



# The Current Situation of Aesthetic Education in Family Education and Its Impact on the Comprehensive Development of Children

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## Abstract

The current state of aesthetic education in family settings significantly influences the comprehensive development of children. Research shows that the lack of aesthetic education at home can lead to deficiencies in children's aesthetic sensitivity, creativity, emotional expression, and moral character, thereby impeding their future growth. Although many parents have recognized the importance of aesthetic education, numerous issues persist in practice. Some parents treat aesthetic education merely as a tool to enhance their children's academic profiles, while others simply ignore its significance. This paper analyzes the current situation of aesthetic education in family environments, explores its influence on children's overall development, and proposes targeted strategies for improvement.

## Subject Areas

Education Science

## Keywords

Family Education, Aesthetic Education, Comprehensive Development of Children

## 1. Introduction

Aesthetic education, also known as education in beauty, is often delivered through artistic forms such as visual art, music, and dance to inspire aesthetic sensibility and creativity. It serves not only as a mode of education but also as an essential means to cultivate a well-rounded personality and enhance one's overall quality. A child's education is shaped by three main domains: family, school, and society.

Since the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, President Xi has emphasized: “The family is the first classroom of life, and parents are the first teachers of children.” From early childhood, children begin to receive family education, and its influence shapes who they become. Thus, family education is foundational to a child’s character, behavior, and personality development. As an important part of family education, aesthetic education profoundly affects a child’s growth. However, in real life, many families tend to neglect the significance of aesthetic education, which limits children’s development in areas like aesthetic appreciation, creativity, and emotional expression [1]. Therefore, this study focuses on the current status of aesthetic education in family settings and how it can be improved.

This study adopts a conceptual literature analysis method, mainly searching the China National Knowledge Infrastructure (CNKI) database (2000-2023), supplemented by a small number of English theoretical classic literature. The Chinese search keywords are “family art education”, “child development”, and “art education illiteracy”, and English literature is supplemented by directly citing authoritative works. Screening focus: CSSCI core journal articles; Empirical research or basic theoretical literature. Specially included in the policy text of the “Research Report on the Development of Chinese Aesthetic Education (2020-2022)”, a framework for analyzing family aesthetic education practices is constructed.

## **2. The Function of Family Education and the Role of Aesthetic Education in It**

### **2.1. The Function of Family Education**

Family education plays a crucial role in a child’s development. As Soviet educator Sukhomlinsky once said, “Parents are the first teachers of children.” Children receive the longest and earliest education from their parents. Even after entering kindergarten, primary, or secondary school, children still spend most of their time in the family environment, heavily influenced by their parents. Moreover, this education takes place during the child’s most impressionable years, leaving a lasting impact that can shape their entire life.

The family is the first social setting a child encounters and plays a key role in shaping personality and character. Unlike school or societal education, which focuses on academic and specialized knowledge, family education covers a wide range of life aspects. It includes basic life skills such as eating, speaking, walking, and emotional expression, as well as social interactions, cultural understanding, and moral behavior [2]. Parents transmit their knowledge and life experience selflessly to their children. Their behavior, attitude, and values also exert a subtle yet profound influence on children’s development [3].

The family is also a cradle for talent. Early training and a healthy family culture are essential factors in nurturing capable individuals. Psychological research indicates that early childhood is a critical period for psychological development. Family education during this period helps instill positive traits like honesty, bravery,

diligence, and self-discipline.

## **2.2. The Role of Aesthetic Education in Family Education**

Aesthetic education is a vital part of family education and has far-reaching effects on children's holistic development. It focuses not only on intellectual growth but also on the cultivation of aesthetic sensitivity, creativity, and emotional expression, helping children develop a sound personality and a rich inner world [4]. Sukhomlinsky likened a child to a rough jade that must be sculpted into a fine statue with the help of various forces—with family playing the leading role. Family aesthetic education is subtle yet powerful. The daily environment, atmosphere, emotions, and activities in a family form the basis for a child's understanding of the outside world, influencing their perception of nature, society, and culture, as well as their moral and aesthetic values. Based on Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences [5], family aesthetic education promotes cognitive integration by activating spatial intelligence (artistic composition), bodily kinesthetic intelligence (manual), and interpersonal intelligence (emotional resonance). This mechanism is confirmed in the case of "disciplinary integration" in the "Research Report on the Development of Chinese Aesthetic Education": Zhoushan, Zhejiang integrates marine culture into aesthetic education courses, and students intelligently understand ecological aesthetics through natural observation.

