

THE CURRENT STATUS OF COORDINATION BETWEEN FAMILIES AND SCHOOLS IN EDUCATING SELF-SERVICE SKILLS FOR CHILDREN AGED 3-4 IN PRESCHOOLS

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Abstract: Educating self-service skills for children aged 3-4 is an important task in Early Childhood Education, contributing to the development of independence and the holistic growth of children. Self-service skills are essential abilities that help children take care of themselves and become more independent and confident in daily life. These include everyday habits such as feeding themselves, maintaining personal hygiene, dressing independently, and organising their belongings. These skills not only promote self-reliance but also help children integrate more effectively into their surrounding environment. Children need to be trained in self-service skills from an early age. Those who develop self-care abilities tend to adapt more easily to learning and daily activities at school, which also helps parents feel more reassured when their children begin school. The purpose of self-service skills education is to enable children to independently perform certain tasks related to eating, sleeping, and personal hygiene. These skills include activities that children can carry out to meet their own needs, such as serving their own food, feeding themselves, preparing their sleeping space, wiping their mouths, using the toilet, preparing clothes and personal items, completing personal tasks, and meeting their basic needs independently. These are considered essential life skills that parents should teach and nurture from an early age in order to establish good habits and a positive lifestyle for children. However, the effectiveness of this education depends not only on the school but is also greatly influenced by the family environment. This paper proposes several measures to strengthen the coordination between families and schools with the aim of improving the effectiveness of self-service skills education for children, drawing on practical implementation in Early Childhood Education institutions.

Keywords: self-service skills, children aged 3-4, family-school coordination, Early Childhood Education.

I. Introduction

In the current context of educational reform, the Early Childhood Education Curriculum is oriented around a child-centred perspective, with an emphasis on promoting children's active engagement, initiative, and learning through experience. For children aged 3-4, prioritising the education of self-service skills helps to foster habits of independence in self-care and in carrying out daily activities without requiring the assistance of others. Self-service skills represent one of the foundational competencies that support the holistic development of personality in preschool-aged children. This is one of the most important educational components for preschool children - particularly for young preschoolers, who are at the "starting point" of the personality development process, as they are just beginning to take their first steps in life and are gradually "learning to be human". If these skills are developed early, children will be able to form well-rounded and enduring personal characteristics. Educating self-service skills from an early age enables children to learn to care for and protect themselves. They can integrate more quickly into their surrounding environment, develop relationships with others, and engage meaningfully in everyday tasks- thereby enriching their knowledge, experience, and individual competencies. Without the necessary self-service skills, children will inevitably encounter difficulties in their daily lives. Developing these skills from an early age, in ways that are appropriate to children's developmental stage, will help them become more confident, proactive, and self-reliant in later life.

II. Main content

2.1. Content of self-service skills education for children aged 3-4 in preschool settings

According to the current Early Childhood Education Curriculum [1], the content of self-service skills education for children aged 3-4 is not structured as a series of separate lessons but is integrated into daily care and educational activities, through which children have opportunities to experience, practise, and begin forming habits. The content of self-service skills education can be organised into the following main groups:

Table 1: Groups of self-service skills education content for children aged 3-4

No.	Skill	Content
1	Self-care skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Washing hands correctly (before meals, after using the toilet) - Wiping face and brushing teeth (with guidance) - Using the toilet independently and calling adults when needed - Putting on and taking off simple clothing (T-shirts, elastic-waist trousers)
2	Eating and drinking skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Feeding themselves with a spoon - Drinking from a cup - Sitting properly during meals, not running around while eating - Greeting the teacher and classmates before eating - Clearing away their bowl and spoon after meals (at a basic level)
3	Daily routine skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Independently retrieving and putting away personal belongings (backpack, shoes) - Tidying up toys after playing - Laying out their sleeping mat for nap time (with support) - Recognising their own belongings
4	Personal hygiene skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Not putting dirty objects in their mouth - Covering their mouth when coughing or sneezing - Not littering; disposing of rubbish in designated bins - Keeping clothing clean
5	Self-service skills in group settings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Queuing when washing hands or collecting belongings - Waiting for their turn - Cooperating with peers during activities - Asking for help when needed

Throughout the process of self-service skills education for children aged 3-4 in preschool settings, teachers integrate various educational content areas to help children become more flexible in their activities, more self-confident, and better able to adapt to a collective environment.

