

# Curriculum Design and Implementation of "Childcare Integration" Based on Children's Psychological Development

Houqi Yang<sup>1, 2</sup>, Fengqiong Zheng<sup>1, 2\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Sichuan University of Science & Engineering, ZiGong 643000, China

<sup>2</sup>NiLai university, PHD, Malaysia

\* Corresponding Author

## Abstract

**This article discusses the design and implementation of the "childcare integration" curriculum with children's psychological development as the core. The article explains the concept of "childcare integration" and its importance to children's psychological development; analyzes current problems in education; proposes design principles and implementation strategies; looks forward to the future development of the curriculum, emphasizing the importance of personalization and innovation.**

## Keywords

**Children's Psychological Development; Childcare Integration; Curriculum Design; Implementation Strategy.**

## 1. Introduction

"Integrated childcare and nursery care" refers to providing continuous and consistent education and childcare services for children aged 0-6, aiming to optimize the connection between childcare and kindergarten education through systematic and holistic curriculum design and implementation. "Integrated childcare and nursery care" includes two aspects: management system integration and education integration, and education integration should be the core of childcare and nursery care integration (Ding,2000). "Integrated childcare and education" is not simply a connection or simple "superposition" between nurseries and kindergartens, but rather it is about integrating the advantages of the two types of education to achieve comprehensive education for infants and young children aged 0 to 6 years old(Zhao,2002).The childcare stage focuses on the healthy development and basic ability training of children aged 0-3, while the kindergarten stage focuses more on the sociality, cognitive ability and preschool education preparation of children aged 3-6. Integration is not uniformity. To achieve "childcare integration", it is necessary to integrate the childcare and education of preschool children on the basis of recognizing the differences in educational needs of the two age stages(Yu,2008).The integration of childcare and preschool education not only emphasizes the establishment of continuity in educational content between the two stages, but also pays attention to the unity of childcare concepts, educational methods and evaluation standards to ensure that children receive appropriate support and guidance throughout the preschool stage.

The core of this model is to reduce the fragmentation and repetitiveness of educational content at different stages. By integrating the resources and goals of childcare and kindergarten, the integration of childcare and kindergarten can effectively avoid the disconnection of the two stages of education and provide children with a coherent and targeted educational experience. This model can also enhance the synergy between families and institutions, ensuring that parents and educators can form an educational synergy during the critical period of children's growth and jointly promote the all-round development of children. The integration of childcare

and kindergarten is not only related to children's current physical and mental health and learning adaptability, but also lays a solid foundation for their future learning ability and social adaptability.

## **2. Impact on children's psychological development**

The integration of childcare and preschool education has far-reaching significance for children's psychological development. It can provide continuous and consistent educational support at the key development stage of children, which helps to build a sense of psychological security and trust. The changes in educational environment and goals faced by children at different stages may bring adaptation pressure, and the integration of childcare and preschool education can help children reduce the uneasiness and anxiety caused by environmental changes by designing consistent learning and living experiences, thereby promoting emotional stability and mental health development.

The integrated education model of childcare can support the natural transition of children's cognitive, emotional and social development. In the 0-6 years old stage, children's psychological development is in a period of rapid growth, and their self-awareness, emotional expression ability and social interaction ability are gradually formed. The integrated childcare provides children with rich opportunities for interaction and exploration through consistent curriculum goals and practical methods, which helps to cultivate their empathy, cooperation ability and positive social behavior patterns. In addition, the continuous educational environment can help children form a stable sense of self-identity and support them to gradually master the skills of interacting with the environment.

The integrated childcare can also promote children's interest in learning and confidence. Through appropriate curriculum arrangements and personalized support, children can explore new knowledge, develop new skills and gain successful experiences in a familiar environment. This positive learning experience can strengthen their internal motivation and provide psychological preparation and behavioral foundation for adaptation and development in the subsequent education stage.