First, with improving living standards, people increasingly seek spiritual fulfillment. Aesthetic education meets this need by guiding children to appreciate art, experience nature, and enjoy life, thereby developing aesthetic interests and abilities. This enables them to discover, appreciate, and create beauty, enhancing life quality and laying a solid foundation for future development.

Second, aesthetic education in the family serves multiple purposes. On the one hand, it fosters imagination and creativity. Through artistic creation and appreciation, children use their minds to interpret works and express emotions, enhancing both artistic literacy and problem-solving skills. On the other hand, aesthetic education improves emotional expression. Art conveys complex emotions; engaging with it helps children understand and manage their feelings, improving communication. Moreover, it cultivates temperament and optimism in the face of challenges [6].

Ultimately, aesthetic education is an indispensable component of family education. Parents should adopt diverse strategies to help children discover, appreciate, and create beauty, supporting the development of healthy personalities and spiritual richness.

## **3. Phenomena Arising from the Implementation of Aesthetic Education in Family Settings**

### **3.1. The Absence of Aesthetic Education in the Family**

Since the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, education has been placed at the core strategic position of national development. The continu-

ous deepening of education reform and significant increase in investment have propelled China's education system to the forefront of the world. Education, as an important way to achieve personal values and a better life vision, benefits a wide range of people, and the phenomenon of illiteracy has been significantly reduced. However, it is worth noting that "aesthetic illiteracy"—the lack of individual ability to appreciate, understand, or create beauty—is widespread. Its specific manifestations are diverse, including weak aesthetic perception, insufficient creativity, lack of appreciation ability, and indifference to beautiful things in daily life. A considerable portion of the population overly focuses on practical value and neglects the richness of artistic, cultural, and emotional dimensions. For a nation that highly values education, the widespread lack of aesthetic literacy urgently needs to be further explored.

The important reason for this phenomenon is the long-term lack of family aesthetic education. According to the research report on the development of aesthetic education in China (2020-2022), over 60% of surveyed parents narrowly equate aesthetic education with artistic skill training, believing that "appreciating natural scenery" does not fall within the scope of aesthetic education; Up to 79% of parents admit that they have not received systematic aesthetic education, which makes it difficult to effectively guide their children's aesthetic experience. This kind of absence is manifested in reality as parents often use "whether the painting is like it or not" as the main criterion for evaluating children's creativity, ignoring their emotional expression; Some college students are unable to interpret the emotional connotations of their works in art museums and other art venues, and can only mechanically recognize surface features such as "beautiful colors", reflecting a clear lack of aesthetic understanding ability [7].

Cai Yuanpei, a major figure in Chinese educational history, advocated for a balanced education combining military, practical, moral, philosophical, and aesthetic components. Over time, these were simplified into four aspects: physical, intellectual, moral, and aesthetic education. However, as society advances and parents become more educated, they increasingly prioritize intellectual development at the expense of the others—especially aesthetic education.

Many parents mistakenly equate aesthetic education solely with art classes, ignoring its broader role in shaping character and perception. Family education profoundly influences a child's growth, yet many parents overlook the critical role of aesthetic development, contributing to widespread aesthetic illiteracy.

### 3.2. The Instrumentalization of Aesthetic Education

In recent years, the increasingly fierce academic competition has given rise to new parenting practices. To avoid falling behind, many parents have arranged excessive extracurricular tutoring courses for their children, resulting in a lack of necessary rest time for them. This high-intensity educational model (often referred to as "intensive parenting") encourages children to continuously pursue academic performance. In 2021, the term "chicken baby" (*i.e.* intensive parenting) was selected as one of the top ten buzzwords of the year by the magazine "Biting Words",

indicating its social impact. It is worth noting that the lack of aesthetic literacy mentioned above is intertwined and mutually reinforcing with the utilitarian tendency in aesthetic education practice. In 2022, nearly 70% of netizens supported the cancellation of the art grading system in the Weibo vote on the topic of “canceling art grading” (Research Report on the Development of Chinese Art Education), reflecting the widespread concern of society about the alienation of art education goals.

