

# Study on Daily Routine Education Issues and Strategies for Preschool Children in Small Classes

**Congying Zhang**

Jishou University, Jishou 416000, Hunan, China

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**Abstract:** From ancient times to the present, the cultivation of habits has always been a focus and has an impact on a person's lifetime. Kindergarten daily life activities run through every day of the children, and through the cultivation of daily life routines, children can develop good habits of self-discipline, laying a solid foundation for future learning and life. The "Guidelines for the Learning and Development of Children Aged 3–6" also emphasizes the importance of cultivating good daily habits in young children. Therefore, kindergartens follow the educational purpose of cultivating people with integrity, and incorporate the education of daily life routines into various aspects of the day in kindergarten.

**Keywords:** small class; daily life routines; habit cultivation

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## 1. The importance of daily routines for preschool children

The daily routine of life is to teach young children basic life skills, cultivate good living habits, and the "Kindergarten Education Guidance Outline" (hereinafter referred to as the "Outline") clearly states that good habits and hygiene habits are essential for young children to have basic self-care skills. The daily routine of young children refers to the basic behavioral norms and activity sequences that children in kindergarten need to follow, which may seem simple but have a great impact on children. By repeating these activities daily, children can develop self-discipline, gradually establish self-management requirements for daily routines, and follow a series of rules, such as queuing for handwashing and not cutting in line randomly, which helps them understand the meaning of rules, develop a sense of order, understand the need to restrain their behavior in collective life, and better adapt to the various rules in social life, improve children's adaptability, gradually adapt to the daily routines of kindergarten, cultivate good living habits, promote comprehensive development, in the daily routines, children need to cooperate with others, share toys, take turns in activities, such as using playground equipment together during outdoor activities, which can enhance their social skills, teach children to respect others, understand others' feelings, improve interpersonal communication skills, better integrate into the group. The daily routines of kindergarten are formulated by the country through many scientific studies, which are beneficial for the cultivation of children's cognition, emotions, behavior, etc.

## **2. Issues related to the daily routines of preschool children**

### **2.1. Children themselves**

Currently, the children have been in the kindergarten for three months. Most of the children no longer cry when they come to the kindergarten; Washing. When washing hands, children like to play with water. 3–4 children really enjoy playing with water and have wet their clothes several times. Children can use hand soap to wash their hands, but some children spend too much time washing hands and some have not developed the habit of washing hands, they need to be reminded by teachers. However, most children can use the restroom properly with the reminder from teachers. Girls in the younger classes can wipe themselves after using the restroom, while those in the older classes still need the help of teachers; Drinking water. Children can recognize their own student numbers and the location of their water bottles, but they tend to cut in line when drinking water. This is because the area where the water bottles are placed is limited and small, causing crowding. It sometimes results in conflicts between children who are getting water and those who are done. However, after getting water, the children are disciplined and stand in an orderly manner on the green line to drink water; The children's queuing situations are not good. They do not understand how to queue in a straight line or in two lines. Children are used to queuing separately for boys and girls, and some have fixed mindset. When teachers ask them to form a single line, some children do not allow children of the opposite sex to be in front of them, saying, "Teacher, he is a boy (girl)." However, with the reminder of the teachers, most of the children can queue properly, and a few children need the teachers to guide them. It takes a long time to queue properly, and the children wait passively, sometimes squatting on the ground or playing around. During the queue, children like to look around and easily get distracted by other things; Eating. The children's eating habits are not very good, they like to talk, cannot be quiet, eat slowly, and are picky eaters. The children's small muscle development is not yet perfect, and they are not very nimble with spoons; Group activities. Children cannot sit properly on chairs, like to touch others with their hands, but most children follow the teacher's pace, such as answering questions; Outdoor activities. Children have poor discipline and rule awareness, and their attention span is short, mainly manifested in wanting to play a different game after playing for a while.

### **2.2. Kindergarten factors**

Kindergarten failed to mobilize the foundational role of family education in cultivating routines; there is a lack of routine education and training in kindergartens; the time arrangement of daily routine activities in kindergartens is unscientific and unreasonable. In some kindergartens, the emphasis on routine education in small classes is insufficient, often focusing only on children's knowledge, neglecting their emotional communication and social skills. The establishment of rules is unreasonable: the rules are too strict or complex, ignoring the emotional needs and age characteristics of children, making it difficult for children to understand and comply, and even causing resistance to the rules. Communication between kindergartens and families is not smooth, leading to parents' lack of understanding of the content and requirements of routine education in kindergartens, making it impossible to effectively address routine issues at home for children.

