

# An analysis of the impact on the family education of left-behind children in rural areas based on the Family Education Promotion Law of the People's Republic of China

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**Abstract:** As China's economic development level is getting higher and higher, most rural youth or middle-aged people choose to go out to work in order to improve the material conditions of family life. Over time, the lack of family education for left-behind children has received more and more attention. In 2021, China proposed the “Comprehensive Implementation of the Rural Revitalization Strategy” to improve the quality of rural education development. In 2022, the “Family Education Promotion Law of the People’s Republic of China (hereinafter referred to as the law) will be further implemented, which clearly states that family education takes moral cultivation as the fundamental task to promote the healthy growth of minors. However, the family education of left-behind children in rural areas still has problems such as backward educational concepts and lack of parental education. To effectively alleviate this social problem still requires the efforts of families, schools, society and the government. If we can take the law as an opportunity, we can provide new ideas and directions for the family education of rural left-behind children in the new era, so that these children can grow up healthily and happily.

## 1. The reality and existing problems of family education for left-behind children in rural areas

Left-behind children refer to children whose parents or one of them migrates to work in other areas, and the children stay in the place of household registration and cannot live with their parents. These children are forced to stay in their hometowns in rural areas. Such population movements on a large scale form a special group. Due to some historical and other factors, the economic development of various regions in China is unbalanced, especially the gap between rural and urban development is relatively large. A group of people in the rural areas find that the efficiency of improving living standards through farming and other forms was relatively low, and hope to improve the quality of life of their children by working hard in big cities. Earning money and raising children in rural areas seem to be incompatible. These parents have to give up raising and educating their children, entrust these left-behind children to their grandparents who are more assured, but this may affect the quality of life of these children. The adverse effects of development also make left-behind children more eager for parental care, they will have some deviations in mental health, personality and learning. In the context of rural revitalization, the rural economy has developed rapidly, and the level of rural education has also made great progress. The issue of family education for left-behind children in rural areas has also attracted more public attention [1]. The “Family Education Promotion Law of the People’s Republic of China” (hereinafter referred to as the law) implemented in January 2022 clearly pointed out that family education refers to the teaching of physical fitness, cultural accomplishment, and behavioural habits of minors by parents or other guardians in order to promote the overall healthy growth of minors. The implementation of this law hopes to help the family education of left-behind children.

From the perspective of practical value, with the development and progress of society, the requirements for people's quality in society are getting higher and higher. Those who can adapt to

modern society still need some good family education. It is hoped that through the research on this issue, the left-behind children can achieve all-round development and better adapt to social life.

The main guardians for left-behind children in rural areas include grandparent guardianship, close relative guardianship, and self-guardianship. The corresponding family education methods for left-behind children include intergenerational education, close family education and self-education. Intergenerational education is the education performed by grandparents. Generally, they only pay attention to the physical care of children to ensure their safety and health. The overall development of children's psychology and learning is not well taken care of. In addition, the education level of the grandparents is relatively low. They cannot shoulder the heavy responsibility of family education. The close family education is the education performed by the parents' friends or relatives. It would be quite rare if some simple family education can be given to the left-behind children. In the environment of close relative education, some left-behind children will feel insecure and they are more vulnerable and sensitive psychologically, and may develop a withdrawn personality [2]. Self-education refers to children who are at home without management, and whose parents regularly raise money to meet their material needs. This situation may enhance the left-behind children's ability to take care of themselves, become psychologically mature, be able to endure hardships and stand hard work. It may also cause children to indulge, act recklessly, have no ability to take care of themselves, and develop bad study habits.

In intergenerational education, grandparents are prone to doting on children, obeying everything, easily developing some bad habits, not paying enough attention to family education, using methods that cannot keep up with modern society, and there will be unreasonable and unscientific situations, etc [3]. Due to the busy work of parents outside the home, they do not have enough time to communicate with their children, and take a more relaxed approach to their children's learning and healthy growth. Most parents can only give different attitudes through their children's performance in school. If their children get good grades, they will be gratified and there will be additional material rewards. If their children don't get good grades, their parents may yell at them. There were also some parents who did not have the conditions to go to school at that time, and their thinking was relatively conservative. They thought that studying was of useless, and it was better to earn money early to support their families. This kind of ignorance of children's psychological problems and difficulties on the road to growth will have a negative impact on children's future learning and healthy growth, and they will lack interest in learning. Therefore, there are still many problems in the family education of left-behind children, and further improvement is needed in terms of educational methods and educational ideas.

Since the parents of left-behind children work outside the country all the year in order to provide their children with a better material life, these children can only be separated from their parents for a long time. When their children encounter difficulties and problems, their parents cannot solve the problems in time. This will easily lead to a serious lack of family affection for left-behind children: their physical and psychological needs cannot be effectively met, and there are very few opportunities to communicate with their parents. Even if the parents make a phone call, they are most concerned about their children's learning. Parents who go out to work occasionally come back to make the left-behind children very excited, but what makes them more painful in the face of short-term happiness is another long-term separation. Large emotional fluctuations are not a good thing for children. Children's physical and mental health and overall development will be adversely affected. After all, left-behind children are in an important period of personality development and formation, and they need the care and correct guidance of their parents or guardians to give them a sense of security and belonging.

