

Development Characteristics and Enlightenment of Inclusive Early Childhood Education in the United States

Wei Han

Urban Vocational College of Sichuan, Chengdu.6010.China

Abstract. Inclusive education is a continuous educational process, that is, accepting all students, opposing discrimination and exclusion, promoting active participation, focusing on collective cooperation and meeting different needs. Inclusive education is a new trend of thought in international education, which originated in the Civil Rights Movement in 1950s. American inclusive education has gone through three stages of development: returning to mainstream education, supporting special education actively by general education, and inclusive education. Three forms of integration are adopted: full integration, semi-integration and reverse integration. The outstanding feature is that the Government has enacted laws and policies to guarantee children's equal access to education, and to meet the different development needs of children by providing education that gives adequate assistance and support to all children. The development of inclusive preschool education in our country needs to be carried out from the aspects of concept, teachers, policies, parents, funds and so on.

Keywords: Early Childhood Education; Inclusive Education; United States.

1. Introduction

Inclusive education is the development trend of international education, which leads the educational reform and development of all countries in the world. In the field of early childhood education, countries have carried out relevant research and practice of inclusive early childhood education. The United States has made great achievements in inclusive preschool education, which has important enlightenment and reference significance for the development of inclusive kindergarten education in our country.

2. Development of Inclusive Kindergarten Education in the United States

The inclusive education in the United States was developed earlier and developed rapidly, and achieved fruitful results. Preschool inclusive education has a history of more than 50 years, and has achieved great development results, which provides valuable experience for other countries to carry out preschool inclusive education practice.

2.1. Development Stage of Inclusive Education in the United States

American inclusive education thought can be traced back to a series of social movements launched by Western people in the period of Western Renaissance and French Enlightenment, and directly derived from the spirit of the American Civil Rights Movement since 1950s. The civil rights movement in the United States called for democratic equality and human dignity, put forward the slogan "Separation is inequality", and demanded that all races and groups should participate equally in social life. One of the concrete manifestations of this movement is to oppose the exclusion of person with a disability and to strive for equal access to education for the disabled. Finally, under the combined pressure of public opinion and professional organizations, the Federal Court finally recognized that separation was inequality and advocated the inclusion of physically handicapped children in ordinary schools as much as possible. With the civil rights movement, inclusive education in the United States has been gradually valued and developed by the society. In addition, the development of inclusive education in the United States is closely related to the inherent requirements of the development of special education and the emerging international educational trend. The



inclusive education in the United States has also been developed and perfected under the reflection of special education on a series of social problems such as segregated education, such as the inability of the disabled to integrate into mainstream society and hatred of society, and under the promotion of international educational ideas such as education for understanding, lifelong education, and education for all. It began in the 1970s and experienced three stages of development: returning to mainstream education, supporting special education actively by general education and inclusive education.

2.1.1. Return to Mainstream Education

The "Education for ALL Disabled Children Act" passed by the U.S. Congress in 1975 marked the beginning of the movement back to mainstream education in the United States. The bill requires schools to provide appropriate education for all handicapped students, but mainly for those with mild disabilities. The idea of a return to mainstream education is to maximize the placement of disabled students in ordinary classes, where they can study and live together with normal children. The basic approach is that special students participate with ordinary students in non-academic subjects in the general education programme, such as art, sports and music. The study of the main subjects continues to take place in separate special education classes. Although the movement of returning to mainstream education has broken the complete separation of special children and normal children's education models in traditional education, it has not solved the problem of the relationship between general education and special education. General education only accepts students with special educational needs within a certain scope.

2.1.2. General Education Actively Supports the Special Education Stage

Many educators and parents can't tolerate the slow pace of reform and demand for expanding the scope of special education services. Under this background, a new round of special education reform movement was started in the mid-1980s. The core issues of the movement are the way of educating students, the structure and organization of special education and the relationship between special education and general education. In order to explore the feasibility of general education serving students with mild ability impairments, the reform of general education teaching plan was tried. The aim is to integrate general and special education and to create a unified education system. However, due to the lack of active participation of the general education community, the reform movement initiated by the special education community cannot achieve the goal of the reform of the whole education system. Although this reform movement lasted not long, it had a great influence on the inclusive education reform that began in the late 1980s.

