the intrinsic relationship between life and education, and advocated "letting the classroom be revitalized with life". Thereafter, the community has emphasized the integration of life education into school education.

In recent years, social phenomena such as children and adolescents' disregard for life, violence in schools, and accidental deaths have occurred frequently, which to a large extent explains the psychological fragility, impulsiveness, and weak awareness of life among contemporary children. According to the investigative Reality of the Blue Book of Education: A Report on the Development of Education in China (2018), there are more than 200 reported suicide attempts and suicide deaths among primary and secondary school students [2]. According to the Blue Book of Mental Health: Report on the Development of China's National Mental Health (2019-2020), the detection rate of depression among Chinese adolescents in 2020 will be 24.6%, of which 7.4% will be severely depressed [3]. Evidently, there is currently a shortcoming between families and schools in the life education of children in primary schools.

In September 2016, the general framework of the Core Qualities for Student Development in China was officially released, clarifying the importance of "cherishing life" and incorporating it into the educational dimension of "healthy living". In 2021, the Ministry of Education issued a circular on the Guidelines for Life Safety and Health Education in Primary and Secondary School Curricula and Teaching Materials, which formally incorporated life education into primary and secondary school curricula [4]. The guideline insists on the concept of "life first, health first", which signifies that there is a policy basis for the circularization of life education. In primary school, the significance of life education is to enable students to know how to cherish life and experience the meaning of life. This also demonstrates the concept of "people-oriented" new curriculum reform to realize the requirements of quality education.

## **2. Current issues in children's life education in primary schools**

### **2.1 Schools' insufficient recognition of life education**

There are many problems with the development and implementation of life education at the elementary school level at present. The main problem is that schools do not have enough knowledge about life education for students. Although schools are gradually emphasizing students' mental health education, the importance of life education is often overlooked. Schools lack the necessary knowledge and understanding of life education and rarely conduct relevant educational activities. Over the years, many social phenomena such as students taking life lightly, belittling life, animal abuse, and violence in schools have often occurred in schools, all due to the failure to emphasize the cultivation of students' outlook on life from an early age. As a result, neither teachers nor parents are fully aware of the important impact of life education on the physical and mental development of students. In addition, primary school students are at a critical stage of their physical and mental development, their minds are not yet mature, and their capacity to withstand hardship is low; once they encounter insurmountable difficulties, this may lead to psychological collapse and even to a situation in which they despise life [5]. At this stage, most parents also lack awareness of life education, focusing more on meeting students' material needs and academic performance, while emphasizing mental health education, but neglecting the establishment of students' outlook on life. Although mental health education is planned in schools, life education is still not given enough attention. The lack of systematic life education curricula and activities in schools has resulted in students being unable to fully understand the meaning and value of life, making it difficult for them to develop a correct outlook on life and healthy mental quality.

On the whole, the inadequacy of life education in schools and families needs to attract the widespread concern and attention of society. Only by fully integrating life education into education work can we help students establish a correct concept of life and improve their psychological quality, so that they can better cope with the various challenges of the future.

## **2.2 The teaching methods and content of life education in schools are singular**

China's basic education reform has incorporated mental health education into the primary and secondary school curricula, and the education department has issued a special "Guideline for Mental Health Education in Primary and Secondary Schools". According to the guidelines, subjects such as Morality and the rule of law, Chinese and physical education have incorporated some meaning of life content. However, teachers still have the problem of teaching in a more singular way and content in the teaching process. Schools teach about life mainly through the teaching method of lectures, which is very outdated and leads to a lack of in-depth understanding of life. This kind of teaching is difficult to make children interested in learning, and students cannot really feel the value of life [6]. This instruction can lead to the failure of life education to be effective and even affect children's desire to explore life education. In addition, the curriculum design of life education is not yet perfect, teachers do not have an in-depth interpretation of the content of life education, and there is insufficient excavation of teaching resources, so this kind of education does not enable children to truly realize the true meaning of life [7]. In the process of teaching design, teachers have an inaccurate grasp of the teaching content and lack in-depth research on the penetration methods of life education, so classroom teaching lacks effectiveness.

## **2.3 Family, school, and society have not formed a synergy for life education**

Life education is a long-lasting mandatory course in life, and school education alone is not enough. The family and society are very important educational forces. Families are rarely involved in educating primary school children about life and death, and even avoid talking about the topic of "death". Some parents even believe that children are too young and not yet old enough to need to talk about life and death topics. In addition, parents' neglect of children's life education is also due to the failure to make good use of the combined efforts of school, family, and society in education. For life education, only teaching in schools is not enough, it also needs the guidance of the family and the help of the community. Parents lack awareness of life education, then children are prone to develop negative emotions and do irrational things as soon as they are frustrated. In addition, life education conducted only in schools is thin and fragmented, with only the acquisition of knowledge, lacking the experience and realization of life [8]. Only through a tripartite educational synergy, with school education as the leading role, family education as the foundation, and social education as the backbone, can children's life education be effectively implemented. Only through a tripartite educational synergy, with school education as the leading role, family education as the foundation, and social education as the backbone, can children's life education be effectively implemented.

