

# Labor in the game: The way of children's labor education

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**Abstract:** *Children's labor is different from adults, so it is particularly important to explore the labor education mode in order to suit for children's development. Children's labor and games are closely coupled. In theory, the proposition that man is a player provides the theoretical basis for children to work in games. In practice, Chen Heqin's game-like labor education provides successful experience. Working in games is conducive to stimulating children's enthusiasm to participate in work, promoting children's social development and cultivating children's complete personality. We can cultivate children's interest in work through the spirit of play, enrich children's work experience through the game content, guide children's work habits through the game environment, and practice the strategy of children's labor education.*

**Keywords:** *Children; Labor education; Games; Strategies*

## 1. Introduction

The comprehensive and harmonious development of human beings must be built on the basis of labor education. Otherwise, education will be impossible. Labor is something that permeates everywhere. Labor is of great significance to the all-round development of human beings, and it is the basis for a person's development. What's more, it's vital for the development of children. Montessori also pointed out that work is what children are born to do.

Preschool education is the starting point of the whole process of talent training and the foundation stage of labor education, so we should pay attention to children's labor education. However, here is a difference between children's labor and the adult's labor. At the preschool stage, labor education of children can not be required by the standards of adults, so it is particularly important to find a suitable way of labor education. With the current situation of children's labor education, it is found that the form and content of children's labor education are monotonous and boring. The labor practices in which children participate are mostly cleaning, sorting things, weeding on campus, etc. Students have low enthusiasm for labor, and the evaluation of students' labor achievements is also limited to the physical production. It neglects the cultivation of labor attitude, collective cooperation and social responsibility in the process of labor. Therefore, it is necessary to constantly explore ways of working that can make children happy.

## 2. The dialectical and unified relationship between games and labor

There is a dialectical unity between play and labor. Play is a kind of labor in the eyes of children, and there is no form of play that is not modeled on some serious work. The needs of life compel man to Labour, and later he comes to regard the practical use of his power as a pleasure. Games are born and formed from labor. Some traditional games have their origins in serious and intense labor. At the beginning, the purpose of these activities is to meet the needs of material life. However, with the improvement of social productive forces, people no longer pay all labor for material life, so productive labor can be transformed into game activities.

### 2.1. "Man is the player" provides a theoretical basis

Theoretically, the hypothesis of "game man" lays the theoretical foundation for labor in the game. Schiller once pointed out that man is a real person only when he is playing. This shows that people have the nature of play. Play is no longer just entertainment or play for children, but a way and proof for the

full display of human's free nature and complete personality. In a certain sense, "play" means "the birth of human beings" and "the return of humanity".<sup>[1]</sup> Shi Zhongying believes that playing is the nature of children. The urge to play is not only expressed in human children, but also throughout human life, which is human nature, and children are made up of different types of play.

Children need to participate in games and play in the role of the game. The child is always in the role of play, to understand the child is to understand the game in which the child participates, and in turn, to understand the game in which the child participates is to understand the child in the game. Only by understanding what children do, think in games can we truly understand their growth. The deprivation or disappearance of games may put children at risk. It can be seen that the game is not only a kind of ordinary recreational activities in children's daily life, but also the requirement of children's inner nature and the basic way for children to grow up.

A large number of research experience show that participating in educational games and enjoying the pleasure given by educational games is another "purpose" for children to participate in educational activities. Since children can only "confirm" themselves and become themselves in the game, then the education of children should fully show "playfulness", so that the whole body and mind of children are often in a state of play, the design of educational activities, the creation of educational environment should be more in line with the nature of children's play. Therefore, children's labor education should be carried out in games, and children's labor concept and labor skills should be cultivated through gamified labor.

## ***2.2. Chen Heqin's game-style labor education method provides practical reference***

In practice, Chen Heqin demonstrated the feasibility and effectiveness of labor in game. Chen Heqin stressed that children are born active and good at games. They have a "game heart", and games are children's second life. According to Chen Heqin advocated "game type labor education law", Parents should carry out children's family labor education in an experiential way. Chen Heqin personally demonstrated the value of experiential labor education through games: "Once, the children in my family spread their books on the floor and did business games. Soon, when it was almost time to eat, I repeatedly asked him to put away his book, but he always refused. I'd pile up the books, and as I piled them up, I'd say, "Hi ho," "hi ho." He heard this 'hey-ho' sound, which triggered his previous experience of carrying things, and he happily helped to pack them up."<sup>[2]</sup> Chen Heqin stressed that the method of teaching children with games is the easiest to achieve results, and it can reduce a lot of pain and trouble.