### **2.3. Teacher factors**

The unreasonable aspects of conventional education methods in daily life mainly manifest in: firstly, teachers are overly leading and their methods are single. Teachers lack professional knowledge and approach the cultivation of children's daily routines in a rigid manner, or newly hired teachers lack experience, resulting in a lack of emphasis and knowledge on how to cultivate children's daily routines leading to a great deal of confusion. In a small class, lunch ends at 12 o'clock noon, from the start of the meal until the children finish eating, the most common words used by teachers are to quickly eat, just like a tiger eating quickly, especially as the meal comes to an end, the teachers urge more and more, which is very detrimental to their personalized growth. Teachers often hope that children can reach their ideal level, but in reality, it is not as expected. The daily routines of the small class are initially poor, and the teacher needs to emphasize them multiple times, sometimes the teacher may lose patience and have a harsh tone. Moreover, the kindergarten where I am currently located also pays great attention to daily life routines, with high demands on teachers who need to accurately grasp the

daily routine process, and have strict control over time.

## **2.4. Parental factors**

Currently, many parents do not want their children to fall behind, believing that knowledge is very important. Therefore, they often worry that their young children will not learn real knowledge in kindergarten. They spend a lot of time focusing on various learning activities, especially special skills training, which results in them overlooking the development of regular habits in young children. As the time for school enrollment approaches, parents also experience separation anxiety just like their children do. They are reluctant to part with their children and do not want to be separated from them. The daily routine in kindergarten constrains the children, which may leave them exhausted. When they return home from school, parents no longer enforce routines, and some indulgent parents adopt a permissive style of parenting where children can do as they please at home. The routines that were established at kindergarten are lost when they return home, leading to a situation where five plus two equals zero. The elders fail to recognize the harm of bad habits and do not take the negative impact on the children's physical and mental development seriously.

## **3. Strategies for solving daily routines of preschool children**

### **3.1. Familiarize young children with daily life routines through various activities**

#### **3.1.1. Model demonstration, imitation method**

The method of setting an example is to praise young children who perform well verbally and give them certain material rewards, which will reinforce their behavior and encourage other young children to follow suit. Letting young children learn actively and consciously through observation and practice. Children aged 3 to 6 have a strong ability to imitate, especially in small classes, they love to imitate and care about teacher's praise. In a daily life activity, I taught the children to play a finger game: Little Monkey Climbing a Mountain. At the beginning, the children all did well, actively following my actions. When I mentioned the little monkey rolling down, a child laid down on the floor from the chair, and other children found it interesting and followed suit. This phenomenon illustrates that children love to imitate, so setting a good example for them is very important. Teachers and children greet the children coming to the kindergarten every morning with smiles, saying "Good morning"! Day after day, gradually children will develop the habit of greeting each other in the morning. Before group activities, there is a roll call where I praised the children who answer loudly and sit quietly. When other children hear the teacher's praise, they immediately sit nicely on their chairs. This semester, the kindergarten carried out health-themed activities. In September, we taught the children how to wash their hands in seven steps. We demonstrated and then let the children try it themselves. In October, my class required the children to wipe their mouths and rinse after each meal. As the children may not know how to do it, we teachers explained it first, demonstrated the steps, and then let the children try on their own. We also ask children who listen attentively in group activities to demonstrate how to sit properly on small chairs, and so on. Of course, for more complex routines, children may need repeated demonstrations and reminders from teachers. Teachers are the best role models for children. In children's minds, teachers are respected, and a good example set by teachers can have a positive influence on children and positive guidance is more effective than punishment. For example, during mealtime, the teacher can demonstrate how to eat correctly, hold a spoon in one hand and a bowl in the other, and throw unwanted food into the bin. Teachers can also teach children how to line up correctly and show them the importance of waiting in line. For instance, a child named Zhe Zhe pointed out that my chair was not on the green line and my eyes weren't looking forward, so I immediately corrected myself and thanked Zhe Zhe for the reminder. I understand that, with the teacher's demonstration and the children's imitation, most of the children have gradually developed good habits and routines. As teachers, we also have a set of standards: sit up straight, hands on thighs, feet together, communicate with children in a gentle and child-friendly manner, be a role model, and set a good example for the children to follow.

