

# Children's Philosophy and its Triple Value Implications and Practical Exploration

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**Abstract:** Inspired by Lipman's ideas, Matthews published *Philosophy of Childhood* in 1994, officially establishing the academic field of children's philosophy. Its theoretical foundation lies in the profound recognition of children's philosophical potential, namely, that children can also become subjects of philosophical thinking. This paper aims to deeply analyze the triple value implications of children's philosophy and explore its integration path in educational practice, specifically involving the innovation of educational concepts, the diversification of teaching methods, the implementation of interdisciplinary integrated teaching, and strategies for addressing practical challenges.

**Keywords:** Children's Philosophy, Value Implications, Educational Practice.

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## 1. Introduction

In the realm of educational discourse, Children's Philosophy has emerged as a transformative force, reshaping our understanding of how children learn and develop. Rooted in the belief that children possess inherent curiosity and philosophical capacity, this field encourages educators to embrace a more holistic and student-centric approach to education. As we delve into the intricacies of Children's Philosophy, it becomes evident that it is not merely a pedagogical tool but a profound educational paradigm shift with the potential to revolutionize educational practices globally.

The concept of Children's Philosophy recognizes the importance of valuing children's subjectivity and fostering their independence. By encouraging children to explore their surroundings with curiosity, experiment with new ideas, and express their thoughts and feelings without fear of judgment, educators can nurture a sense of independence and self-confidence in them. This, in turn, paves the way for their overall development, fostering intellectual and emotional growth. Furthermore, Children's Philosophy emphasizes the importance of respecting diversity in thinking styles and cognitive abilities, thereby encouraging educators to tailor their teaching methods to meet the individual needs of each child.

The implementation of Children's Philosophy encompasses three primary dimensions: Philosophy by Children, Philosophy with Children, and Philosophy for Children. Each of these dimensions plays a crucial role in cultivating critical thinking, emotional intelligence, and a deeper understanding of philosophical concepts among children. For instance, through philosophical discussions, children are encouraged to question assumptions, evaluate evidence, and formulate their own opinions, thereby deepening their understanding of the world around them. This interactive nature of philosophical discussions also promotes emotional intelligence by fostering empathy, understanding, and respect for diverse perspectives.

The theoretical foundations of Children's Philosophy draw upon constructivist learning theory, which posits that knowledge is constructed through active engagement with the world. This theoretical framework provides a robust basis for the practice of Children's Philosophy, emphasizing the

importance of allowing children to actively participate in their learning process. By engaging in philosophical discussions and exploring real-world situations, children are able to apply theoretical knowledge to practical problems, thereby enhancing their understanding and critical thinking abilities.

The integration of Children's Philosophy into educational practice necessitates a number of innovations and diversifications. Firstly, educators must embrace a conceptual innovation, evolving from the role of a mere "lecturer" to a "facilitator." This shift in role underscores the necessity for educators to prioritize children's autonomy and self-discovery, guiding them towards independent learning while maintaining an appropriate level of detachment. Secondly, the diversification of teaching methods is crucial for effectively embedding Children's Philosophy within educational practices. Educators can utilize diverse pedagogical strategies such as game-based discovery teaching, storytelling and discussion, and role-playing and simulation exercises to ignite children's learning interest and curiosity. These strategies not only make the learning process enjoyable and stimulating but also facilitate children's comprehension of philosophical concepts and meanings. Finally, interdisciplinary integration is another vital aspect of Children's Philosophy education. By weaving together insights from various disciplines such as psychology, sociology, and education, educators can create a more holistic and enriched educational experience for children. This integration not only broadens their understanding of the world but also enhances their ability to apply philosophical ideas to real-world situations.

Despite the transformative potential of Children's Philosophy, educators face numerous challenges in integrating it into educational practices. These challenges include difficulties in sustaining children's attention and the inherent abstractness and complexity of philosophical concepts. However, by adopting strategies such as designing engaging teaching activities, utilizing intuitive teaching materials, and emphasizing guidance and inspiration, educators can overcome these challenges and create a dynamic and responsive learning environment that nurtures children's intellectual and emotional growth.