2.1.3. Inclusive Education Stage

In the late 1980s, advocates representing the interests of students with severe and multiple abilities began to explore how to transfer these students from special schools to special classes in nearby ordinary schools. They began to question the separation of general education and special education theoretically, and called on schools to abolish the separation system of special education by the degree of defect, advocating that all students with disabilities should be mixed with other students and that they should be provided with auxiliary help and services in general education classes. The inclusive education reform movement began. Inclusive education involves the reform of the whole school education system, which is a re-recognition of the nature of special education and a re-construction of the education system. Its core ideas are: (1) To promote the policy of admission to nearby schools, allowing special students to enter nearby schools to study. (2) Special pupils shall be taught in general education classes corresponding to their age and grade. Students may not spend all their time in their classes, and students may receive special teaching and coaching in resource classrooms or other environments when needed. (3) Educators mainly provide educational support and services for special students in general education classes, and integrate special teaching methods and resources into general education classrooms, including the adjustment of teaching methods, the revision of curriculum and the addition of additional resources. At present, schools that have implemented inclusive education are placing special students in general education and exploring the reconstruction of schools for the benefit of all students.

The development of inclusive education in the United States has gone beyond the scope of special education, and it has put forward a comprehensive reform of general education, which will have a great influence on the reform of the whole school education system in the United States on a deeper level.

2.2. Experience in Inclusive Early Childhood Education in the United States

Looking through the development and practice of inclusive education in American kindergartens, we find that the outstanding characteristics of inclusive education are that the government guarantees children's equal educational opportunities by formulating laws and policies, and meets children's different development needs by providing education that gives full help and support to all children. For this reason, the inclusive education of kindergartens has explored the teaching mode of teamwork, individualized education plan for children's special needs and flexible and diverse placement forms for children with special needs. The experience of inclusive preschool education in the United States is of great significance to the development of inclusive kindergarten education in China.

2.2.1. Legislation Guarantees the Implementation of Inclusive Education in Kindergartens and Establishes Guiding Educational Policies

Regulations and policies are the guarantee of inclusive education in kindergartens. First of all, the state should provide all children with fair opportunities for education through the formulation of laws and regulations, guarantee all children's equal development and right to education, and provide education that gives all children full assistance and support. Secondly, the government promotes the implementation of inclusive education in kindergartens by formulating and introducing laws and policies related to inclusive education in kindergartens. With the constraints and guarantees of relevant laws and regulations, kindergartens have to implement inclusive education according to law. For example, the relevant legislation of the United States stipulates that all special preschool children aged 3-5 have the right to free and inclusive preschool education and to enter early education services for ordinary children. Legislation like this ensures that kindergartens cannot say "no" when facing special children entering the park. Finally, in order to implement the inclusive education in kindergartens, the relevant government departments should establish the educational policy with good guiding role and introduce the corresponding implementation outline. The formulation of the policy or implementation program of inclusive education in kindergartens can provide unified, clear and specific guidance for the implementation of inclusive education in kindergartens. Kindergartens implement inclusive education "with rules to follow", will not be at a loss in the face of inclusive education. For example, the "Head start" program in the United States, the "sure start" program in United Kingdom and inclusive preschool education in Japan are all guided by clear and well-directed guidelines. Another example is the "Outline for the Implementation of Preschool Integrated Education" and the "Essentials of Kindergarten Education" formulated by Japan are both in the form of outlines and have set guidelines and objectives, which are conducive to the implementation of inclusive kindergarten education.