2.2. Content of school-family coordination in self-service skills education for children aged 3-4

The content of school-family coordination in self-service skills education for preschool children aged 3-4 includes the following components:

- *School-family coordination for aligning educational goals, content, methods, and requirements for self-service skills education*

The first and most fundamentally guiding dimension of coordination is the alignment of educational goals, content, methods, and requirements for self-service skills education for children aged 3–4 with their families. In this regard, the school is responsible for informing families about the educational goals, content, methods, and requirements for self-service skills education as set out in the Early Childhood Education Curriculum, and for clarifying which self-service skills are developmentally appropriate for children aged 3-4. Families need to develop an accurate understanding of the importance of self-service skills education and to support the school's educational objectives. This alignment helps to prevent contradictions in educational expectations and creates a coherent educational environment for children.

- *School-family coordination to create optimal conditions for children's holistic development and to improve the effectiveness of self-service skills education*

Coordination between families and schools in the care and education of children is considered a fundamental principle that ensures all child-rearing and educational activities are carried out effectively and comprehensively.

In order to fulfil the objective of the Early Childhood Education Curriculum—that is, to provide holistic care and development for children—school-family coordination affords children greater opportunities and conditions for practising age-appropriate self-service skills, thereby supporting their development across multiple domains. Children are not only trained in self-service skills at school but also at home, which helps them to develop skills, independent thinking, and a sense of self-motivation in daily life. Well-rounded

development will create a solid foundation for children to achieve their fullest potential across the physical, moral, intellectual, and emotional dimensions.

- School-family coordination to enhance families' knowledge and skills regarding self-service skills education through modern, child-appropriate educational methods

At present, many families still have a limited understanding of appropriate methods for educating children in self-service skills. In fact, a considerable number of families adopt an overprotective approach, not allowing children to do anything independently at home. This inadvertently renders children passive and entirely dependent on their parents, thereby undermining the effectiveness of self-service skills education.

Accordingly, school-family coordination helps families improve their awareness and develop the knowledge and skills needed to educate children in self-service skills, enabling them to select modern educational methods that are appropriate for the psychological and physiological characteristics of their children.

In addition, the school has a responsibility to guide parents in applying methods that are suitable for children aged 3-4-such as modelling, encouragement, and providing opportunities for children to act independently-and to advise parents on how to support children when they encounter difficulties. Consistency in educational methods helps children absorb learning more effectively, prevents behavioural confusion, and contributes to improved educational outcomes.

- School-family coordination to build an appropriate educational environment for self-service skills development

The educational environment plays an important role in the formation of self-service skills for preschool children aged 3-4. School-family coordination helps to create a supportive educational environment in which children can practise their skills. At school, the classroom space is arranged appropriately, with furniture and equipment that is the right size for children. At home, families organise the living space to suit children's capabilities and prepare personal items that children can easily use independently. Consistency between the two environments makes it easier for children to transfer skills from one setting to the other, thereby contributing to improved quality in self-service skills education.

- School-family coordination for monitoring, evaluating, and adjusting the self-service skills education process

According to the Early Childhood Education Curriculum, the evaluation of children's development should be carried out on a regular and ongoing basis. The content of coordination in this area includes: the exchange of information between teachers and parents regarding children's skill performance; the agreement on supportive measures when children encounter difficulties; the adjustment of educational content and methods to suit individual children; and collaborative evaluation that ensures the self-service skills education process is responsive to each child's needs and abilities.

The content of school-family coordination in self-service skills education for preschool children aged 3-4 encompasses: aligning educational goals and requirements; jointly implementing age-appropriate self-service skills content; standardising educational methods; establishing a supportive educational environment; and collaboratively monitoring and evaluating the process of skill development in children. The full and systematic implementation of these coordination components contributes to improving the effectiveness of self-service skills education, meets the requirements of the Early Childhood Education Curriculum, and lays the groundwork for children's holistic development.

2.3. Current status of school-family coordination in self-service skills education for preschool children aged 3-4 in Do Luong District, Nghe An Province

2.3.1. Current status of school-family coordination in the implementation of self-service skills education content for children aged 3-4

The results of the survey on the implementation of school-family coordination content in self-service skills education for preschool children aged 3-4 at Do Luong District preschools are as follows:

Table 2: Level of implementation of school-family coordination content in self-service skills education for preschool children aged 3-4

