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# Research on the Influence of Family Environment on the Aesthetic Ability of Young Children

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**Abstract:** The family serves as the primary environment for young children's growth, and the quality of its construction is crucial for the initiation and development of their aesthetic abilities. The family environment is a complex system composed of multiple dimensions, including material conditions, activity practices, atmosphere immersion, and parental qualities, which collectively influence the four core aesthetic abilities of young children—perception, imagination, judgment, and creativity—laying the foundation for the formation of their aesthetic literacy. This study employs a case analysis method to explore the compositional characteristics of the family environment for children aged 3–6, the differences in the impact of various family environment types on their aesthetic abilities, and the pathways for optimizing the family environment. The analysis results indicate that: (1) There is a positive correlation between the development level of aesthetic abilities in children aged 3-6 and the degree of immersion in the family environment. Abundant family art material resources and frequent parent-child art activities can significantly enhance children's aesthetic abilities; (2) The creation of a family art atmosphere integrated into daily life positively promotes the long-term development of children's aesthetic abilities.

**Keywords:** Family environment; Young children; Aesthetic ability

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## 1. Introduction

In the field of preschool education, the development of children's aesthetic abilities is closely related to various factors. Without aesthetic abilities, it is impossible for potential aesthetic objects to emerge in consciousness, nor can there be aesthetic experiences or expressions, let alone the occurrence of any aesthetic activities. Therefore, aesthetic abilities occupy a central position in the formation of students' aesthetic qualities<sup>[1]</sup>. Based on existing experiences and teaching materials, people often summarize patterns from the developmental characteristics of children themselves; however, the factors influencing children's aesthetic abilities are multifaceted, and preschool education practitioners often overlook many perspectives. Adopting a child-centered approach means not only focusing on the children themselves but also paying attention to all aspects of their growth and development. This study aims to explore the relationship between children's aesthetic abilities and their family environment through an analysis of the development of children's aesthetic abilities and family environments. It seeks to comprehensively enrich the theoretical research perspectives in the fields of children's aesthetic development and family aesthetic education, thereby facilitating better application in the practice of preschool education.

## 2. Family material environment: Laying a solid foundation for aesthetic perception

The family material environment serves as the primary medium through which young children encounter and perceive beauty. The quantity, types, and suitability of resources available directly determine the starting point and breadth of children's accumulation of aesthetic experiences, playing a foundational role in the development of their aesthetic perception abilities. Rich and suitable family material resources, encompassing not only art-related resources but also aesthetic elements in daily life, can provide children with diverse aesthetic stimuli, helping them establish initial aesthetic cognition. The following is an excerpt from a family observation titled "Color Exploration Beside Picture Books":

While engaging in independent play in the living room, the young child first walked slowly along the neatly organized storage cabinets, with their gaze wandering over the harmoniously colored cartoon decorative paintings on the cabinet surfaces. Subsequently, the child voluntarily walked to the picture book corner, pulled out a children's picture book displayed on the bookshelf, and sat on the carpet to browse through it. During the browsing, the child repeatedly stroked the colorful illustrations in the picture book with their fingers, murmuring softly, "The yellow of the little duck is so bright", and "The flowers here are pink." The child also pointed at the shapes in the illustrations, saying, "The round sun", and "The square house." After about 10 minutes, the child put down the picture book, walked over to the nearby craft table, and picked up the paintbrushes and clay placed on the tabletop. First, the child pinched and pressed the clay with their fingers to feel its soft texture, and then touched the handles of the paintbrushes made of different materials one by one. During this time, the child noticed the potted pothos placed beside the craft table, reached out and gently touched the leaves, observed the patterns on the leaves, and then attempted to mold similar shapes with the clay, occasionally looking up to compare the details of the pothos leaves with their own clay creations <sup>[1]</sup>.

The process of reading picture books is essentially the process through which young children perceive the images and text within them. During reading, children develop certain expectations for the information conveyed by these visuals and texts, and they maintain keen attention and observation towards elements such as character depictions, color schemes, and lines <sup>[2]</sup>. In this activity, children progress from perceiving beauty to expressing it by observing the colors in picture books, touching creative tools, and interacting with natural greenery. Conversely, families with scarce material resources or lacking aesthetic planning restrict children's opportunities to encounter diverse forms of beauty. If the home environment is cluttered and disorganized, lacking basic aesthetic decorations and creative materials, children's aesthetic perception will be confined to fragmented scenes from daily life, making it difficult for them to form systematic aesthetic experiences and subsequently hindering the advanced development of their aesthetic abilities. Furthermore, the suitability of the material environment is crucial. Resources and aesthetic elements that align with the age characteristics of children aged 3–6 can lower the barriers to their aesthetic exploration and stimulate their willingness to actively perceive beauty. In contrast, overly adult-oriented or chaotic material environments are unlikely to nurture children's aesthetic development and may even interfere with their aesthetic cognition.