## **3. Problems with the current “childcare integration” curriculum**

### **3.1. Fragmentation of educational content**

The current "integrated childcare" curriculum has a significant split in the design of educational content, which is manifested in the inconsistency of goals and content between the childcare stage and the kindergarten stage. In the childcare stage, the educational content usually focuses on the cultivation of basic life skills, such as self-care, diet, sleep, etc., mainly to meet the physiological and safety needs of children aged 0-3. Although this content arrangement conforms to the physiological characteristics of children's early development, it often ignores the needs of cognitive development and social development. Language, sensory training and initial social interaction lack systematic planning in the curriculum, and these areas are the key foundation for children's subsequent learning and social adaptation(Zhang & Jiang,2024).

The curriculum design at the kindergarten stage focuses more on preschool education preparation, focusing on the improvement of cognitive abilities and the guidance of social behavior norms. However, the educational content at this stage is often not well connected with the childcare outcomes. Kindergarten teachers may not understand the learning and development status of children at the childcare stage, resulting in repetitive and inefficient teaching activities or being out of touch with the actual level of children(Li,2023).In addition, due to the lack of communication mechanism between childcare institutions and kindergartens, the educational content cannot be seamlessly connected. Children are prone to difficulties in

adapting to different stages due to the large span of courses, which may even affect their learning interest and mental health. Therefore, to solve the problem of fragmented educational content, it is necessary to establish a systematic curriculum system at the childcare and kindergarten stages to ensure the continuity and consistency of educational content and provide complete development support for children.

### **3.2. Lack of personalization**

Although the "integrated childcare" curriculum is designed to meet the comprehensive development needs of children aged 0-6, the lack of personalized education is still a prominent bottleneck in the actual design and implementation. The current curriculum usually adopts unified teaching goals and methods, ignoring the individual differences of children in age, interests, abilities and development speed(Qi,2023).Especially at the level of psychological development, there are significant differences in cognitive abilities, self-awareness and emotional regulation levels among different children, and a unified curriculum design cannot effectively respond to these diverse needs.

For 2-year-old children, their cognitive activities are mainly based on perception and operation, while 4-year-old children can already start simple logical reasoning. If the curriculum uses the same teaching activities for children of all ages, it will make it difficult for younger children to understand, while older children may feel bored, and eventually weaken their interest in learning. The lack of personalized education is also reflected in the neglect of children with special needs. Some children may need more sophisticated support due to their physiological or psychological characteristics, and children with delayed language development need to pay more attention to language training, but these needs are often ignored in current courses.

An important prerequisite for achieving personalized education is that educators have a deep understanding of each child's interests, abilities and learning styles. However, many teachers fail to effectively observe and record children's individual characteristics due to heavy workload or lack of professional training, and it is difficult to adjust the curriculum based on these characteristics. Therefore, promoting the personalization of the "childcare integration" curriculum requires strengthening teacher professional development, while developing flexible and diverse curriculum resources to provide children with appropriate learning support.

### **3.3. Insufficient home-school collaboration**

Home-school collaboration is a key link in the implementation of the "childcare integration" curriculum, but in reality, there are still many deficiencies in the collaboration between parents and educational institutions. Low parental participation is a common problem. Some parents are not sufficiently involved in their children's education due to busy work, backward educational concepts or unfamiliarity with the curriculum content. They are usually limited to passively accepting information from the school and fail to actively participate in curriculum activities or educational decisions. This lack of in-depth interactive relationship weakens the effect of home-school collaboration and also affects the quality of curriculum implementation.

There are differences in educational concepts between parents and educators. Some parents believe that the childcare stage is mainly a care function and lack awareness of the importance of early education, while in the kindergarten stage they may focus too much on the learning of academic knowledge and ignore the comprehensive development needs of children. Although educators have professional backgrounds, they lack the skills to communicate with parents in practice and find it difficult to effectively convey scientific parenting concepts. Such differences in concepts make it difficult for both parties to form a joint force, which directly affects the achievement of curriculum goals.

