**Course Essay of Chongqing University**

**Parents should Avoid Excessive Intervention when Children are Playing**



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Parents’ intervention when children are playing is necessary. Playing is not spontaneous for a child, especially at a young age, so parents should play a role of leader and motivator. Also, some of the children’s improper behaviors in playing, such as fighting and drinking wines should be promptly checked. These interventions are proper. However, walking in Chinese parks, we can easily witness children playing by their “caring, strong and intelligent” parents constantly asking “Baby, are you thirsty? Don’t run. Kite is a better toy than mud. Clay should be played like this...” To children, reminding too frequently, teaching too many and regulating strictly on children’s way of playing are all excessive interventions. And these excessive interventions bring about many drawbacks ranging from making children more fragile to frustration to limiting independent exploration as well as lowering the effect of learning in games. Thus, parents’ excessive intervention in children when they are playing should be avoided.

As one of the main excessive interventions of parents, constantly reminding the children of risks and even cutting them off from injury and dangers makes children weaker, because children neither get the experience of fall nor have enough courage faced with frustration. As an old saying goes, what didn’t kill me makes me stronger. When learning to walk at a young age, no one succeeded in walking without thousands of falls (Yu.Y, 2011). When playing as a teenager, people experience various injuries and risks, becoming wiser to cope with frustration and gradually adapting to failure. Then growing up to be older, encountering greater wind and rain in life, the ever scarred child can get over one challenge after another. Frustration at a young age stimulates children’s potential when they are in difficulties and helps them face the difficulties more actively (Xie.H, 2021), therefore experience of frustration is important. What’s more, continuously strengthening children’s awareness of risks will naturally spawn fear of risks and convey one message that risks are everywhere (Huang.X, 2019), which in turn lowers their courage to face the challenges. To sum up, it is unwise for parents to excessively remind and protect children who are playing.

Another kind of excessive intervention children encounter is being taught everything in playing, for lack of experience in life, by their parents. But it only results in limitation of independent exploration. Alison Gopnik (n.d.), American professor of psychology, carried out an experiment. He invited 2 groups of children to a room with a complex device in it. Group A watched an adult clumsily try every method to turn on the device while Group B listened to an adult explaining the way to turn it on specifically. Then getting in touch with another device of the same complexity, group A turn it on successfully through active attempts and efforts while group B gave up after very few attempts, asking for further instruction of the adults. We can come to a conclusion that, the more specifically the teaching process is, the less children will do to explore other aspects of the item being taught. It’s just like when you are driving a car on an unfamiliar road, you turn to go along with the road shown by the navigation, instead of driving out of the road and into the forest to open up a way yourself. But for children, exploration does matter. As Alison Gopnik (2011) stresses, carrying out various experiments can get enormous information for the children’s future use. That is why, responsible as teaching progress is, children shouldn’t be excessively taught. Also, we shouldn’t require children to focus on one single thing like an adult brain does, since children are good at digesting information from various sources(Alison, 2011).

Some parents argue that if they don’t intervene, children will play in a single, repetitive and meaningless way like digging mud, in which they think children can’t get improved enough (Gu.C & Chen.P, 2021). However, Wei Feng (2021), head of kindergarten of China Welfare Association, mentions that Human behavior is complex and positive leading helps people form more meaningful behaviors. Xingzhen Huang (2019), parent-child psychologist, shared her experience on Wetchat. Once she took the children to mountain climbing, the children showed great interest in picking golden leaves in the mountain foot. Having bought the cable car tickets, Huang told the children “more fun is on the top of the mountain”. But the children insisted that “it was more fun picking leaves”. As a result, Huang refunded the tickets and a packet of leaves are collected, with children’s stories written on them. Huang (2019) mentioned, children may not be interested in things adults like, but things adults are bored with can be found fun by children. Thus, no meaningless way of playing exists, since any way involves so many challenges and problems waiting for children to find, analyse and solve. Such process of gaining experiences is a process of growth. What matters is children’s freedom to choose because it inspires curiosity and passion for learning and it is with interest that children can get the best teacher to improve. To sum up, respecting children’s own way of playing and offering encouragement will spark significant learning.

Generally speaking, excessive intervention makes children more fragile to frustration, limits their independent exploration and lowers their effect of learning in games. The book, *Understanding Waldorf Education: Teaching from the Inside out*, points out that play is to children what work is to adults. Only when a child’s playing is guaranteed and fulfilled can he grow up to be a happy, positive and productive man. Therefore, dear parents, do not let your intervention in children’s playing originate from the wish to better the children but result in limiting them. Let’s avoid excessive intervention and allow children to fully enjoy the playing and then enjoy a happy life!

(1027 words)

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