Unit: score, %

Assessment content	Assessment level (%)				Mean score	Rank
	Good	Fair	Average	Poor		
School-family coordination for aligning educational goals, content, methods, and requirements for self-service skills	18.3	48.5	33.2	0.0	2.85	3
School-family coordination to create optimal conditions	48.6	30.9	20.5	0.0	3.28	1

for children's holistic development and to improve the effectiveness of self-service skills education						
School-family coordination to enhance families' knowledge and skills regarding self-service skills education through modern, child-appropriate educational methods	16.1	36.3	47.6	0.0	2.69	5
School-family coordination to build an appropriate educational environment for self-service skills development	17.8	47.5	34.7	0.0	2.83	4
School-family coordination for monitoring, evaluating, and adjusting the self-service skills education process	32.1	50.5	17.4	0.0	3.15	2
Overall mean	26.6	42.7	30.7	0.0	2.96	

Source: Compiled from the authors' survey results

The survey results on the level of implementation of school-family coordination content in self-service skills education for preschool children aged 3-4 at Do Luong District preschools were assessed at a moderately good level, with a mean score of 2.96. Of the respondents, 26.6% rated implementation as good, 42.7% as fair, 30.7% as average, and none rated it as poor. Specifically:

The content rated highest, at the fair level, was "School-family coordination to create optimal conditions for children's holistic development and to improve the effectiveness of self-service skills education" with a mean score of 3.28, followed by "School-family coordination for monitoring, evaluating, and adjusting the self-service skills education process" with a mean score of 3.15. Other content areas were rated only at the moderately average level, with the lowest-rated being "School-family coordination to enhance families' knowledge and skills regarding self-service skills education through modern, child-appropriate educational methods", with a mean score of 2.69.

These findings indicate that the current content of school-family coordination in self-service skills education for preschool children aged 3-4 is not sufficiently diverse or comprehensive. In some preschools, communication between teachers and parents often amounts to little more than general updates, lacking detailed practice plans and component skill breakdowns (for example, the steps involved in dressing oneself) that parents could implement with their children at home. Some content areas also lack in-depth discussion of psychosocial development and life skills, leading to insufficient alignment between schools and families on educational content and an increased risk of contradictions in how children are taught (for example, the school reinforcing routines and habits while the family indulges the child).

2.3.2. Current status of school-family coordination in the use of educational methods for self-service skills for children aged 3-4

The results of the survey on the implementation of coordination methods between families and schools in self-service skills education for preschool children aged 3-4 at Do Luong District preschools are as follows:

Table 3: Level of implementation of school-family coordination methods in self-service skills education for preschool children aged 3-4

Unit: score, %

Assessment content	Assessment level (%)				Mean score	Rank
	Frequently	Occasionally	Rarely	Never		
Face-to-face meetings and direct communication with families	30.4	69.6	0.0	0.0	3.30	2
Communication through established information channels and social media platforms (phone, Zalo, Facebook, etc.)	61.4	38.6	0.0	0.0	3.61	1
Parent meetings organised by the school	18.5	81.5	0.0	0.0	3.19	3
School and class events and activities involving families	0.0	63.4	36.6	0.0	2.63	4
Project-based educational methods	0.0	23.5	55.9	20.6	2.03	5

involving family participation						
Overall mean	22.1	55.3	18.5	4.1	2.95	

Source: Compiled from the authors' survey results

The survey results on the level of implementation of school-family coordination methods in self-service skills education for preschool children aged 3-4 at Do Luong District preschools were assessed at a fairly frequent level, with a mean score of 2.95. Of the respondents, 22.1% rated the methods as frequently used, 55.3% as occasionally used, 18.5% as rarely used, and 4.1% as never used. Specifically:

The most frequently used method was "Communication through established information channels and social media platforms (phone, Zalo, Facebook, etc.)", with a mean score of 3.61, followed by "Face-to-face meetings and direct communication with families", with a mean score of 3.30 (rated at a fairly frequent level). "Parent meetings organised by the school" was implemented at an occasional level, with a mean score of 3.19. The least frequently used method was "Project-based educational methods involving family participation", with a mean score of 2.03.

These results indicate that the use of school-family coordination methods in self-service skills education for preschool children aged 3-4 in Do Luong District has lacked flexibility and consistency. The approach has relied primarily on social media communication platforms (phone, Zalo, Facebook, etc.) and direct exchanges during drop-off and pick-up times, with limited in-depth interaction or substantive sharing. In this dynamic, schools typically play the role of "informing" and parents play the role of "receiving", rather than engaging in joint discussion and problem-solving. Furthermore, some parents are busy and consider education to be the school's responsibility, or lack the knowledge and skills needed for appropriate coordination.