### **3.1.2. The wonderful use of children's songs and poetry**

Introducing music is a way to help children develop daily habits and promote healthy development through the combination of education and entertainment. Children's poetry looks at the world from a child's perspective, comprehending the world with a child's heart, and laying the foundation for children's future growth and development. When teaching children daily routines, children in the small class often do not understand the meaning or purpose. Children in the small class belong to the perceptual operation stage, and cannot understand many intangible items or daily routine phrases. In this case, children can be allowed to listen to children's songs to understand the importance of routines in the lyrics of children's songs. Through my long-term observation, I have found that children have difficulties with mealtime and the final clean-up before leaving the garden in daily routines. Children like to chat and talk during meals, eat too slowly, so teachers can play children's songs "mealtime song, eat by yourself, don't waste food" to children before meals. If children cannot remain quiet, teachers can play calm instrumental music to help them calm down. As for the chaotic situation when children are leaving the garden, due to time constraints, teachers are busy organizing children's clothes, and caregivers are busy cleaning up the classroom. Sometimes they cannot take care of children who have already finished organizing their clothes, resulting in a noisy classroom. Playing children's song music can help children stay quiet and reduce noise, as well as help them learn knowledge or daily routines in children's song music. Children's songs and poetry can be used anywhere, anytime, and are not limited. For example, when taking attendance, we can recite poetry together: "Don't speak when I call your name, who I call, who answers". When lining up and walking, you can sing "Under the big bridge in front of the door, a group of ducks swam by" with children to relieve their emotions. Reciting the poem "Lining Up" when lining up, and reciting the poem "Handwashing Song" during daily washing. Children's songs and poetry not only help children establish daily routines, but also help them understand things and seasons in life. For example, "Colors of Autumn" can help children better understand autumn and observe nature; "Traffic Lights" can invisibly teach children what to pay attention to when crossing the road and how to cross it.

### **3.1.3. Learning and practicing in the game**

Game activities not only help cultivate social skills but also contribute to building relationships and respecting others. Children enjoy playing games and can experience joy and happiness through them. Mr. Chen Heqin once said: Children are naturally active, and games are their basic activities. Teachers can use games to integrate daily routines into play. As adults, we all enjoy fun programs and game activities, let alone children. By turning ordinary and boring activities into fun games, children can receive natural education through play. Games are the best assistant in children's regular education, so happy and fun games can play a significant role in children's daily routine habits. For example, before meals, when children wait for food and become noisy, I say to them: Let's play the game "123 Stop", I say "123 Stop" and you cannot talk or move, let's see who can hold on until the end. Immediately, the classroom becomes quiet.

### **3.1.4. Create a good living environment**

A good living environment not only affects the emotions of young children, but also influences the cultivation of their daily routines. In kindergarten, the teacher's attitude, facial expressions, words and actions; the layout of the classroom environment; regular daily routines and schedules; the design and layout of different areas; a good and quiet dining environment; rich and safe outdoor activity materials; and the teacher's psychological education for young children all affect the formation of children's habits. Case study: Yuhua District, Changsha Green City Kindergarten values children's reading a lot. Each class has many picture books in the reading area. During a meal waiting period, I told the story of "Yummy Yummy" through a picture book, helping children develop good habits of eating by themselves, not being picky, and being hygienic. I asked the children how they should eat after telling the story. After finishing the story, I mentioned, "The teacher will observe your behavior later." Indeed, at the beginning of the meal, the children showed much improvement in eating compared to before, but shortly after starting the meal, they started talking and needed reminders from the teacher. However, through this incident, it shows that reading picture books has a great impact on young children,

who can acquire a lot of knowledge from them. Through my comparative survey of each class, I found that children all enjoy listening to teachers telling picture book stories and are willing to do so. Most children can listen attentively and answer the teachers' questions and tell simple stories from the picture books. Teachers can guide children carefully and also help them establish daily routines using child-friendly language. Case study: Little Star is a very unique girl. Recently, teachers found that she didn't like sitting in chairs. So we told her, "Little Star, your chair is very sad because you are not sitting on it. The chair started crying sadly. You quickly go check on it." Upon hearing this, she immediately ran over and sat on her chair. BonBon is quite young and likes to make sounds during nap time. After learning that he likes police officers, we told him, "BonBon, go to sleep quickly. Later, your favorite police uncle will come to see if you are asleep." He responded, "Okay," and drifted into sweet dreams.

### **3.2. Kindergarten strengthens daily education system**

Kindergartens must do a good job in institutional construction and rigorously enforce the system. Kindergartens need to draw up a reasonable daily life flowchart, distinguishing time points for different age groups. I believe that it is better not to make the daily life flowchart too rigid, but rather flexible and adjustable. If the requirements for teachers are too high and too strict, teachers may have difficulty organizing children to complete their daily routines. It is important to cultivate the quality of teachers, strengthen their moral qualities, establish good teacher-student relationships, and have teachers organize children's activities reasonably, understand the weekly tasks, specific daily goals for children, and integrate routines with activities. Kindergartens should organize training sessions more frequently, so that all kindergarten teachers and other staff members understand the importance of children's daily routines and implement them in practice. Not only the main lead teachers should do well, but also childcare teachers need to do well. The construction of routines is not achieved overnight; it requires accumulation over time. If the kindergarten attaches importance to this, the teachers and parents will naturally pay attention to the children's daily routines under the guidance of the kindergarten.