## **3. Effective Strategies for Implementing Life Education in Primary Schools**

### **3.1 Schools need to pay more attention to life education**

Schools should emphasize the importance of life education and systematically implement it in conjunction with school mental health education under the guidance of various policies. To begin with, teacher training should be strengthened, and teachers should be guided to strengthen their own learning and understanding of life education content, and consciously infiltrate life education into

their daily classroom management and teaching work. Secondly, schools should guide parents to emphasize the cultivation of children's outlook on life. In order to make parents attach importance to life education, schools should organize talks for parents, parent-child education and other thematic activities to warn parents of the great significance of life education. In addition, subject teachers can combine subject knowledge with life education, especially in Chinese, Morality and the rule of law, and mental health education, by integrating the content of the teaching materials with life, so that students can feel the value of life in the process of acquiring knowledge. For example, there are a lot of literary works about affection and friendship in Chinese language courses. Teachers can make students feel the emotions in the texts by immersing them in the situation through contextualized teaching, so as to guide them to appreciate the meaning of life and the preciousness of life. In the process of teaching some literary works, teachers should guide students to think about the relationship between human beings and nature. Students are trained to have correct moral concepts, like compassion, responsibility, etc., and to know how to protect and care for others. Schools can also improve their school-based curriculum system, incorporate life education into their school-based curriculum, and take advantage of the diversified and individualized nature of the time, form, and content of the school-based curriculum to fully carry out life education.

In summary, Schools should, through daily teaching and school activities, gradually strengthen elementary school children's awareness of life, their knowledge of health, their appreciation of the preciousness of life, and the development of their mental health and sense of well-being. Children should be well prepared to adapt to an unknown social life in the future.

### **3.2 Actively improving life education curriculum resources and enriching the content of life education**

Teachers should adopt various forms of teaching methods and explore interesting teaching resources, to realize an efficient life education classroom. To begin with, teachers should according to the law of physical and mental development of primary school children, stage by stage to set up a reasonable content of life education. Teachers should study the textbook carefully, clarify the goals of life education, dig deep into teaching resources, and guide students to actively explore and experience. Utilizing the life education-related elements in the subject teaching materials, effectively combining the life education content with the subject knowledge, has achieved a double teaching effect. In addition, a variety of teaching methods, such as situational teaching and game teaching, are adopted to enrich children's life experiences. The original boring textbook knowledge is transformed into familiar life situations, thus effectively enhancing the children's sense of experience [9]. Moreover, teachers should combine classroom activities with life education. When teachers implement classroom activities, they should incorporate life education concepts that can help children experience life and enable them to better perceive the sense of value of life. Not only is it necessary to teach students the skills and basic knowledge on which they depend for their survival, but it is also necessary to make children realize the value of life. These can be realized through different thematic activities, such as some festivals (World Red Cross Day, Chinese Tomb-Sweeping Festival, etc.).

### **3.3 Enhancing links between schools, families, and society to form educational synergies**

Schools should integrate the resources available to them to carry out life education activities. Schools, families, and society should form a joint educational effort to implement life education. At first, schools should systematically conduct life education [10]. As far as schools are concerned, life education is not only about teaching some basic knowledge about life but also about helping

children to understand the meaning and value of life through diversified activities and courses. Schools can organize life education theme class meetings, lectures, practical activities, etc. so that students can feel the preciousness of life in their experience through vivid forms of teaching. Schools should also share information with parents and work together to train children to develop good habits, establish an optimistic attitude towards life, and understand the value of life. As the family is the first environment in which children grow up, the educational concepts and behaviors of parents have an important influence on their children. Parents should take an active part in life education and maintain close contact with schools to create a good educational environment for their children. Furthermore, parents should incorporate some knowledge of life education into their daily education, and through family activities, role-playing watching documentaries, etc., let children know how to respect and love life, cultivate a rich sense of life, and enhance their awareness of self-protection. In addition, parents should create a warm and comfortable home atmosphere to enhance children's sense of security. Moreover, an excellent life education is closely related to the support of the social environment. Society, as an important part of education, should also play an active role. All sectors of society can create an atmosphere in which society as a whole pays attention to life education by organizing public welfare activities and publicizing the concept of life education.

Parents and schools can organize practical social activities for children. Schools should make full use of the advantages of the community to lead children to visit life safety experience halls, simulated fire drills, survival training, etc. so that children in elementary school can experience life in a light way, which not only enhances children's knowledge and skills of survival, but also enables them to experience the significance of life and to form a correct outlook on life, values, and the concept of life. Schools, families, and society form a great complementary effect to create a favorable atmosphere for life education.

#### 4. Conclusions

Life education is an education that each individual should be educated in. It is a long-lasting life subject that requires strong support and guidance from the school. Teachers and parents should give priority to life education for children so that they can recognize the nature of life and confront the predicament of life's existence. Life education should be focused on from childhood, which is why it is essential at the primary school stage. This stage is a critical period in children's physical and mental development, and early education profoundly impacts their future growth. Schools conduct life education to enable children to become fully developed human beings with vitality and sound personalities. Schools, families, and society should work together to effectively implement life education to improve the quality of children's lives and help them realize the value of life.

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