2.2.2. Perfecting the Form of Education and Building a Comprehensive Service Education System

Children with special needs receive care and education in the same class as ordinary children, which is a huge challenge for kindergarten teachers when they arrive. First of all, because different children have different biopsychological development characteristics and learning styles, the educational activities suitable for ordinary children are not necessarily suitable for special children. Secondly, due to the limitation of professional knowledge and educational experience, kindergarten teachers cannot meet the different needs of all children, especially special children, in their daily life and educational activities. In order to meet the development needs of all children, relevant preschool education workers are required to seek help, change teaching strategies, enrich education channels and methods, and provide education suitable for every child, especially special children.

American kindergarten inclusive education is in the forefront of the world, and its advanced experience enlightens us to build a comprehensive service education system to meet the needs of different children and meet their development. Concretely reflected in the following aspects: First, the formulation of individualized education plans, individualized guidance. Due to the particularity of special children's needs, preschool education workers should formulate individual education plans, design individualized education programs, conduct individual guidance for special children according to the characteristics of each special child's physical and mental development, and adopt different intervention strategies for different types of special children. Second, provide additional support and special services for special children. Many children, especially special children, need special services and training, such as psychological counseling, early identification, rehabilitation training, family counseling, etc. Third, teachers should rationally plan the time for special children to receive general and special education, and arrange for special children to go to resource classrooms to receive special counseling and special training according to their needs. Resource classrooms have special education classes, rehabilitation training centers and other forms. Fourthly, flexible placement and education forms should be adopted for special children. There are many forms of special child placement. If special children do not benefit from ordinary classes because of the serious obstacles, they may consider transferring special children to special classes for training. If special children in special education classes have greatly improved their learning abilities after a period of training, they may also be considered for transfer to ordinary classes for care and education with ordinary children. The form of placement and education for special children should be determined according to the needs of special children.

Only a comprehensive education system can provide assistance and support to all children, meet their different needs and promote their development. Therefore, inclusive education in kindergartens must perfect the educational form and build a comprehensive service education system.

2.2.3. Integrate Social Resources, Build Social Support System, and Form Teamwork Mode

Kindergarten inclusive education is an interdisciplinary system engineering, relying on the strength of kindergarten teachers alone cannot carry out inclusive education well, need the cooperation and support of all social institutions and personnel. The experience of inclusive education in kindergartens in the United States enlightens us that not only the inclusive education centers and relevant government institutions in their countries guide the development of inclusive education in kindergartens, but also in the practice of inclusive education in kindergartens, A team work model of teachers, parents, interdisciplinary experts and professionals working together for early childhood care and education has also been developed.

Preschool special children and kindergartens in social relations should seek social support and help. First of all, relevant government departments, such as education departments, civil affairs, disabled people's federations, educational research institutions, special education schools, and medical organizations, have certain relations and ties with kindergartens in implementing inclusive education. On the one hand, kindergartens should seek help and support from these institutions in implementing inclusive education. On the other hand, in order to promote the implementation of inclusive education in kindergartens, these institutions should strengthen contacts, coordinate and cooperate with each other, and do a good job in supporting and assisting. Secondly, although teachers are direct practitioners of inclusive education in kindergartens, relevant preschool workers such as headmasters, preschool education experts, other discipline experts such as educational psychologists, special education experts, and other professionals such as medical personnel, special education teachers, etc. There are volunteers, social workers, parents and other social personnel to the implementation of kindergarten inclusive education to help and support the role. Kindergartens should seek the help and support of these social personnel to implement inclusive education, integrate these resources, make them perform their own duties, cooperate with each other, and form a common and cooperative work mode. Finally, kindergartens should attach importance to parental participation and seek community support, and use community resources to promote inclusive education. For the implementation and development of inclusive education in kindergartens and for the education and development of all

children, the support and help of social forces is undoubtedly enormous. In addition, in the process of implementing inclusive preschool education, the United States has formed professionals such as "preschool special education workers", "service coordinators", "integration promoters" and special education administrators". These professionals play an important role in the implementation and development of inclusive kindergarten education. In the process of implementing inclusive education, kindergartens in our country may as well learn from the experience of the United States and seek and train these professionals according to their own needs.