The mechanism of home-school collaboration is also relatively simple and formal. Although many institutions keep in touch with parents through parent meetings, WeChat groups, etc., these communication methods are mainly based on information transmission and lack in-depth interaction and feedback. Parents usually participate in the form of filling out questionnaires or providing simple opinions, but fail to participate deeply in the design and improvement of the curriculum. Strengthening home-school collaboration requires educational institutions to actively build a cooperation platform and provide parents with more opportunities to participate in education, such as inviting parents to participate in curriculum development, theme activities, and opening parent education workshops. Through the establishment of diversified forms of collaboration and consensus on concepts, home-school collaboration can truly become an important support for the successful implementation of the "childcare integration" curriculum.

#### **4. Curriculum design principles based on children's psychological development**

##### **4.1. Development suitability**

Developmental appropriateness is one of the core principles of curriculum design, requiring that educational content and methods match the psychological development stage of children. According to the characteristics of children's development, the important laws of psychological development in the 0-6 years old stage include the rapid improvement from perceptual movement to language and cognitive ability, the transition from dependence to initial independence, and the gradual development of self-awareness and emotional regulation ability(Xu & Peng).Children aged 0-3 years old mainly engage in intuitive perception and manipulation activities, and the curriculum should focus on providing rich sensory stimulation and exploration opportunities. Children aged 3-6 years old gradually have preliminary abstract thinking ability, and the curriculum can guide them to conduct activities such as logical reasoning and simple classification through specific situations.

Developmental appropriateness is also reflected in the consideration of children's attention span. The time arrangement of course activities should be adapted to the children's concentration development stage to avoid fatigue or anxiety caused by too long activity periods. At the same time, the focus of education at different stages should be from easy to difficult, from concrete to abstract, to help children build new knowledge and skills based on existing experience. By focusing on developmental appropriateness, the curriculum can effectively stimulate children's interest in learning, reduce stress and frustration, and promote healthy physical and mental growth.

##### **4.2. Continuity and consistency**

Continuity and consistency are important goals of curriculum design for childcare and kindergarten. Children experience a transition from childcare to kindergarten during their growth process. The consistency of educational content, goals and methods in this process directly affects children's adaptability and learning experience. The childcare stage is mainly to meet children's physical and psychological safety needs, while the kindergarten stage gradually transitions to social and cognitive education. Therefore, curriculum design needs to establish a coherent connection mechanism between the two stages to ensure that the educational content is progressive in difficulty and depth.

The living habits and basic abilities (such as dining, self-care, etc.) cultivated in the childcare stage should be continued in kindergarten, while incorporating more cognitive and social goals, such as preliminary awareness of rules and the ability to participate in group activities. In addition, curriculum activity design should avoid repetition or fragmentation between stages.

For example, the perceptual games already available in childcare can be further developed into classified activities in the kindergarten stage, thereby achieving a natural progression of content. Through the consistent design of the curriculum, children can more easily adapt to the educational environment at different stages, reduce anxiety caused by changes, and improve the continuity and efficiency of learning.

### **4.3. Personalization and diversity**

Personalization and diversity are key principles of curriculum design, which aims to respect the uniqueness of each child and meet their diverse learning needs. In the 0-6 years old stage, there are significant differences in children's interests, abilities and development levels. Some children have strong language expression skills, while others show a higher interest in hands-on activities. Therefore, curriculum design should understand each child's interests and ability levels through observation and evaluation, and design flexible and diverse activities accordingly (Zhou et al, 2024). Provide opportunities for storytelling and role-playing for children who like language activities, and set up construction or handicraft activities for children who prefer hands-on operations.

