

The Analysis of the Attachment Status of Left-behind Children and its Influence

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Abstract

The attachment status of Left-behind children is not only an important content of social interaction, but also an important factor affecting the psychological development of Left-behind children. This paper analyzes the attachment status of Left-behind children and its influence on their physical and mental development, in order to helping the Left-behind children gaining security, trust and psychological support from positive social association.

Keywords

Left-behind Children; Attachment Status; Influence.

1. Introduction

Attachment is not an innate trait, but a product of interaction between children and the object of attachment. Attachment provides a way to understand children's social development and mental health. The environmental factors, especially the type of family structure in which the Left-behind children live, have an impact on their attachment status and their attachment objects. This has a long-time impact on their cognitive, emotional and social development and even the development of their life. The attachment status of the Left-behind children is not only the important content of the social intercourse, but also the important influence factor of the Left-behind children's psychological development.

Attachment is the most important social relationship in children's early life, which is the beginning and important part of individual social development. It has great influence on children's physical and mental development, especially on social development. Bronfenbrenner, an American psychologist, describes the interaction of developing children with a variety of environments. Bronfenbrenner argues that much of the important communication in preschoolers' mental and physical development takes place in a variety of micro systems directly and face to face. Family, school, peer, play place and so on are all the components of the "Micro-system" in the social ecological system of preschool children, which has an important impact on the physical and mental development of preschool children. Different types of family structure provide different emotional and social support for preschool children. Different types of family structure will have an impact on the attachment objects of rural Left-behind children. Different attachment objects of children left behind in rural areas will have an important impact on their psychological development.

2. Attachment Status of Left-behind Children

The attachment status, physical and mental development of Left-behind children are rooted in the family. The family is a complex system composed of interdependent family members, in which the change of individual behavior affect the behavior of other members. Because of the particularity of Left-behind Children's family structure, different types of family structure lead to different attachment status of Left-behind children. The family types of the Left-behind children mainly include three types: the guardian of the next generation (the guardian of the

grandparents), the guardian of the single parent (the guardian of the mother) and the guardian of the relatives and friends. Among them, grandparents' guardianship and maternal guardianship are the main ones, but grandparents' guardianship accounts for the largest proportion.

2.1. Attachment Status of Left-behind Children under the Guardianship of Their Grandparents

Chinese child welfare and protection policy report (2019), a report on the attachment of children left behind by their grandparents, found that there were 6.97 million Left-behind children in China. In the case of guardianship, 96 percent of Left-behind children in China are in the care of grandparents. [1] The white paper on the state of mind of Left-behind children in China (2019) reveals that Left-behind children are often cared for by their grandparents due to the absence of both or one of their parents. In the process of education and growth, the Left-behind children who are separated from their parents and their attachment relationships are alienated. This has a great impact on their cognition, emotion and socialization. [2]

Under the normal circumstances, Left-behind children whose parents are away from home use this kind of custody of the grandparents mostly. In this situation, Left-behind children's attachment object is mostly grandparents. Because of the consanguinity and the absence of the parents, the grandparents' guardians mostly adopt the material type or the laissez-faire type of discipline, giving more material, life satisfaction and too much tolerance and confine of the superficial care. Most of the grandparents' ideas are relatively conservative and their educational methods are simple. They do not understand the educational idea of guiding the physical and mental development of the Left-behind children. In addition, most grandparents (maternal grandparents) are older, and some grandparents (maternal grandparents) have custody of more than one or two Left-behind children. Apart from life care, it is difficult for them to provide guidance and care for children's physical and mental development. As a result, some Left-behind children form an unsafe attachment, have behavioral bias or psychological bias which are not conducive to their healthy physical and mental development.

2.2. Attachment Status of Left-behind Children the Guardian of Their Mothers

For Left-behind children with single parents, the main custody is their mothers. Early childhood is the critical period of children's physical and mental development. Some mothers of the Left-behind children often pay little attention to or are not aware of the important influence of positive attachment and psychological safety base on their children's physical and mental development due to their own cultural level. They neglect the establishment of attachment relationship and the core content of early education which lead children to form insecure attachment relationship.