On the whole, the problems of rural left-behind children in family education are mainly reflected in the following three aspects. The first is the lack of living care. Whether it is intergenerational guardianship, close relative guardianship, or self-supervision, it can basically only ensure that the left-behind children have enough food and clothing, and some are even unable to take care of them wholeheartedly, and they cannot solve some of their physical or psychological problems. The second is that the guidance in learning is not enough. The grandparents are limited by their own

knowledge level. Close relatives and guardians also have their own children to take care of and work to deal with, so the guidance on learning can also be superficial. Finally, left-behind children lack the timely care of their parents. In places with better rural conditions, they can still contact their parents by phone, but the connection is not close [4]. Places with poor conditions may not have a few words with their parents for a year, so that their children may have some psychological problems, they may also lack a sense of security, and may become the target of being bullied.

## **2. The value and practical difficulties of the implementation of the law**

In the context of rural revitalization, the law provides legal support and institutional guarantee for the effective development of family education for left-behind children in rural areas in the form of legislation, and has made specific requirements for the content, methods and methods of family education, to divide the rights and obligations of responsible subjects such as family, school, government and society. Under the current double-reduction policy, each subject returns to the original goal of education for left-behind children, promotes the all-round development of underage students, and breeds the most beautiful flowers of the motherland in the future [5].

The law insists that the family should fulfil its responsibilities. Parents or other guardians should establish that the family is the first person responsible for their children, assume the important responsibility of implementing family education for their children, and use correct thoughts, methods and behaviours to educate minors on developing good thoughts, conduct and habits. Parents should consciously learn the professional knowledge of family education, expand their knowledge and ability in educating children, and improve the quality of family education, so that their children can learn effectively when they enter preschools, primary and secondary schools, etc. The law adheres to demand orientation and focuses on solving the outstanding problems of left-behind children in family education [6]. The state also has corresponding responsibilities, and should organize relevant departments to formulate and promulgate a national family education guidance outline. The law insists on government leadership. Government actively establishes and improves the linkage mechanism jointly implemented by relevant departments, and further promotes the two-pronged approach of school education and family education. The law adheres to social coordination. According to the different stages of left-behind children in rural areas, the society organizes some public welfare family education guidance activities timely, and arranges time in advance so that guardians of left-behind children can participate on time, so as to gradually improve the knowledge and quality of family education. The implementation of this law not only makes the family education of rural left-behind children full of vitality, but also points out the way forward for the further improvement of the quality of family education.

There are still some practical difficulties in the implementation of the law for left-behind children in rural areas.

First of all, there is a lack of parental education in family education. In most rural families, parents have to work outside all year round in order to provide their children with better material living conditions. Parents often ignore that they are the main responsibility of family education, and hand over their children to grandparents or close relatives for guardianship. In the absence of family education subjects, parents can only focus on their children's economic life and physical health remotely, and do not pay much attention to their spiritual life, study habits, and mental health [7]. In today's society, the relationship between children and their parents is the first important social relationship they need to face. If there is a crack in the relationship, it will appear in various interpersonal relationships when the children grow up and enter the society. This long-term lack of family education subjects for rural left-behind children will also bring challenges to the further improvement of the quality of rural family education.

The second is the traditional educational thought and the lack of modern educational knowledge. The important task of family education for left-behind children is handed over to grandparents. However, grandparents have different backgrounds and knowledge levels. Their educational methods and educational ideas for children cannot keep up with the pace of the times. The grandparents will also show excessive doting on the children and be obedient to the children. This is

not conducive to cultivating children's independent consciousness and ability to think about problems. There are some parents who have misunderstandings about family education, thinking that reading is useless, and treating their children's education with an indifferent attitude. This kind of thinking is not conducive to the growth and success of children.

Finally, the participation of various responsible subjects in the family education of left-behind children is insufficient. Although the law puts forward corresponding requirements for families, schools, and society, and clarifies their respective responsibilities in family education and the corresponding legal price for failure to fulfil their responsibilities. But in rural areas the departments still perform their own duties, do not communicate with each other, and do not have a common understanding of the goal of unified family education for left-behind children. So the overall effect of family education will also be affected. Do not add any text to the headers (do not set running heads) and footers, not even page numbers, because text will be added electronically.

### **3. The education of left-behind children in rural areas shall be combined with the law to play its greatest role**

In order to maximize the role of this law in promoting the family education of left-behind children in rural areas, it is also necessary to integrate the specific content and methods of family education involved in the law into the education of left-behind children, and also to establish a well-defined family education responsibility system for left-behind children in rural areas.