### **3.3. Strengthen teachers' routine awareness and improve teachers' own qualities**

Facing the newly enrolled children in the kindergarten, teachers can first establish a good teacher-student relationship with the children, let the children feel the warmth and love from the kindergarten and teachers, and give the children a hug. In the early stage, teachers focus on companionship, building an intimate relationship with the children first. After the children adapt to life in the kindergarten, parents can visit the kindergarten to observe. Teachers should do preliminary work, such as understanding the children's home situation during home visits. For the first time, the children in the small class leave their families and are separated from their family members for a long time. They go from being the center of attention for their whole family to being focused on by three teachers, causing some children to seek attention at the kindergarten. Additionally, the children need to adapt to the kindergarten's habits and may feel timid, which is not easy. I believe that as a teacher, one must first update their educational concepts, keep up with the trends of the times, participate in experienced and meaningful training sessions, and enrich their experience and professional knowledge. Children are the subjects of education, and allowing them to participate in the establishment of daily routines can best reflect the teacher's respect for the children. Teachers should empower children to establish daily routines as children's hand-eye coordination and muscle development are not yet perfect, and they cannot handle everything like adults do. Children need gradual guidance and the establishment of a sense of routine from teachers. In today's families, most only have one child, and nearly a few adults revolve around one child. With young people being busy with work, they often do not have time to take care of their children, resulting in the older generation taking care of the children. The older generation is very doting towards the children, leading to the children relying on their parents for everything, which can result in poor self-care skills. Teachers should not be impatient for immediate results but should guide the children step by step in establishing daily routines, such as knowing their student number and where to place their bag, cup, and bed. These need to be gradually guided and emphasized by the teachers. For example, when Bang Bang came to the kindergarten in mid-September, the other children could already proficiently place their bags, cups, and towels. However, Bang Bang could not do it correctly, kept



making mistakes, and did not recognize his student number. So, every day when Bang Bang came to the kindergarten, I warmly greeted him, told him the location of his bag and his student number, which is a 2 and a 3, and asked him to place it himself. When drinking water, I would emphasize that your student number is a 2 and a 3, and it should be placed in the last locker, pointing it out to him. After washing, I would again emphasize that your student number is a 2 and a 3, pointing out the location of the towel. In this way, with my daily exercises, by the second week of enrollment, Bang Bang no longer needed my reminders and could easily find the corresponding positions for his items on his own.

### **3.4. Methods for developing life habits in family**

The “Outline” points out: the family is an important partner of the kindergarten. As teachers, we need to recognize the position of home-school cooperation. Communication and cooperation with parents in kindergarten have always been highly valued. Both kindergarten education and family education are important components of early childhood education and are irreplaceable. The “Outline” points out: based on the principles of respect, equality, and cooperation, we should strive for parents’ understanding, support, active participation, and actively support and help parents improve their educational capabilities. Therefore, adhering to the principles of home-school cooperation and strengthening communication skills with parents is very important. When communicating with parents, the tone should be friendly, thinking from the perspective of parents, establishing two-way information, timely communicating and exchanging information about the child’s daily habits in the kindergarten, asking more about the child’s habits at home, and discussing and solving problems together with parents. At the same time, parents should be promoted on the benefits of cultivating good habits in children. Through forms such as WeChat parent groups and lectures, parents should be taught knowledge and cultivation methods related to good habits in children, so that parents can participate in the education of children. For individual special children, specific education should be formulated. Parents need to change their outdated views on daily routine education, and realize the importance of daily routines. Parents should be aware that the cultivation of daily habits and rules plays an important role in the future learning and development of children, maintaining consistency in two aspects: consistency between home and school, and consistency among family members. Encourage parents to actively and positively guide children in a healthy way, establish a healthy way to evaluate children, and it is important for parents to cultivate good character in children at home, which is the cornerstone of shaping good behavior habits and influences the formation of various habits in the daily routines of children in an imperceptible way. Encourage parents to cultivate children’s autonomy, do things within their capabilities, avoid excessive indulgence and pampering, cultivate the habits that children develop in kindergarten should also be consistent with those at home. In daily education, teachers and parents play different roles and need to jointly cultivate good behavior habits in children.

### **Disclosure statement**

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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