In conclusion, Children's Philosophy represents a profound educational paradigm shift with the potential to revolutionize

educational practices globally. By valuing children's subjectivity, fostering their independence, and encouraging critical thinking and emotional intelligence, educators can create a more holistic and enriched educational experience for children. As we embark on this journey of exploring Children's Philosophy, let us embrace the challenges and opportunities it presents, striving to create a world where every child can thrive academically, emotionally, and philosophically.

## **2. Analysis of the Triple Implications of Children's Philosophy**

Children's philosophy, as a distinctive and specialized branch within the broader field of philosophical research, and a pivotal component within the domain of pediatrics, meticulously and systematically explores the intricate laws and distinctive characteristics governing children's cognitive development. The triple value implications inherent in this field are profound, multifaceted, and profoundly enriching. Specifically, these implications encompass:

### **2.1. Philosophy by Children: Valuing Subjectivity and Fostering Independence**

The concept of "Philosophy by Children" underscores the importance of recognizing children as autonomous thinkers with their own unique perspectives, values, and ways of understanding the world. This approach challenges educators to shift from a traditional, adult-centric model of education to one that places children at the forefront. It necessitates a fundamental change in how we perceive children—not merely as passive recipients of information but as active participants in their own learning processes.

By valuing children's subjectivity, we encourage them to explore their surroundings with curiosity, experiment with new ideas, and express their thoughts and feelings without fear of judgment. This fosters a sense of independence and self-confidence, which are crucial for their overall development. Educators who embrace this philosophy create safe and inclusive learning environments where children feel empowered to share their insights, question existing norms, and engage in meaningful dialogue with their peers and teachers.

Moreover, "Philosophy by Children" emphasizes the importance of respecting diversity in thinking styles and cognitive abilities. This recognition encourages educators to tailor their teaching methods to meet the individual needs of each child, thereby enhancing learning outcomes and fostering a deeper appreciation for the complexity and beauty of human cognition.<sup>[1]</sup>

### **2.2. Philosophy with Children: Cultivating Critical Thinking and Emotional Intelligence**

"Philosophy with Children" involves engaging children in philosophical discussions through interactive methods such as dialogue, questioning, exploration, and reflection. This approach leverages the power of collaborative learning to cultivate critical thinking, moral reasoning, and creative problem-solving abilities in children.

Constructivist learning theory, which posits that knowledge is constructed through active engagement with the world, provides a theoretical foundation for this practice. By participating in philosophical discussions, children are

encouraged to question assumptions, evaluate evidence, and formulate their own opinions. This process not only deepens their understanding of complex concepts but also enhances their ability to think critically and make informed decisions.

Furthermore, the interactive nature of philosophical discussions promotes emotional intelligence by fostering empathy, understanding, and respect for diverse perspectives. Children learn to listen attentively, express their ideas clearly, and engage in constructive dialogue with others. These skills are essential for building strong interpersonal relationships and navigating the complexities of social interactions.

Educators who facilitate these discussions play a crucial role as guides and partners in the learning process. They create opportunities for children to explore real-world situations, apply theoretical knowledge to practical problems, and reflect on their experiences. In doing so, they not only deepen children's understanding of philosophical concepts but also strengthen the emotional bonds between educators and learners.<sup>[2]</sup>

### **2.3. Philosophy for Children**

When guiding children in philosophical thinking, educators must carefully plan their teaching strategies to ensure that the learning experience is engaging, meaningful, and developmentally appropriate. This involves exploring and utilizing a variety of teaching links such as narration, storytelling, questioning techniques, problem clarification, discussion guidance, and dialogue art. Narration and storytelling serve as powerful tools for capturing children's imagination and sparking their curiosity. By selecting materials that are relevant to children's lives and rich in philosophical content, educators can create a foundation for meaningful learning. These stories can serve as a springboard for discussions about morality, justice, and the nature of reality, prompting children to reflect on their own beliefs and values.