Diversity is reflected in the richness of the course format, such as integrating content from different fields such as language, music, art, science, etc. into activities to meet the needs of children's multi-faceted development. At the same time, the course should also adapt to children's different learning styles, allowing children to find a learning path suitable for them in a variety of ways through sensory stimulation, visual demonstrations or interactive activities. Through personalized and diversified design, the course can not only enhance children's interest in learning, but also help them discover and develop their personal potential, laying a solid foundation for subsequent development.

### **4.4. Social development**

Social development is an important part of children's psychological development and an area that needs special attention in curriculum design (Huang, 2023). At the age of 0-6, children gradually move from family life to collective life, and learn to develop cooperation, empathy and social skills in interaction with peers. Curriculum design should provide children with opportunities to interact with their peers through group activities, role-playing and cooperative tasks. By working in groups to complete puzzles, children can learn to divide labor and cooperate in mutual cooperation, and enhance team awareness.

Emotional interaction is also an important aspect of social development. The support and acceptance that children feel in their relationships with teachers and peers will directly affect their self-confidence and sense of belonging. The curriculum can help children learn to express and understand emotions through sharing sessions or situational dramas, so as to establish positive interpersonal relationships in the group. By focusing on the curriculum design of social development, children can not only better adapt to collective life, but also lay a good foundation for their future social interactions.

## **5. Curriculum Implementation Strategy**

### **5.1. Innovation and integration of content design**

The design of course content should focus on the innovation and integration of theme activities, organically combining cognitive, language, emotional and social goals to meet the comprehensive development needs of children. Integrating educational goals in different fields through theme activities can not only increase the fun of learning, but also allow children to learn and grow naturally in real situations (Wang, 2023). For example, in the "Know My Community" theme activity, teachers can guide children to understand important places in the community (such as hospitals, fire stations, supermarkets) and their functions, and stimulate



children's interest and cognition of the community through explanations, picture displays and field observations. At the same time, role-playing activities can allow children to try to play social roles such as doctors, customers or firefighters, experience social interactions in real situations, and cultivate empathy and cooperation awareness(Li,2023).

Integrative design can integrate language development and emotional expression goals. Encouraging children to share their observations and feelings about the community through drawing, narration or performance can not only improve their language expression skills, but also promote emotional development and social skills. Through the integration of thematic activities, the course content can not only stimulate children's interest in learning, but also effectively help them establish an interdisciplinary comprehensive knowledge system, laying a solid foundation for subsequent learning and development.

## **5.2. Diversification of teaching methods**

Diversification of teaching methods is an important means to improve the quality of curriculum implementation. Gamified learning is a teaching method that is highly suitable for preschool children(Bi & Feng,2023).Through role-playing, scenario simulation and other forms, children can actively participate in learning in familiar life experiences. For example, in the scenario simulation of "supermarket shopping", children can learn basic numerical operations while practicing polite language and social rules such as queuing. This method can effectively stimulate children's interest in learning and enhance their practical ability.

Inquiry-based learning focuses on the development of children's autonomy and creativity. Teachers can guide children to discover new knowledge in exploration by asking open-ended questions or project tasks. For example, in the theme of "The Mystery of Water", children can understand the changes in the form of water by observing experiments such as ice melting and hot water evaporation. This process not only cultivates children's scientific thinking, but also improves their problem-solving ability.

The use of interactive technology can enhance the fun and sense of participation in learning. Using digital tools such as interactive whiteboards and virtual reality (VR) technology, teachers can provide children with a richer learning experience. For example, in the theme activity of "Exploring the Universe", VR technology allows children to "visit" the solar system and understand the distribution of planets and the cosmic environment in an immersive way. Through these diverse teaching methods, curriculum implementation can better meet children's diverse learning needs and promote their cognitive, emotional and social development.