## **3. The value of labor in the game**

Labor is the inherent attribute of human beings, the most fundamental feature of human beings, and the means of human existence. Labor education is of great significance to children's development. In the new era children's labor education should fully experience the labor process through practical activities, and let children learn to respect and love labor. As the center of children's life world, games integrate games and labor in the way that children know and understand the world. Working in games can help stimulate children's enthusiasm to participate in labor and promote children's social development.

### ***3.1. It is conducive to stimulating the enthusiasm of children to participate in labor***

The true essence of a game is to free the player from tension in the pursuit of a goal. The game is a kind of spontaneous voluntary activity without external purpose that makes the player feel happy and interesting, and the player is also subject to the positive constraints of the game when playing the game.<sup>[3]</sup> The reason why children do not feel depressed in the process of play is that the game has no external purpose, children gain fun and self-spiritual satisfaction through the game, and this internal satisfaction is the purpose of children's play. Children's labor education comes from real life, and is closely related to life, and children's labor is hidden in their daily life. For children, the game occupies most of the children's life, the children's labor process is actually hidden in the game process, a variety of toys contain a variety of labor tools, such as children's independent dressing, eating, making bed. All of these exercise children's labor ability. Interest is the main driving force for children to participate in games, and children get fun and self-satisfaction in games, with entertainment, freedom and no external purpose, which can make children immersed in games. Games are entertaining, free and without external purpose, which can immerse children in games. The process of labor is full of fun, independence, creativity and willfulness for children. Transforming labor into games and integrating labor education into games is conducive to

enhancing children's immersion in games and improving children's enthusiasm for work.

### ***3.2. It is conducive to promoting the social development of children***

Children's social development mainly refers to the process of mastering social norms, acquiring certain social skills and social morality, internalizing social roles, and adapting to social life through social interaction. A game is an activity in which the players voluntarily participate readily accept the rules of the game. Who doesn't take the game seriously is the destroyer of the game. People are social and cultural. As a social person, we cannot escape from the collective. We live in the society all the time, keep interacting with others, and constantly acquire social experience to maintain social interaction. According to Goffman's dramatization, each of us is a born "actor", always playing the role given to us by society on a stage built by society. The operation of society and the relationship between people need to abide by certain norms to be harmonious and orderly, so it is very important to cultivate children's rational awareness of rules. In the game, children perceive the importance of rules and abide by the rules, which is conducive to training children to consciously abide by the norms and gradually become the social citizens expected by the society. Social role play develops the ability of individuals to generalize about the important nature of social roles. In addition to the real practice, the game recreates a certain phenomenon of life in action. In this activity, children understand, learn and master the basic social relations between people by virtue of language and role. Games develop children's language ability, cognitive ability, practical ability and communication ability by simulating the social relations between people, and help children grasp the social moral norms of solidarity, cooperation, friendship and mutual assistance and develop the ability to adapt to social life.

### ***3.3. It is conducive to cultivating children's perfect personality***

On 20 November, 1989, the 44th Session of the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which clearly states that play and recreation are the rights of the child and that the primary purpose of education is the fullest development of the child's personality, intellect and physical and mental capacity. Kairingsteiner proposed that labor education can cultivate children's character, and is a kind of personality education. In play-like labor, children can get satisfaction. They have to go through the process of overcoming difficulties, independent judgment, conscientiously completing tasks and achieving success. In this process, the overall quality of the child is improved, such as the quality of will, observation ability and thinking ability. High-quality child labor education can make children experience individual growth, enjoy spiritual pleasure, and achieve complete growth.<sup>[4]</sup> For example, in children's planting activities, children need to complete tillage, watering, weeding and other steps. During this process, children engage in physical activity, careful observation, and social interaction. In order to accomplish this task, children need to devote themselves to it. So it cultivates the complete personality of the child. Froebel believes that the play is the best way to develop children's creativity. Because play is not only the process of object internalization, but also the process of subject externalization. The idea that children are just looking for entertainment when they play is a big mistake. Play is the first method of mental development of the child, it is the first effort to understand the external world, to accumulate initial experience from things and facts, and to exercise physical and mental abilities.