3. Inspiration of Inclusive Preschool Education in the United States to Our Country

Inclusive education is a new trend of educational thought and a trend of international educational development. However, the inclusive kindergarten education in our country started late and developed slowly. It faces many challenges in its implementation, mainly from the aspects of concept consciousness, teacher level and economic foundation. The development of inclusive kindergarten education in the United States has inspired the early childhood education in our country in the following aspects.

3.1. Attach Importance to the Cultivation of Inclusive Education Concept

Concept consciousness is an important factor that affects the smooth and comprehensive implementation of inclusive education in kindergartens. According to the history and present situation of inclusive preschool education in the United States, establishing and popularizing the correct concept about special children and inclusive education is an important condition for the development of inclusive preschool education. This is because the concept of inclusive education among preschool workers, parents and all levels of society directly affects the practice of inclusive preschool education. First of all, American society has the pursuit of democratic and equal social and cultural values, and the government and society spare no effort to advocate the idea of accepting and understanding special children, which has effectively promoted the development of inclusive education in the United States. Secondly, the American Department of Special Children and the National Association for Early Childhood Education have vigorously promoted inclusive early childhood education, which has made the concept of inclusive education deeply rooted in the hearts of the people. Finally, in the United States, the establishment of family support and service programs such as the "first start" program and the individualized family education program has strengthened parents' confidence in inclusive early childhood education. The correct concept of inclusive education has been established in all circles of American society, which has promoted the development of inclusive preschool education in the United States.

At present, the support and recognition of inclusive education in kindergartens are not enough, which is related to the lack of public understanding of children with special needs and the lack of understanding of inclusive education concept. Society lacks a correct understanding of special children. Discrimination and prejudice against the person with a disability is widespread and the public is not fully accepting the right to education and other equal rights for the handicapped. As for the concept of inclusive education in kindergartens, the public generally lacks understanding of it, even education decision makers and preschool educators lack a correct understanding of the concept and connotation, let alone ordinary people. Under the premise of the general lack of understanding and understanding of inclusive education, the development of inclusive education in kindergartens in our country is difficult. Therefore, in order to promote the development of inclusive preschool education in our country, we must cultivate the correct concept of inclusive education among the public.

3.2. Attach Importance to the Construction of Teaching Staff

The implementation of inclusive education in kindergartens not only requires renewal of ideas, but also requires reform of curriculum and teaching methods, which puts forward new requirements for the professional quality of kindergarten teachers and poses new challenges to the professional

development of teachers. Preschool teachers are direct practitioners of inclusive education in kindergartens. To implement inclusive education, teachers need to master professional knowledge and some teaching skills related to inclusive education. However, in our country, "the current teachers generally lack of inclusive education literacy, reflected in inclusive education concept, inclusive education knowledge, inclusive education skills and ability. At present, many teachers in our country are unfamiliar with inclusive education. Many teachers' understanding of inclusive education is only superficial and do not understand its connotation. Even some teachers have never heard of this educational concept. In addition, the more common concept is that children with special needs are "problem children", for these children, special education is the effective education for them.

In our country, first of all, the training of ordinary kindergarten teachers and the training of special education teachers are separated. Secondly, ordinary normal colleges and universities rarely offer special education courses, which leads to the fact that ordinary kindergarten teachers have little or no contact with special education courses and training during school. Preschool teachers who have joined the workforce have little contact with the theory and training of special and inclusive education. As a result, kindergarten teachers in our country generally do not have the professional knowledge and skills related to preschool special children's education, and generally lack the knowledge reserve and teaching skills related to inclusive education. The lack of professional kindergarten teachers is one of the biggest obstacles to the implementation of inclusive kindergarten education in our country.