## 3. Family atmosphere environment: Shaping the spiritual core of aesthetic development

The family atmosphere environment constitutes the spiritual core of the family setting, shaping children's aesthetic orientations and value judgments through subtle and pervasive influences, thereby exerting a decisive impact on the depth and sustainability of their aesthetic ability development. The advantage of family aesthetic education in the new era lies in its close alignment with the laws of aesthetic cognition, naturally stimulating aesthetic interest and systematically enhancing aesthetic abilities through tangible family life scenarios (such as holiday decorations, household collaboration, and leisure interactions) <sup>[3]</sup>. The formation of such an atmosphere primarily stems from the comprehensive qualities, aesthetic attitudes, and family interpersonal relationships of parents. Parents with a certain level of aesthetic literacy can more accurately discover beauty in daily life and guide children to perceive it in appropriate ways. Parents' emphasis on and pursuit of beauty are conveyed to children through their daily words and actions, enabling children to form the

cognition that “beauty is worth exploring and pursuing”, thereby stimulating their intrinsic motivation to actively explore beauty. Meanwhile, harmonious and congenial family interpersonal relationships provide children with a relaxed and joyful growth environment, facilitating the generation of positive aesthetic emotional experiences. The following is an excerpt from a family observation titled “Light Blue Sky”:

After completing a painting at home in the afternoon, the child proactively approached the parent, who picked up the artwork and asked softly, “Why did you use light blue for the sky? What does this color remind you of?” The child pointed at the painting and said, “Because the sky in the morning is light and looks very comfortable.” The parent smiled and responded, “Yes, a light blue sky indeed makes people feel relaxed. You observed very carefully.” Subsequently, the child took the parent’s hand and pointed to the clouds outside the window, saying, “Mom, look, the sky beneath the clouds is also light blue. I want to add another cloud to my painting.” The parent nodded in agreement and handed over the paintbrush, saying, “Sure, you can paint what you imagine.” During this time, the parent also tidied up the scattered art supplies and gently reminded the child, “Put the art supplies away neatly so that our little desk looks more comfortable.” The child proactively came forward to help, categorizing the paintbrushes and placing them in the storage box.

Research indicates that a tastefully decorated, clean, and organized home environment can provide children with a living space that nurtures their young minds at an early age, enabling them to appreciate formal beauty sooner. Conversely, children growing up in cluttered and dirty homes tend to develop lazy habits and lack an aesthetic eye<sup>[4]</sup>. Through this case, it can be seen that by asking questions, parents can stimulate children’s aesthetic expression, deepen their color perception and observational awareness through affirmative responses, and guide children to reflect on their own aesthetic expressions, thereby enhancing their understanding of color beauty.

#### **4. Family activity environment: Promoting the advanced development of aesthetic abilities**

The family activity environment serves as the core setting for young children to translate their aesthetic perceptions into practical abilities. Through various interactive parent-child activities, it facilitates the progression of aesthetic abilities from “perception” to “application”, thereby strengthening the development of aesthetic imagination, judgment, and creativity. Regularly conducted parent-child activities, encompassing both specialized art activities and daily life activities infused with aesthetic elements, provide children with a practical platform to actively explore and express beauty. By engaging with diverse artistic mediums, children can appreciate beauty from multiple perspectives, preventing a narrowing of aesthetic interests. Additionally, parents can design aesthetic education plans tailored to their children’s interests and developmental needs, and gain insights into their children’s aesthetic growth through periodic assessments<sup>[5]</sup>. Moreover, everyday activities such as visiting parks to observe natural beauty and participating in home decorating also enable children to deepen their aesthetic perceptions through practice. The following is an excerpt from a family observation titled “Animals in the Great Forest”:

Sitting on the carpet, the parent and child took out a picture book depicting a forest scene and played accompanying children’s light music. The parent gently guided, “As we watch the little squirrel in the picture book jumping around, let’s listen to this music and discuss whether you think the music matches the scene.” The child stared at the picture book, gently nodding to the rhythm of the music, and after a moment, responded, “Yes! The music is soft, like the little squirrel walking slowly.” The parent inquired further, “Then, what should the music be like if the little squirrel starts running?” After some thought, the child said, “It should be fast and thumping.”

Subsequently, the parent took out two small musical instruments, a wooden fish and a maraca, and suggested, “Let’s imitate the sounds of the little squirrel walking and running.” The parent gently shook the maraca to produce a soft sound, saying, “This is the little squirrel walking.” The child followed suit, mimicking the gentle movements; then, the parent rapidly struck the wooden fish, saying, “This is the little squirrel running.” The child also increased the tempo of the striking, with an excited expression on their face. The parent then guided, “Let’s compose a piece of music called ‘A Day

in the *Life of a Little Squirrel*, starting with walking to find food and then running to hide.”

The child proactively assigned the instruments, saying, “I’ll use the maraca for walking, and Mom will use the wooden fish for running!” They played together in coordination. During the breaks in the performance, the child actively adjusted, saying, “The music for walking should be even softer; otherwise, it won’t sound like secretly finding food.” The parent agreed and adjusted accordingly. After the performance, the child excitedly said, “I want to add the sound of birds!” They then picked up an empty mineral water bottle and gently shook it, saying, “This sound is like birds chirping; adding it will make it sound even better.” The parent praised and encouraged, “Your idea is really creative! Let’s add it together and give it a try!”