The desire of parents for their children to succeed is understandable, but this expectation has evolved into a social norm that values external achievements and neglects internal happiness. In this context, aesthetic education is increasingly seen as a way to accumulate certificates and qualifications, rather than the fundamental cultivation of aesthetic literacy. With the intensification of educational competition, many families have shifted their focus to intellectual development, while aesthetic education has been marginalized. Even when it comes to art learning, its goals are often utilitarian—focusing on award acquisition and qualification certification, rather than aiming to cultivate deep aesthetic literacy [8].

In addition, the promotion of some training institutions further exacerbates this tendency, overemphasizing the value of grading and certification. Parents who invest in art education are often influenced by this and tend to encourage their children to participate in various grading exams, alienating the learning purpose from genuine aesthetic enjoyment to the pursuit of visible achievements. This process ignores the inner need of children to feel and appreciate beauty. More importantly, when parents impose their personal aesthetic preferences without considering their children’s interests, the process of art learning is easily forced and mechanical, which not only triggers resistance and weakens learning interest, but ultimately hinders the formation and development of individual deep aesthetic abilities.

## **4. Suggestions for Enhancing the Role of Aesthetic Education in Family Education**

### **4.1. Basic Pathways to Promote Aesthetic Education in the Family**

Today, more parents acknowledge the value of aesthetic education but lack the right concepts and methods. Some overemphasize technical skills, while others wrongly believe aesthetic education is solely the school’s responsibility. Both attitudes result in neglect or improper implementation, which harms children’s holistic development.

Parents are the primary educators in aesthetic education. First, they should focus not just on skills but also on cultivating aesthetic awareness, creativity, and emotional expression [9]. Second, they must discard utilitarian thinking, recognizing that aesthetics is about inner development, not external achievement. Third, parents should communicate openly with children, understand their interests and feelings, and respect their preferences. This fosters autonomy and prevents over-interference.

Parents can also provide diverse artistic experiences by taking children to museums, exhibitions, and concerts. Rich exposure helps children develop aesthetic sensibility and appreciation.

Furthermore, nature should be an essential part of family aesthetic education. Natural settings offer abundant resources for sensory and cognitive development. Parents should let children explore nature, forming deep, personal connections with the world. Traditional festivals can also serve as opportunities for aesthetic cultivation, exposing children to rituals, customs, and cultural meaning.

Parents should also encourage hands-on creativity. Crafting, building, and artistic expression all help children bridge subjective feelings with objective forms, boosting confidence and innovation.

Lastly, aesthetic education should integrate with other domains like moral, intellectual, and physical education. By coordinating these areas, children can grow into well-rounded individuals with unique charm. Parents must establish correct aesthetic values and take a multidimensional approach involving emotional communication, artistic exposure, active participation, and collaboration with schools.

Aesthetic education subtly shapes hearts and minds. It helps children experience, enjoy, and create beauty. In a world where technology cannot solve every human dilemma, only a rich inner world can provide guidance. True aesthetic education cultivates individuals with artistic sensitivity, creativity, emotional depth, and strong moral character. Thus, its mission is both urgent and enduring.

#### **4.2. Research Limitations and Future Directions**

The conclusion of this study is based on literature analysis and has three limitations. Firstly, there is a lack of micro behavioral data on family aesthetic education (such as details of parent-child art interaction), which leads to a lack of empirical support for the attribution of phenomena; Secondly, the longitudinal evolution of children's aesthetic literacy has not been tracked, making it difficult to verify the long-term effects of aesthetic education strategies; Thirdly, it ignores the impact mechanism of urban-rural, intergenerational, and family structure differences (such as intergenerational parenting models) on aesthetic education practice. Future research should establish a coding system for parent-child aesthetic education behavior to capture micro interactions, conduct multi-stage tracking cohort studies on children aged 3 - 15 to measure the correlation between aesthetic creativity, and compare the allocation patterns of family aesthetic education resources and intergenerational transmission effects under different socio-cultural backgrounds.

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#### **Conflicts of Interest**

The author declares no conflicts of interest.

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