2.3.3. Current status of school-family coordination in the assessment of self-service skills for children aged 3-4

The results of the survey on the assessment of the effectiveness of school-family coordination in self-service skills education for preschool children aged 3-4 at Do Luong District preschools are as follows:

Table 4: Level of implementation of assessment practices in school-family coordination in self-service skills education for preschool children aged 3-4

Unit: score, %

Assessment content	Assessment level (%)				Mean score	Rank
	Frequently	Occasionally	Rarely	Never		
Assessment of participation in educational planning activities for self-service skills for children aged 3-4	18.2	64.6	17.2	0.0	3.01	3
Assessment of the implementation of self-service skills educational activities for children aged 3-4	15.6	54.5	29.9	0.0	2.86	4
Assessment of the communication and information-sharing between schools and families regarding self-service skills education for children aged 3-4	37.9	62.1	0.0	0.0	3.38	1
Assessment of school-family coordination in the overall work of self-service skills education for children aged 3-4	0.0	45.4	54.6	0.0	2.45	5
Joint assessment of self-service skills development in children aged 3-4	34.4	65.6	0.0	0.0	3.34	2
Overall mean	21.2	58.4	20.3	0.0	3.01	

Source: Compiled from the authors' survey results

The survey results on the level of implementation of assessment practices for school-family coordination in self-service skills education for preschool children aged 3-4 at Do Luong District preschools were rated at an occasional level, with a mean score of 3.01. Of the respondents, 21.2% rated the assessment as frequently conducted, 58.4% as occasionally, 20.3% as rarely, and none rated it as never. Specifically:

The most frequently implemented assessment approach was "Assessment of the communication and information-sharing between schools and families regarding self-service skills education for children aged 3-4", with a mean score of 3.38, followed by "Joint assessment of self-service skills development in children aged 3-

4”, with a mean score of 3.34. The remaining assessment approaches were implemented only at an occasional level, with the lowest being “Assessment of school-family coordination in the overall work of self-service skills education for children aged 3–4”, with a mean score of 2.45.

Based on practical observations, many respondents noted that the assessment of school-family coordination effectiveness in self-service skills education for preschool children aged 3-4 has not received adequate attention or investment. In some cases, school administrators and principals have regarded the purpose of evaluating school-teacher-family coordination primarily as a means of improving the dissemination of the school's educational plans and of mobilising parental support for material resources and educational conditions.

2.3.4. Current status of self-service skill levels in preschool children aged 3-4 at preschools in Do Luong District, Nghe An Province

In recent years, preschools have consistently paid attention to and invested in the education of self-service skills for children aged 3-4 in order to meet the objectives of the Early Childhood Education Curriculum. The actual self-service skill levels of children aged 3-4 at the surveyed preschools at the beginning of the 2025-2026 academic year are as follows:

Table 5: Self-service skill levels of preschool children aged 3–4 at Do Luong District preschools

Assessment content	Assessment level (%)				Mean score	Rank
	Good	Fair	Average	Poor		
Self-care skills	18.7	35.8	41.7	3.8	2.69	3
Eating and drinking skills	19.6	36.2	44.2	0.0	2.75	2
Daily routine skills	17.1	32.7	47.5	2.7	2.64	4
Personal hygiene skills	22.9	33.1	38.5	5.5	2.73	1
Self-service skills in group settings	15.4	27.3	48.1	9.2	2.49	5
Overall mean	18.7	33.0	44.0	4.2	2.66	

Source: Compiled from the authors' survey results

The survey results on the self-service skill levels of preschool children aged 3-4 at the beginning of the academic year were not rated highly, falling only at a moderately average level with a mean score of 2.66. Among the respondents, 18.7% rated the level as good, 33.0% as fair, 44.0% as average, and 4.2% as poor.

The skills rated highest were “Personal hygiene skills”, with a mean score of 2.73, while the lowest-rated were “Self-service skills in group settings”, with a mean score of 2.49.

These results indicate that children's self-service skill levels remain limited. The primary reason for this is that the majority of parents are occupied with work and do not spend sufficient time with their children, nor have they developed a clear awareness of the need to educate self-service skills from the earliest years of life. A considerable proportion consistently believe that their children are still too young to manage tasks independently, and as a result, they over-indulge and over-protect them. This leads children to become dependent and reliant on others, and they are unable to carry out tasks that are within their capabilities. When assigned a responsibility, they do not attempt it voluntarily but instead always look to others for help. Over time, this becomes an ingrained negative habit.