Questioning techniques are another crucial aspect of philosophical education. Educators must design questions that are inspiring, hierarchical, and open-ended to encourage children to think deeply and critically. By guiding children through a series of questions that progress from intuitive feelings to abstract thinking levels, educators can help them construct a preliminary framework of philosophical concepts and develop their reasoning skills. In the problem clarification stage, educators use clear and accurate language to help children understand the core of the problem they are exploring. This involves breaking down complex ideas into manageable chunks, using concrete examples, and encouraging children to articulate their thoughts and questions. This process cultivates logical thinking and critical analysis abilities, preparing children to engage in more sophisticated philosophical discussions in the future.

Finally, organized discussions and dialogue activities provide children with opportunities to express their opinions freely, listen to others' viewpoints, and learn to respect differences and seek consensus. These activities encourage children to think critically, communicate effectively, and collaborate with others to solve problems. By engaging in these discussions, children develop a deeper understanding of philosophical concepts and enhance their ability to apply these ideas to real-world situations. To achieve optimal teaching effects, educators must possess a profound understanding of philosophical literacy and educational psychology. They must also be willing to continuously reflect

on and adjust their teaching strategies based on children's individual differences and learning needs. By doing so, educators can create a dynamic and responsive learning environment that nurtures children's intellectual and emotional growth, fostering a lifelong love of learning and a commitment to critical thinking.<sup>[3]</sup>

### **3. Exploration of the Path for Integrating Children's Philosophy into Educational Practice**

The integration of children's philosophy into educational practice emerges as a comprehensive and intricate endeavor, aiming to nurture children's holistic development through meticulously crafted methodologies and ideological frameworks. This pursuit is multifaceted, necessitating a profound comprehension of both the theoretical bedrock of philosophy and the unique developmental imperatives of children. The following section delves into the specific pathways for this practical integration:

#### **3.1. Innovation of Educational Concepts**

Children's philosophy transcends being merely a pedagogical tool; it represents a profound educational paradigm shift. This concept emphasizes a student-centric approach, incrementally transforming the traditional "teacher-as-lecturer" model through dynamic interactions between educators and learners. In this transformation, educators must evolve from the role of a mere "lecturer" to a "facilitator," actively engaging in the educational process while maintaining an appropriate level of detachment to steer students towards autonomous learning and self-discovery. This conceptual innovation underscores the necessity for educators to prioritize children's needs and interests, fostering their capacity for independent thought and problem-solving skills, thereby laying a robust foundation for their subsequent growth and development.<sup>[4]</sup>

#### **3.2. Diversification of Teaching Methods**

To effectively embed children's philosophy within educational practices, educators must continuously probe and apply diverse pedagogical strategies. These strategies encompass:

**Game-Based Discovery Teaching:** Leveraging the inherent fun, freedom, and challenge of games, educators can devise philosophically rich game activities. These activities enable children to encounter and reflect upon philosophical queries amidst play, thereby igniting their learning enthusiasm and curiosity.

**Storytelling and Discussion:** By selecting philosophical narratives or fables that resonate with children's daily lives, educators can facilitate an understanding of the deeper philosophical implications through a narrative-discussion hybrid approach. This method nurtures children's imagination and critical thinking abilities.

**Role-Playing and Situational Simulation:** By allowing children to embody diverse personas or replicate specific scenarios, they can personally engage with philosophical issues, thereby heightening their sense of participation and immersion. This practical engagement fosters their learning and development.