2.3. Attachment Status of Left-behind Children under the Guardian of the Relatives and Friends

In the survey, about 4 percent of Left-behind children in rural areas are under the guardian of the relatives and friends. The guardian of the relatives and friends ranked the fourth in closeness. In the custody of relatives and friends, Left-behind children in rural areas are raised by relatives such as uncles, aunts and so on. For the more sensitive Left-behind children in rural areas, they are easy to have the feeling of the fence, forming a fear, withdrawn, introverted character.

Moreover, there are also cases of the Left-behind children are transferred from one parent to another. After the child is entrusted by the parents to a relative, the relative maybe transfers the Left-behind child to another relative for some reasons such as work transferred. The Left-behind child who has been entrusted several times is almost at a loss. This is undoubtedly detrimental to their physical and mental health development.

3. The Attachment Status of Left-behind Children Affects Their Physical and Mental Development

The attachment theory of Ethology, represented by Bowlby, a British psychologist, elaborates the mechanism and development of attachment from the perspectives of ecology, psychoanalysis, psychology, psychiatry, cybernetics and information theory. It was widely accepted. Bowlby was commissioned by the World Health Organization to conduct a large survey of children raised in dysfunctional families. He noted with deep feeling that the key to the mental health of children was that young children should have a warm, intimate and lasting relationship with their mothers (or stable surrogate mothers). The preschool child is satisfied and can also feel pleasure. Separated from the family, the mental health of the preschool child will be greatly endangered.

3.1. Positive Impact on the Left-behind Children

Attachment is the most important social relationship in children's early life, which is the beginning and important part of individual social development. It has great influence on the Left-behind children's physical and mental development, especially on social development. Attachment helps the Left-behind children building an internal model which they use it to understand themselves and the world. Even as an adult, this internal work model also guides the individual's thinking and expectations in relationships.

The safe attachment can help the Left-behind children to explore the external environment positively and provide them with a sense of security, belonging, emotional support and social support. At the same time, the Left-behind children may have more positive emotions, stronger social skills, fewer psychological and behavioral problems. The Left-behind children are more likely to develop friendships and have more emotional connections. Attachment is the cornerstone of good parent-child relationship. Attachment is not only present in early childhood, but also give great significance in the development of a person's long life.

3.2. Negative Impact on the Left-behind Children

However, because of the special family structure of the Left-behind children and the characteristics of the attachment objects themselves, the attachment status of the Left-behind children may also have negative impact on their physical and mental development. Unsafe attachment status can affect the Left-behind children's cognitive, social interaction and emotional skills. Some researchers have pointed out that the Left-behind children have communication obstacles and avoid interpersonal communication due to the lack of psychological support and guidance from their parents. These will not only hinder the Left-behind children in childhood interpersonal communication, but also affect the Left-behind children's personality development, and even produce anti-social behavior.

The physical and mental health problems of Left-behind children need the joint efforts of the state, society, family, school and other parties. It need to establish an effective system to solve the problem. The government and all sectors of society should continue to pay attention to the problems of this vulnerable group in specific aspects of their physical and mental development, such as attachment status and actively solve them.

4. Conclusion

"Chairman Xi Jinping Thought of socialism with Chinese characteristics in the new era" in the proposed: People's livelihood is close to the people and their life. The government must seize the most immediate and realistic interests of the people and the people who need the most attention. The government make an effort to achieve early childhood education at a higher

level. People have more and more sense of acquisition, happiness and security. The Left-behind children in China is still the most vulnerable group that needs the attention of the whole society. Not just children, but individuals of all ages, those who firmly believe that there is always someone behind them giving them trust and support at all times in their process of development, they can give full play to their talents and tap their potential.

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