## **4. Strategies to promote the integration of labor education and games**

Human beings are players, and this is even more evident in children. Since the child does not yet have a real purpose, has not fully mastered the technique of imitating adult activities, and assumes adult tasks out of a degree of consciousness which has not yet developed to the maturity which the adult of the time has attained, his early participation in Labour can only be a kind of play-like act. Here the game and labor are inseparable. Rousseau believes that human education should be carried out according to the growth of the child and the natural development of the human heart. Education away from fairy tales, nursery rhymes, dreams, games is also far away from the education of children.<sup>[5]</sup> Children are young. Their intellectual development is not complete, and their attention span and willpower are not strong enough. Therefore, in the form of games for labor, which is beneficial to improve the labor interest of children. When children's interest in labor is enhanced, they can experience more labor content, obtain more labor experience, so as to form good work habits.

#### ***4.1. Cultivate interest in labor with the spirit of game***

Play is a free activity. A game that requires obedience will no longer be a game, but a game imitated by labor. Adults and children have different attitudes towards work. For adults, participation in labor is to meet the needs of life. However, it is a pleasure for the children to take part in the labour. Freedom and autonomy are the spirit of children's play. When carrying out labor education, teachers should avoid forcing children to work, give full play to the attraction of games to children, and imply labor tasks in game activities, so that children can acquire the cognition of labor through interesting and pleasant game experience, complete labor in an excited state, and make use of the subject consciousness in the game. Help children form a correct concept of labor. Help children experience the fun of labor, and constantly stimulate children's interest in labor. Let children form a respect for labor, love of labor emotion. So as to continuously improve children's labor knowledge, labor skills and labor literacy, so as to continuously improve children's labor knowledge, labor skills and labor literacy.

#### ***4.2. Enrich the labor experience with the game content***

Life experiences and role play can help young children learn about social service agencies and jobs that are close to them. Such as shopping malls, post offices and hospitals. Leading children to experience the services of these organizations will help children develop a sense of respect for the work of staff and cherish the results of work. Through diversified occupational role-playing games, children can know different workers, understand the working environment, labor characteristics and labor content of different workers, and enrich children's labor experience and cultivate children's labor skills through labor practice experience. In different occupational role playing, children are allowed to taste the labor content of different workers and experience the hardships of workers, so as to cultivate children's respect for labor and workers and be able to bear hardships and endure hard work. For example, children playing a doctor in the game can understand the doctor's work, understand the doctor's hardships. It develops the habit of maintaining health and caring for physical health. Gamified planting and breeding enables children to learn the labor skills of planting and breeding, understand the relationship between labor and plant growth in the labor process of soil loosening, watering, fertilizing, feeding, changing water and so on, and enjoy the joy brought by labor.

#### ***4.3. Guide the formation of labor habits with the game environment***

Montessori believes that it is through the interactive experience with the environment that children acquire the spiritual nutrition needed to build spirits. This shows that all aspects of children's development are influenced by the environment, so adults should take the environment as an important means of education to build an appropriate environment for children to promote their development. Environmental construction can be divided into dominant environment and recessive environment. Hidden environment creation is mainly the use the space to create a working atmosphere. Parents can create a gamified environment on the wall of the family, in order to attract children's interest, cultivate children's labor emotion, guide children to develop good working habits. For example, post clear and lovely labor operation flow charts to guide children to work correctly. Explicit environment creation mainly refers to adults through demonstration, subtly influence children to develop good working habits. For example, parents could tell children that the garbage is a baby, the trash is the home of the garbage baby. Every time the garbage is thrown into the trash can, the garbage baby is sent home. Children are working in the game, avoiding the boredom of labor, increasing the fun of labor, getting rid of task-driven impatience, and making children enjoy it.

Montessori stressed that work is what children are born to do. Play is the life state and existence mode of children, and the way in which they interact with the world. Heizinga believed that the meaning of games could not be explained by the needs of the biological level and the needs of practical interests. The meaning of the game is the display and release of vitality, which brings great pleasure to the subject of the game and lets the onlookers share their happiness. Games are not just about playing, but about all the same pleasurable states of unity of mind and body as playing. Unlike adults, children do not work for the production of material good, but for the manifestation and development of their nature. In theory, labor education can achieve the state of "pleasing to the ear" and "pleasing to the spirit". Therefore, educators should give full play to the role of games and adopt the way suitable for children's natural development to carry out labor education.

## 5. Conclusions

As an important content in children's growth and development, labor has rich educational implications. By clarifying the value of labor education in games, it will help educators develop a new perspective, and help them better organize labor activities and help children achieve more.

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