### **3.3. Interdisciplinary Integration and Cross-Field Teaching**

The amalgamation of children's philosophy with various disciplines is pivotal in realizing its educational potential. This integration necessitates educators to adopt a fusion strategy encompassing both "vertical" and "horizontal" integration. Vertical integration strives to establish a cohesive educational ecosystem spanning universities, secondary schools, and primary schools. Through inter-teacher communication, educators at all levels can gain a comprehensive understanding of students' learning requirements and current educational contexts, thereby facilitating targeted instructional activities. Horizontal integration emphasizes embedding the concept of children's philosophy across diverse disciplines such as language arts, mathematics, English, science, moral and civic education, physical education, and the arts. This approach transcends traditional disciplinary boundaries, designing lessons centered on problem awareness and value-oriented guidance. This interdisciplinary approach equips children with the tools to apply philosophical thinking across a broader spectrum of subjects, thereby enhancing their comprehensive literacy and innovation capabilities.

#### **3.4. Challenges and Coping Strategies in Practice**

In the realm of educational practice, educators encounter myriad challenges when integrating children's philosophy. These include difficulties in sustaining children's attention and the inherent abstractness and complexity of philosophical concepts. To mitigate these challenges, educators can adopt the following strategies:

**Design of Engaging Teaching Activities:** Utilize diversified pedagogical methods, such as games and role-playing, to ignite children's learning interest and curiosity. This approach enables children to acquire philosophical knowledge in an enjoyable and stimulating environment.

**Utilization of Intuitive Teaching Materials:** Employ visually intuitive teaching resources, such as images and videos, to facilitate children's comprehension of philosophical concepts and meanings.

**Emphasis on Guidance and Inspiration:** During the educational journey, prioritize nurturing children's autonomous learning abilities. Encourage them to identify and pose questions independently, and attempt to resolve them. This approach fosters their capacity for independent thought and problem-solving.<sup>[5]</sup>

By adopting these strategies, educators can effectively navigate the complexities of integrating children's philosophy into educational practices, thereby enhancing children's overall cognitive, emotional, and social development.

## **4. Conclusion**

In summary, the educational practice of children's philosophy represents a comprehensive and systematic project that necessitates educators to meticulously consider and diligently practice a multitude of facets. These aspects include, but are not limited to, educational concepts, teaching methodologies, interdisciplinary integration, and engagement from both family and society. Each of these components plays a crucial role in shaping the overall educational experience for children within the realm of philosophy. Firstly, educational concepts form the foundational bedrock upon

which the entire practice is built. They guide educators in understanding the essence and purpose of children's philosophy education, emphasizing the importance of respecting children's subjectivity, valuing their diverse perspectives, and fostering an environment conducive to intellectual and emotional growth. Secondly, teaching methods are the tools through which these concepts are brought to life in the classroom. Effective teaching methodologies in children's philosophy often involve dialogue, inquiry, and reflective practices that encourage children to actively engage with philosophical ideas, question assumptions, and develop their critical thinking skills. These methods go beyond traditional lecture-style teaching, emphasizing instead a more interactive and participatory learning experience. Interdisciplinary integration is another vital aspect of children's philosophy education. By weaving together insights from various disciplines such as psychology, sociology, and education, educators can create a more holistic and enriched educational experience for children. This integration not only broadens their understanding of philosophical concepts but also helps them see the relevance of these ideas in other areas of their lives. Moreover, family and social participation are indispensable in supporting children's philosophical development. Engaging parents and the wider community in philosophical discussions and activities can reinforce the lessons learned in the classroom, fostering a culture of continuous learning and intellectual curiosity beyond school walls. Through continuous exploration and innovation, educators can strive to provide children with higher-quality and more effective philosophical education services. This ongoing development ensures that

the educational practice remains relevant and responsive to the evolving needs and characteristics of children. It also underscores the importance of adaptability and flexibility in teaching strategies, as educators must be prepared to adjust their approaches in response to the dynamic nature of children's growth and development.

Furthermore, recognizing that children's philosophy education is a continuous development process necessitates educators to maintain an open mindset and keen insight. This means being willing to embrace new ideas, reflect critically on existing practices, and adjust strategies as needed. By doing so, educators can ensure that their teaching remains aligned with the latest research and best practices in the field, ultimately promoting children's overall development and growth in the most effective and meaningful ways possible.

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