

# ***The Influence of Parenting Style on School Adaptation of Special Children in Primary School***

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**Abstract:** Family education is the starting point of life which is important to children's development. Especially for special children, good family education is favorable to make up for congenital defects. Recently, China paid high attention to the development of special education, formulating the Action Plan for the Development and Promotion of Special Education in the 14th Five-year Plan to push it towards high-quality development. Social attention to special children increases significantly but still has rising space. In China, the study of parenting styles on children's school adaptability has gotten rich achievement, but the research for special children is relatively few. Different parenting styles and both parents using the same parenting style have different impacts on the children's development. Special children's school adaptability is influenced by many factors, so their developmental level is uneven. Therefore, parents need to accurately grasp the relationship between the two and use appropriate parenting styles to nourish their children to promote children's physical and mental health development.

**Keywords:** Parenting style, special education, special children, school adaptability

## **1. Introduction**

China has 85.914 million disabled people, accounting for 6.16% of the total population. The Action Plan for the Development and Promotion of Special Education in the 14th Five-year Plan proposed that special education is a vital part of education undertaking and the important content of building a high-quality education system. Since the reform and opening up, China has paid high attention to the rights of the disabled, strived to develop special education undertaking well, and guided the disabled and children with special needs to throw themselves into the great cause of socialism and practice the spirit of self-improvement, realizing their dreams. Especially since the twenty-first century, China's central committee and state council have repeatedly adjusted special education policy and the special education in China has developed better and better from the exploration to the mature period. The previous special education system in China was mostly based on other's experiences and patterns, which did not meet China's national conditions satisfactorily and did not pay attention to the special history and cultural background of China. In recent years, China's central committee has clearly put forward "to be based on Chinese national conditions and explore a road of reform and development of special education with Chinese characteristics. At present, special education in China has shifted from the alternate use of inclusive education and integrated education to the policy that only uses integrated education, which not only embodies the reference of special education to international

concepts but also shows that China has gradually explored the special education concept that meets China's national conditions [1].

Family is regarded as the first classroom of one's whole life, and parents are the first teachers of children, so family education is vital for children's development. Whether the cultivation of daily behavior habits or the influence of morality and culture, family education is always an important part. Doing a good job in family education is beneficial to children's physical and mental health development. In 2021, the Law of the People's Republic of China on the Promotion of Family Education was officially promulgated, approving the important status of family education and providing a guarantee for the further development of family education.

Yet now, family education in China still has certain problems and is in urgent need of improvement: in China, most parents impose their own opinions on children and register various continuation classes for children, depriving them of too much resting time. If things continue in this way, it not only increases the family's financial burden but also harms children's physical and mental health development. Some parents possess a negative attitude, thinking that education is a matter for school or because they are working outside, spending quite little time with their children, and even some parents use violence against children, severely harming children's physical and mental health development. As for special groups, the problems of special children in family education are much more significant. Therefore, as the subject of family education, parents need to pay high attention to parenting style and undertake the responsibility initiatively, especially for parents of special children.

## 2. Parenting Style

### 2.1. The Concept of Parenting Style

Parenting style is a behavior tendency of parents in the daily activities of educating and raising children and it is the comprehensive embodiment of parents' educational concept and education behavior with relatively stable behavior styles [2]. In China, some scholars use parental parenting, parental rearing patterns, and caregiving styles, but parenting style is generally accepted by the academic world [3].

### 2.2. The Type of Parenting Style

The study of parenting style is mainly divided into orientations: one is from the different dimensions of parenting style, concretely disguising a certain behavior dimension or a specific parenting style under a behavior dimension, and another is disguising parenting style according to different dimensions [3]. Among them, the study of American psychologist Baumrind is the most famous. Baumrind divides the parenting style into three dimensions: authoritarian parents, authoritative parents, and permissive parents [4]. The authoritarian parents usually called the autocrats, manifest as controlling, detached, distrustful, and somewhat less warm than other parents [4]. Therefore, children whose parents are characterized as authoritarian have good behaviors in obedience and conformity to the rules but the conceptions are relatively poor [5]. The authoritative parents are stern but warm whose features are a high level of nourishing, participation, and encouraging self-development, and they guide the activities and decisions of their children by inference and discipline which is the combination of high control and positive encouragement [4, 6]. permissive parents do not control and excessively demand their children, give higher autonomy, and are always warm [4, 7]. Afterward, Lamborn and other scholars based on Baumrind's research, provide evidence for the practicability of four dimensions of parenting style from Maccoby & Martin, and the permissive parenting style is divided into indulgent parenting style and neglectful parenting style [5, 8, 9].