First, it is necessary to further strengthen the education of left-behind children by parents themselves, so that parents deeply understand that they are the most important subjects of responsibility for their children's education. After all, family is the first school for children, and parents are the first teachers for children, and parents' education for their children is the starting point. These words have been ringing in our ears since childhood. Parents who go out to work have gradually realized that a warm family environment is crucial and irreplaceable for the healthy growth of children. These left-behind children seem to have complete families, but they often live in the absence of their parents. The children have been in a family environment composed of guardians such as grandparents or close relatives for a long time. Children seriously lack the role model of parents and the subtle influence of parents, so that they may lose the ability to learn worldview, outlook on life and values from their parents [8].

In family education, parents should also constantly change their educational thoughts and ideas, not only to pay attention to their children's physical health, but more importantly, to pay attention to their children's ability to develop in all aspects, especially their psychological needs and personality development. Both parents should try their best to let one of them stay at home to take on the responsibility of education. For parents who cannot stay at home, they should also pay attention to the overall development of their children through video. Parents should increase times to meet with children and actively integrate into children's daily life. Parents should also increase their awareness of long-term family education for their children, and constantly improve their own knowledge and ability, not only to become companions in their growth and life, but also to help their children go further on the road of life. The law clearly regards precepts and deeds as the main means of family education, and also emphasizes personal upbringing and joint participation.

Second, the school should assume the corresponding responsibility for the main body of education. The school constantly combines various forces in the society, attaches great importance to individualized care, and continuously promotes the comprehensive physical and mental development of left-behind children [9]. The school exchanges experience through various forms of special lectures, provides specific guidance services to guardians, spreads scientific educational concepts, and continuously improves the family education ability of guardians of left-behind children. The school should continue to improve the family education of left-behind children, formulate a reasonable family education assistance system, and constantly improve the school learning environment and the quality of school teaching facilities, and provide a good educational atmosphere for left-behind children.

On the one hand, teachers at school should correctly treat left-behind children and the problems

that these children may have, and clarify their responsibilities and obligations. Teachers who help left-behind children should carry out targeted help and support according to each left-behind child's different living environment, family situation and hobbies. On the other hand, the ability of rural school teachers to provide educational guidance to left-behind children needs to be further improved, such as regularly arranging teachers to participate in family education training courses and be able to carry out field practice [10]. Teachers themselves should also read a lot of books related to the education of left-behind children, earnestly understand the specific content of family education, and give left-behind children maximum learning and psychological help.

Third, the government should strive to create conditions to provide a variety of good national support for the family education of left-behind children in rural areas, and establish a long-term mechanism for family education of left-behind children, and provide a sound institutional guarantee. From 2003 to 2016, China issued a number of opinions on caring and protecting left-behind children, but the most important thing is to implement these policies that have been implemented intact [5]. The government also needs to start with the legal system, incorporate the family education of left-behind children into the goal of high-quality development of social education, and protect the legitimate rights and interests of left-behind children in rural areas. We know that the focus of family education for left-behind children is still on their parents, so it would be a great thing to solve the problem of children migrating with their parents or to make parents and children no longer worry about getting along with each other in different places. The government should take the lead to establish and improve policy guidelines and mechanisms for both inflow and outflow areas to jointly solve the family education problems of left-behind children. The inflowing local government should not only lower the entry threshold for left-behind children in rural areas, but also reduce the cost of children's education [11]. So that left-behind children can enjoy the same educational opportunities in the inflowing cities, and parents can keep track of their children's health and learning status. The government can also create employment conditions for migrant workers by accelerating the pace of rural urbanization, and let these people know that they don't have to go out to give their children a better material life.

Fourth, the development of family education for left-behind children is inseparable from the support of the society. In order to better promote the implementation of family education in rural areas, the society needs to establish a new educational concept in line with the development of the times, establish a sound social support system, and further guarantee the smooth development of family education for left-behind children. The society should further know the understanding of the content of family education by most rural families, highlight the exploration of family education for left-behind children, and find some practical solutions to guide the practice of family education [12]. The social level should also give full play to its own advantages in publicity, and use modern video, Internet and other advanced technological means to carry out various forms of family education publicity. The society also needs to change the material thinking of family education. The concept of all-round development of morality, intelligence and physique should be applied to social education activities. Talent scoring standards should also be further changed, no longer blindly attaching importance to scores, education, etc., so let each child's personality be fully developed.

#### **4. Conclusion**

According to the process of social development in China, left-behind children in rural areas will continue to exist for a period of time in the future. The problem of family education for left-behind children is still a difficult problem that cannot be ignored. It is not only related to personal development, but also related to the hope of the country and the nation. The formal implementation of this law has given legal and institutional protection to the family education of left-behind children, and promotes the development of rural family education to a certain extent. If the family, school, government and society can work together to form a virtuous circle, and the law can also be strictly enforced in real life, it may effectively solve some problems in the family education of left-behind children and better promote rural revitalization and economic development.

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