2.4. General assessment

2.4.1. Strengths

In recent years, school–family coordination in self-service skills education for preschool children aged 3-4 in Do Luong District has produced a number of noteworthy outcomes, as follows:

The majority of school administrators, teachers, and parents have developed an awareness of the role, significance, and importance of self-service skills education for children, as well as of school-family coordination in educating self-service skills for preschool children aged 3-4.

As a result of timely school-family coordination, children have become more proactive in personal hygiene (handwashing, face-wiping), more capable of self-service during meals and nap time, and have developed habits of neatness and reduced dependency... thereby becoming more confident in daily life, more independent, and better practised in hygiene, eating, and daily routines.

Through school-family coordination, parents and teachers exchange information regularly (via communication notebooks and social media) to ensure consistency in objectives, methods, and approaches to practising self-service skills, thereby avoiding contradictions between home and school practice. Both parents and teachers are kept informed of children's behaviour at home and at school, enabling them to select educational content, methods, and approaches that are appropriate to the individual characteristics of each child.

Timely school-family coordination also enables schools and teachers to establish a safe and healthy educational environment for self-service skills development, thereby contributing to improved quality of care and education that meets the objectives and requirements of the Early Childhood Education Curriculum for children's holistic development.

School-family coordination helps to build a trusting and close relationship between families and the school, facilitating early identification of limitations so that educational content and methods can be adjusted accordingly.

2.4.2. Limitations

Alongside the achievements, school-family coordination in self-service skills education for preschool children aged 3-4 in Do Luong District also exhibits the following limitations:

Although teachers and parents have recognised the importance of self-service skills education and of school-family coordination in this area, the level of awareness among a portion of teachers and parents remains uneven.

The objectives of school-family coordination in self-service skills education at preschools remain too broad and have not been clearly aligned with the specific goals of the Early Childhood Education Curriculum.

The content, methods, and forms of school-family coordination in self-service skills education at preschools lack diversity and flexibility with respect to different groups of children.

The assessment of school-family coordination effectiveness in self-service skills education at preschools has not received adequate attention, and lacks systematic and comprehensive evaluation criteria.

2.4.3. Causes of the limitations

The limitations in school-family coordination in self-service skills education for preschool children aged 3-4 in Do Luong District stem from the following underlying causes:

First, there is a lack of synchronisation between schools and families in the coordination process for self-service skills education. Specifically, most teachers currently organise self-service skills educational activities and coordinate with families based primarily on their own personal knowledge and experience, in the absence of guiding materials. At the same time, the pressure of large class sizes makes it difficult to observe and provide detailed guidance to each individual child in carrying out self-service skills, and limits the time available for specific exchanges with each parent during drop-off and pick-up periods.

Second, there is a lack of consistency in educational methods. Many parents adopt a “doing it for the child” approach at home, which causes children to lose the independent habits they have developed at school. A portion of parents do not fully appreciate the importance of self-service skills and tend to focus primarily on academic skills such as literacy and numeracy, which creates challenges for teachers in their coordination efforts.

Third, there is a lack of two-way information exchange. Many teachers do not communicate in a timely or detailed manner about what needs to be practised at home, while many parents do not proactively exchange information or make use of real-life situations to practise with their children. Some parents lack the experience and competence in specific component skills (for example, how to fold clothes or feed oneself correctly) needed to guide their children—all of which contributes to the limited effectiveness of self-service skills education and school-family coordination in this area.

Fourth, teachers have not yet grouped children according to their individual levels of self-service skill development, which has led to educational activities and approaches that are not sufficiently effective, and has hindered the ability to work with individual parents to develop educational content and methods that are appropriate for each child.

III. Conclusion

In practice, there are still many parents who devote little time to their children, particularly with regard to practising self-service skills. A considerable number of children, having been overly indulged and protected, with parents fearing that tasks will be too hard for them, that they will damage belongings, or that they will take too long, end up having everything done for them. Consequently, children develop a habit of dependency and come to rely entirely on others. A lack of self-service skills renders children passive and creates difficulties for them in participating in group activities. Self-service skills education is therefore not only a necessary but also a critically important component of Early Childhood Education in the current period.

In recent years, preschools in Do Luong District, Nghe An Province have made efforts to fulfil the objectives of holistic education, including the education of self-service skills and the promotion of school-family coordination in self-service skills education for preschool children aged 3-4. However, the findings of this study indicate that school-family coordination in self-service skills education for preschool children aged 3-4 remains a significant bottleneck that requires greater attention and appropriate solutions.

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