The development of inclusive preschool education in the United States attaches great importance to the training of professional teachers. "Research by many American scholars has shown that integrated preschool education can be truly successful only when all preschool teachers are properly trained to provide high quality supportive services to special preschool children, and at the same time, there is more interaction between ordinary children and special preschool children. "Even teachers believe that children can make progress in kindergarten integration classes only if the teaching staff is improved and more and better support is provided.

Therefore, in order to make good progress in inclusive education in kindergartens in our country, we need to attach importance to the training of professional kindergarten teachers and improve the professional level of kindergarten teachers through training and other ways.

3.3. Obtaining the Support and Cooperation of Parents

Parents are the birthers and nurturers of children. Parents' ideas and attitudes are important factors affecting inclusive education in kindergartens. Parents' support and cooperation are the guarantee for the smooth implementation of inclusive education in kindergartens. The source of students is the lifeblood of kindergarten survival, and the choice of parents determines the source of students in kindergarten. If an ordinary kindergarten implements inclusive education and enrolls special children with the park, parents of ordinary children may influence the source of students by not choosing the park to let their children enter the park, and parents of special children may also directly affect the source of students by choosing special schools rather than ordinary kindergartens.

It can be seen that the decision of parents of ordinary children and parents of special children directly affects the implementation of inclusive education in kindergartens. Decisions are dominated by ideas, and parents' understanding and understanding of preschool special children and kindergarten inclusive education directly affects the implementation of kindergarten inclusive education. According to relevant data, both parents of special children and parents of normal children have doubts about studying in class and their attitude is generally negative. Parents of children in general have a neutral attitude towards the implementation of inclusive education and do not understand the positive role of integrated education. Parents of special children often send their children to special schools rather than ordinary kindergartens in order to avoid the unusual eyes of the outside world and under their own pressure. Under the general opposition or negative attitude of parents, inclusive education in kindergartens is difficult to implement. It can be seen that the inclusive education in

kindergartens in our country needs to correct the wrong ideas of parents and obtain the support and cooperation of parents.

3.4. Provide Adequate Financial Security

Economic conditions and material basis are one of the necessary conditions for the development of inclusive education in kindergartens. The American government attaches great importance to the financial investment in inclusive kindergarten education and guarantees it from the legal angle, which is one of the important reasons why inclusive kindergarten education is in the forefront of the world. For example, in the United States, preschool special children can access education services at "Leading" funded preschool institutions, public kindergartens, and preschool facilities attached to the community. The Law on the Education of All Disabled Children, which was subsequently amended, required free and appropriate education for all children aged 3 to 5 years with developmental disabilities, and provided that public kindergartens should establish preschool programmes or contract with outside institutions to develop preschool programmes, Otherwise, the federal government will not subsidize preschool education. In addition, if schools implement the six principles of IDEA, the federal government provides funds to help schools and families pay for the education and services of special children. It can be seen that in order to promote the implementation of inclusive education in kindergartens, the government needs to increase the financial investment in inclusive education in kindergartens.

However, the lack of understanding of kindergarten inclusive education in our society has also provided little support for kindergarten inclusive education. The lack of funds for inclusive education in kindergartens in our country affects the improvement and completeness of kindergarten facilities and equipment, the renewal and purchase of teaching materials and teaching aids, and the professional study and training of teachers. Inadequate funds have led to kindergartens' ability to develop inclusive education, even if they are intentional. It can be seen that the financial problem is a huge challenge for kindergartens to implement inclusive education.

The implementation and development of inclusive education in kindergartens in our country still has a long way to go. It is of great significance to study the advanced ideas and practices of inclusive education in kindergartens abroad and the enlightenment to our country. Therefore, this paper analyzes the representative experience of inclusive preschool education in the United States and the enlightenment to our country's implementation of inclusive kindergarten education, hope that this research can enrich the social public's understanding of inclusive kindergarten education on the one hand, hope to give peer reference on the other hand. Let everyone work together to the development of inclusive kindergarten education in our country.

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