Providing children with a rich array of aesthetic objects allows them to frequently notice and appreciate the various beautiful things in their surroundings and daily lives, as well as to come into contact with and initially appreciate the classic works of masters. This gradually accumulates aesthetic experiences and fosters a wealth of perceptual experiences and aesthetic sensibilities<sup>[6]</sup>. Through this case, it can be seen that the progressive interaction of listening, imitating, and creating effectively assists children in advancing from aesthetic perception to application. The parents’ precise guidance stimulates the child’s musical imagination and expressive desires, while the child deepens aesthetic judgment and enhances creative abilities through instrumental practice.

## **5. Educational recommendations**

### **5.1. Establish a tiered and categorized support system for family aesthetic environments**

Considering the varying economic conditions among different families and the differences in parents’ aesthetic abilities, it is necessary to create a tailored assistance system that accounts for different circumstances and categories. For families with limited financial resources, collaboration with communities and charitable organizations can be initiated to develop cost-effective aesthetic resource packages that explore their potential for aesthetic activities. Additionally, simple and easy-to-follow activity guides should be designed to enable these families to engage in aesthetic education activities without incurring significant expenses, thereby lowering the economic barriers. For families with uneven distribution of aesthetic resources, a “Handbook for Optimizing Family Aesthetic Environments” can be compiled, outlining the appropriate aesthetic resources for children of different age groups and guiding parents on how to integrate aesthetics into daily life so that children can experience beauty at all times. Establishing a mechanism for dynamically assessing family aesthetic environments is also crucial: utilizing both specific data indicators and narrative descriptions to regularly evaluate improvements in the family aesthetic environment ensures that this assistance system is both precise and effective over the long term.

### **5.2. Establish a collaborative community for cultivating aesthetic literacy through home-kindergarten co-education**

Break away from the traditional model of “kindergarten-led and family-supported” and create an equal and collaborative community for cultivating aesthetic literacy through home-kindergarten cooperation. On one hand, establish a “Family Aesthetic Education Research Workshop” platform, inviting parents to participate in the design of kindergarten aesthetic education curricula, transforming aesthetic practice cases from families into materials for collective activities in kindergartens, and facilitating the bidirectional flow of aesthetic education experiences between home and kindergarten. On the other hand, implement a “Parent Aesthetic Education Action Research Program”, guiding parents to document their family aesthetic education practices through action research. Researchers will regularly organize case discussions to help parents summarize patterns, optimize strategies, and enhance their reflective and practical abilities in aesthetic education. Additionally, establish a shared mechanism for home-kindergarten aesthetic development records, where both kindergartens and families simultaneously document children’s aesthetic expressions. Researchers will conduct cross-scenario analyses to develop personalized aesthetic development support plans for children, forming a closed loop of

“research-practice-feedback.”

### **5.3. Promote the integration of family aesthetic education into the teacher training system for preschool education**

It is essential to incorporate “the ability to guide families in conducting aesthetic education” into the core training content of preschool education majors, addressing the current gap in teacher training that focuses solely on kindergarten aesthetic education while neglecting instruction on how to guide families in this area. In terms of curriculum design, a compulsory course titled “Theory and Practice of Family Aesthetic Education” should be introduced to systematically elucidate the relationship between the family environment and children’s aesthetic development, methods for guiding families in aesthetic education, and strategies for collaboration between kindergartens and families in aesthetic education. In practical teaching, an internship platform linking kindergartens and families should be established to enable preschool education students to actively participate in guiding family aesthetic education practices, thereby enhancing their practical skills. For in-service preschool teachers, specialized training in family aesthetic education can be provided, featuring lectures by researchers and experienced aesthetic education teachers in the field. The training should focus on developing core competencies such as “diagnosing family aesthetic environments”, cultivating a group of family aesthetic education instructors with both solid theoretical knowledge and rich practical experience, thereby laying a professional foundation for collaborative aesthetic education efforts between kindergartens and families.

## **6. Conclusion**

The family’s material conditions, atmosphere, and activity environment collectively constitute a vital nurturing ground for the aesthetic development of young children. These three elements work in synergy to lay the foundation for the progression of children’s aesthetic abilities from perception to creation. By analyzing the educational value and practical cases of these three types of environments, this study has clarified the intrinsic connection between the family environment and the aesthetic development of young children, enriching the theoretical perspectives in related fields. Moving forward, it is essential to rely on educational recommendations such as constructing an integrated guidance system and creating a home-kindergarten interaction platform to promote collaborative efforts in aesthetic education between home and kindergarten. This will effectively translate research findings into practical momentum, assist young children in developing sound aesthetic literacy, and provide strong support for the high-quality development of preschool aesthetic education.

## **Disclosure statement**

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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