## **5.3. Deepening of home-school collaboration**

Home-school collaboration is an important part of curriculum implementation. Through home-school linkage, a more supportive environment can be created for children's growth(Wu,2023).It is crucial to establish an effective home-school communication platform. Schools can hold parent meetings regularly, set up home-school WeChat groups, and promptly provide parents with feedback on children's learning progress and psychological development, while collecting parents' suggestions on curriculum implementation. The establishment of a home-school communication platform can narrow the distance between families and schools and enhance the educational synergy of both parties. Providing parent education support helps parents better understand the growth patterns and psychological needs of children. By organizing psychological development lectures, education salons and other activities, teachers can convey scientific parenting concepts to parents, such as how to help children develop self-discipline and how to support their social development, thereby improving parents' educational literacy and participation ability(Tian ,2024).

Encourage parents to participate in curriculum design and activity implementation. Participation in family activities can not only bring parents and children closer together, but also allow parents to understand the course content more intuitively. Inviting parents and children to complete community surveys together, or participate in parent-child sports games and other activities can help parents integrate more deeply into the education process. By deepening home-school collaboration, schools and families can jointly build a supportive growth environment, give full play to the advantages of the "integrated childcare" curriculum, and help children achieve all-round development.

## **6. Evaluation and improvement of curriculum effectiveness**

### **6.1. Diversified evaluation system**

A diversified evaluation system is an important guarantee for the implementation of the "childcare integration" curriculum. Traditional evaluation often focuses on the measurement of knowledge mastery, while neglecting the comprehensive understanding of children's psychological development, emotional expression and social ability. Therefore, it is particularly important to establish a diversified evaluation system. Teachers can gain an in-depth understanding of children's performance in daily activities through observation records, such as their cooperation in games, problem-solving ability and compliance with rules. These observation data can provide a real basis for children's personalized development.

Analysis of children's works is another effective evaluation method. Through the analysis of paintings, handicrafts or language expressions, teachers can understand children's cognitive ability, creativity and emotional state. This evaluation method can not only help teachers identify children's strengths and weaknesses, but also provide parents with intuitive proof of growth. In addition, feedback from parents and teachers also plays a key role in the evaluation. Parents can supplement their children's performance in the family environment through daily observation and communication, while teachers can give professional evaluations based on actual observations in classroom activities.

A diversified evaluation system can comprehensively reflect the psychological and ability development of children and provide a scientific basis for curriculum optimization. At the same time, it also helps teachers, parents and children to form a positive interaction, promotes the transparency and coordination of the educational process, and thus creates a more favorable environment for children's development.

### **6.2. Dynamic adjustment mechanism**

The dynamic adjustment mechanism is a key means to ensure the adaptability and effectiveness of the curriculum. In the implementation of the "child care integration" curriculum, the development needs and educational environment of children at different stages may change, so the curriculum content and teaching strategies must be adjusted in a timely manner according to the actual situation. Evaluation feedback is an important basis for dynamic adjustment. Through regular monitoring and data analysis of children's development status, educators can identify deficiencies in the curriculum. For example, if the evaluation shows that an activity is too simple or complex and cannot meet the learning needs of most children, teachers can modify the activity content or adjust the teaching methods in a timely manner.

Dynamic adjustment also includes responding to individualized needs. Some children may show advantages or need additional support in specific areas, and teachers should design personalized teaching plans based on these needs. For example, add expression and creation tasks for children with strong language skills, and provide more operational activity support for children with slightly slower cognitive development. Another core of the dynamic adjustment mechanism is reflection and improvement of teaching strategies. Teachers need to

conduct group discussions regularly, summarize teaching experiences, and share successful cases, so as to continuously improve the scientificity and suitability of curriculum implementation.

Through dynamic adjustment, the curriculum can not only better meet the growth needs of children, but also provide a practical basis for the professional development of teachers, and ensure the long-term quality and effectiveness of the "childcare integration" curriculum.

## 7. Conclusion

The design and implementation of the "childcare integration" curriculum should always focus on the psychological development of children, and pay attention to the key stage needs of their cognitive, emotional and social development. The curriculum design needs to focus on the continuity and consistency of educational content, and help children achieve a smooth transition between childcare and kindergarten through coherent educational goals and methods. This model can not only effectively reduce the fragmentation of educational content, but also provide children with a sense of security and trust, and promote their all-round development.