### **2.3. The Influence of Parenting Style on Children's Development**

Previous scholars did systemic and overall research on the influence of parenting style on children's development. Parenting style plays a vital role in cognitive ability, socialization, and personality formation: the influences on the development of children's cognitive ability mainly include learning improvement, intelligence development, and language expression which are closely related to the completion of the study of children; the influences to the socialization and personality formation of children mainly include code of ethics, self-consciousness and self-esteem which are closely related to children's self-discipline and social contact [10]. Lu Furong and other scholars based on the three dimensions of Baumrind, found that the authoritative parenting style of father forward predicts the academic behavior in T2, and the authoritarian parenting style passively predicts the peer relationship and the academic behavior, however, the mother's authoritative parenting style obviously forward predict the peer relationship [11]. Wang Yan and other scholars found that the authoritarian parenting style has a negative influence on self-concept, self-acceptance, and aggressive behavior [12]. Therefore, different parenting styles and both parents using the same parenting style have different impacts on the children's development.

## **3. School Adaptation**

### **3.1. The Concept of School Adaptation**

Adaptation is a widely used concept and a trivial psychological explanation of adaptation is that with the change in society, the social behavior of people changes too, such as adapting to a new environment [13]. People's adaptation to the environment is an important content to psychological education, psychological counselling, and psychological counseling.

School is an important place for students to learn and live. In school, students not only learn theoretical knowledge from textbooks, school also undertake some social functions, which are most significant when children step into the kindergarten learning stage. Children from the relatively isolated individuals in the family to the school, become members of the small society, having learned how to socialize with others and some right code and conduct. Students who have good school adaptation can participate in school activities in a positive emotional state, but students who have school maladjustment have academic failure, behavior problems, social maladjustment, and other problems [14]. Therefore, school adjustment should be considered as an important index to method student's physical and mental health development. The primary school stage is an important turning point for life learning, from kindergarten which is mainly about games to primary school which is mainly about knowledge learning. Both the learning form and the content change tremendously and the school adaptation is prone to problems. Special children have particularity, so parents need to pay more attention to them.

Now, the concept definition of school adaptation is still not clear, earlier scholars mainly analyzed absence rate, academic achievement, and other aspects. With further study, some scholars think that school adaptation includes not only academic performance, learning improvement, and academic achievement but also emotion, social adaptation, and other aspects [15].

### **3.2. The Factors that Influence School Adaptation**

School adaptation is affected by multiple factors, including peer relationships, teacher-student relationships, parent-child relationships, parenting style, and others.

Peer relationship is the interpersonal relationship developed through communication between individuals of the same or similar age [16]. Ladd and other scholars found that both peer acceptance and number of friends were correlated to school performance and the best peer relationship was

correlated to class participation [17]. Aiming at primary school students, Yan Beiying and other scholars made a similar conclusion that peer relationships obviously forward-predicted academic adaptation [18].

The teacher-student relationship is an important part of interpersonal relationships, and it is also an important content of socialization. Liu Wanlun & Wo Jianzhong found that the school adaptation of primary and middle school students was obviously positively correlated to the teacher-student relationship [19].

The parent-child relationship is the relationship between parents and children, it is the earliest contact, the most lasting, and the longest kind of interpersonal relationship, being important to children's physical and mental health development [20]. Ling Hui and other scholars found that the parent-child relationship was obviously positively correlated to school adaptation and the parent-child relationship not only directly impacts school adaptation but also indirectly affects it by self-supporting behaviors [21].

Parenting style is a behavior tendency shown by parents nurturing children. Compared with other factors, the influence of parenting style on school adaptation is obvious: parenting style can directly and indirectly affect children's mental health levels [2].

## **4. Special Education**

### **4.1. The Concept of Special Education**

Disabled children are people who are under 18 years old, in the mental, physiological, and human body structure, certain body tissues, and functions are lost or abnormal, and part or all the self-care ability, school adaptation, and social adaptation are lost [22]. Besides meeting the basic medical demands of disabled children, people need to meet the demands of education.

Special education focuses on special children, using specific curricula and teaching methods to reach certain training objectives [23]. Special education is an important part of the whole educational undertaking, the indispensable content of a high-quality education system, and one of the important marks of reflecting a national civilization degree. Therefore, developing special education well is beneficial to promote social justice. Although the special education undertaking in China developed relatively late, China's central committee and state council pay high attention to it, and promulgate a series of policies, effectively protecting the right to education of disabled children and the policy framework characterized by fairness, inclusiveness, and diversification gradually forms.

### **4.2. The School Adaptation of Special Children**

As an important place for children to live and learn, school plays an irreplaceable and vital influence role in children's physical and mental health development. Especially for special students, compared to normal children, special children more easily have school maladjustment. Therefore, it is necessary to know the school adaptation situation of special children and the influencing factors.

Now, scholars have already researched the school adaptation for mentally retarded children, and they found that the school adaptation of mentally retarded children showed an obvious difference in gender. The antisocial behavior level of the boy is higher than a girl, and the self-management ability of a girl is higher than a boy because of the different levels of mental retardation, the development of school adaptation is different too [24].

The factors that influence the school adaptation of special children are similar to those of normal children. Guan Wei conducted a collective survey on students and their parents in grades 2 to 4 of deaf schools, finding that parenting style obviously influenced the peer acceptance of children [25].

As the first teacher of children, parents should emphasize family education and undertake corresponding responsibility. Li Ming proposed that the cognitive development of children has

population heterogeneity, and children with different cognitive abilities have different acceptance capacities to parenting style, therefore, parenting style should focus on individualized teaching: in the normal cognitive ability group of children, the authoritative parenting style is more appropriate; in the high cognitive ability group of children, tolerant parenting style is more appropriate [26]. Thus, as the special group children, special children have the best developing period in education, so parents need to pay more attention to the parenting style to help children's physical and mental health development. However, according to previous research, the integral level of participation in education from special children's parents is low. Although the willingness is relatively high, the understanding is not enough and because of the influence from different aspects, parents of special children always stand in the close space, even if some parents abandon their children, which is adverse to the individual development of special children [22, 27].

## **5. Suggestion**

### **5.1. Strictly Observing Related Regulations and Policies and Nourishing Special Children According to Law**

In 2022, the Law of the People's Republic of China on the Promotion of Family Education was officially issued, which provides more scientific guidelines for family education, marking a new stage of family education. According to the law, parents of minors and other guardians should legally practice the family education. It warns parents that they should not abandon their children. Although special children are imperfect in physical and mental conditions, they still have survival rights. Therefore, some parents should change their opinion and take good care of their children.

### **5.2. Changing the Wrong Parenting Style and Nourishing Special Children Scientifically**

About how to nourish special children in the right way, the treatment methods of most parents are not mature, and the unscientific parenting style is a common occurrence. The behaviors of neglect and violence toward special children should be spurned. Firstly, in thought parents should set up the right and positive concepts in thought. Because of their own problems, special children easily have problems in study, peer relationships, self-care ability, and other aspects. If parents do not help them in time, their self-efficacy and interest in life will decline. This is not good for children's physical and mental health development. Therefore, parents should positively provide emotional support to help children to solve their difficulties. Secondly, in practice, parents should aim at the situation of their children to adjust their parenting style. According to previous research, different parenting styles and both parents using the same parenting style have different impacts on the children's development, the school adaptation of mentally retarded children showed an obvious difference in the gender and because of the different levels of mental retardation, the development of school adaptation is different. Therefore, parents should find the appropriate parenting style according to their children.

### **5.3. Providing Related Powerful Support and Helping Parents of Special Children**

According to previous studies, the integral level of participation in education from special children's parents is low. Although the willingness is relatively high, the understanding is not enough because of the influence of different aspects. Therefore, the country and society should provide relevant support. Now, some experiences have proved that constructing 'the development chain of parents mutually aid each other', forming a cooperation community', and creating a concentric circle of social support are effective methods [27]. With the help of these methods, parents step out of the self-enclosed space and change their experiences with each other. It not only helps to improve the



educational level but also promotes children's physical and mental health development. Therefore, some units can learn from successful experiences to help parents get out of the difficulties.

## 6. Conclusion

Previous research aiming at the influence of parenting style on children's school adaptation has already gotten rich research results. However, the attention of special children needs to increase. Especially for special children, influenced by their own factors, easily have frustration. Good family education is beneficial to make up for the inherent defects, therefore, parents should pay attention to family education and use scientific parenting styles to educate their children to help their physical and mental health development. Besides, Parents of special children bear huge psychological pressures when they nourish their children. Therefore, the country and society should pay high attention to it, providing effective help.

The limitation of the research is that the research mainly summarizes the previous studies, lacking the support point of practical investigation. In future research, scholars can do further research and discussion on special children, to discover the specific relationship between the two factors and find the appropriate and scientific methods to promote their development.

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