The optimization of the "childcare integration" curriculum requires more innovation and practice. The curriculum content should be based on the continuous absorption of the latest educational research results, and incorporate diversified, personalized and interactive design concepts, while strengthening home-school collaboration to create a broader learning and growth space for children. In addition, the implementation of the curriculum needs to achieve real-time monitoring and improvement of educational effects through a diversified evaluation system and dynamic adjustment mechanism.

The "integrated childcare" education model is not only a support for children's current development, but also an important guarantee for laying a solid foundation for their future learning ability and social adaptability. Through the joint efforts of educators, parents and society, the integrated childcare curriculum will provide scientific guidance and a caring environment for children's growth, helping them to embark on a more colorful and happy learning journey.

## Funded Project

1. Sichuan Research Center for Early Childhood Education and Development (2024YB04), 2024.
2. Supported by the Research Center for Preschool Aesthetic Education Development in Southern Sichuan, a key research base of philosophy and social sciences in Zigong City, Sichuan University of Science & Engineering. Project Title: "Cultural Attribution and Cultivation Path of Preschool Children's Aesthetic Education Formation"(XQMY23-04).

## References

- [1] Ding, Y. (2000). Educational integration is the foundation and key to the integration of childcare and preschool education. *Preschool Education Research*, (02), 20–21.
- [2] Zhao, Q. (2002). The integration of childcare and preschool education is the development direction of preschool education. *Journal of Ningbo University (Educational Science Edition)*, (01), 122–123.
- [3] Yu, Y. (2008). Comprehensive understanding of the integrated education system of childcare and preschool education. *Early Childhood Education (Teacher Edition)*, 442(06), 4–5.
- [4] Zhang, S., & Jiang, X. (2024). Constructing a "harmonious but different" integrated childcare service system: Connotation, challenges and implementation path. *Early Childhood Education*, (11), 13–17.



- [5] Li, X. (2023). Exploring the difficulties and solutions of "childcare and preschool education integration" in rural areas. In Proceedings of the 2023 Academic Annual Conference of the China Tao Xingzhi Research Association (I) (pp. 181–183).
- [6] Qi, X. (2023). The current situation and prospects of the construction of integrated curriculum for kindergartens and children in the new era. *Teaching and Educating*, (19), 7–9.
- [7] Xu, J., & Peng, M. (2023). Review and reflection on the theoretical level of "integrated kindergarten and children." *Population and Health*, (09), 25–27.
- [8] Zhou, Y., Yang, Y., & Pei, R. (2024). Construction, implementation and evaluation of the integrated curriculum system for kindergartens and children. *Oriental Baby·Childcare and Education*, (02), 37–39.
- [9] Huang, Q. (2023). Solving the problem of childcare with the "integrated kindergarten and children" model: Based on the research and thinking of Wuhan. *Learning Monthly*, (08), 34–35.
- [10] Wang, Y. (2023). Research on the current situation and countermeasures of the development of "integrated kindergarten and children." *Cultural and Educational Materials*, (01), 143–146.
- [11] Li, X. (2023). The experimental characteristics of the children's group and its inspiration for the integration of kindergarten and children in rural China. *Journal of Shaanxi Preschool Teachers College*, (06), 19–25.
- [12] Bi, B., & Feng, S. (2022). Exploration of the teaching reform of "curriculum and certificate integration" under the concept of integrated childcare. *Modern Vocational Education*, (27), 47–49.
- [13] Wu, Z. (2023). Exploration of the practice of co-education between home, garden and community under the background of "integrated childcare." *People's Education*, (22), 77–78.
- [14] Tian, F. (2024). Research on the development path of childcare services under the background of "integrated childcare." *Science and Technology Wind*, (10), 152–154.