

Cooperative education being promoted

Guideline urges schools, families, communities to work together

By ZOU SHUO
zoushuo@chinadaily.com.cn

China plans to improve a cooperative mechanism made up of schools, families and communities to nurture the development of morality, intelligence, sports, art and a hardworking spirit among students, according to a new guideline.

Issued by the Ministry of Education and 12 other departments, the guideline sets a target of devising a clearly defined, scientific and efficient mechanism by 2035.

While schools still assume the main role in educating students, families should also take active responsibility, and the community should also offer support, the guideline said.

In addition to providing education, schools should inform parents of their child's mental state, academic performance and behavior and investigate the situation at home, it said.

Close, regular contact between schools and families should be established, and head teachers are advised to visit students at home at least once a year.

Schools should also offer advice to parents in their role as family educators and organize meetings at least twice every semester to explain the philosophies as well as major policies related to school and education to parents.

Meanwhile, special attention should be paid to more vulnerable students such as the disabled, orphans, and rural children whose parents are migrant workers.

Schools are encouraged to also make good use of resources to teach students social responsibility and practical skills, and to instill an innovative spirit.

They should set up communication with educational centers and organize field trips, and also invite model workers, artists and representatives of different sectors of society to give talks, the guideline said.

It also urged parents to improve their ability to be family educators, stating that the home is a child's first classroom, and their parents are their first teachers.

Parents should teach children by example, create an uplifting and optimistic family environment, maintain harmonious familial relationships and ensure a good environment in which children are able to grow up healthily.

They are encouraged to follow scientific parenting concepts and focus on developing their child's morals, good habits and physical and mental health.

While fully respecting individual difference, parents should set rational targets for their children, spend more time with them and offer more guidance and encouragement.

The guideline also requests that parents participate more in activities organized by schools, learn more about family education and work with schools to educate their children.

They should encourage their children to finish their homework, exercise every day, read, participate in activities and do house-



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hold chores, while also limiting the time they spend using electronic devices to prevent the formation of bad habits.

Communities should include family education guidance as an important part of public service efforts and set up affordable training at public facilities.

The guideline requires that communities hold extracurricular activities for primary and secondary school students and that museums, education centers, cultural centers, sports venues, parks and art venues should be open to primary school and preschool pupils for free or at a discount.

Greater efforts should be made to regulate children's books, videos and the internet to curb harmful content and prevent addiction to games.

Government departments should work together to strengthen the management of venues near schools, and bars or internet cafes are not allowed to do business in proximity to schools, it added.

An official with the Ministry of Education's Department of Basic Education said the guideline will help implement the double reduction policy, which reduces the excessive amount of homework and extracurricular tutoring students face.

Furthermore, universities and research institutions should conduct more research on the cooperative mechanism and train more family education professionals, the official added.

Zhang Zhiyong, a professor of education at Beijing Normal University, said that central authorities have placed great importance on the cooperative education mechanism and have stressed that the government, schools, families and communities should assume their responsibility in improving education for children.

The guideline is an important step toward strengthening education

reform, creating a good education system and producing students capable of shouldering the responsibility of national rejuvenation, Zhang said.

Yao Feng, principal of Mingqiang Primary School in Shanghai's Minhang district, said the guideline clarifies the responsibility of schools, families and communities in educating students and offers them clear guidance.

In addition to developing a cooperative mechanism, schools should explore further resources in order to offer students after-school activities, as well as listen to parents' advice, she said.

Policy Digest

Authorities asked to ensure food safety

The general offices of four central government agencies, including the State Administration for Market Regulation, have issued a notice asking authorities around the country to ensure food safety in schools and kindergartens.

Local authorities should instruct school canteens and companies providing meals to carry out self-inspection before the start of the new semester, and the supervision of those that had been shut down for a long time during the COVID-19 epidemic should be strengthened.

Authorities should also urge all those concerned to adhere to food safety standards and requirements and improve oversight of food purchasing, storing, processing and delivering, as well as the sanitizing of dishes.

The new semester began for many schools and kindergartens earlier this month, with children returning to campus.

This is the first school semester to begin since the country downgraded its management of COVID-19 in January.

More support urged for transport, logistics sector

Financial institutions should take measures to strengthen support for the transportation and logistics sector to promote the smooth development of the national economy and of industrial and supply chains, a notice said.

The sector is the "lifeblood of the market economy", according to the notice jointly issued earlier this month by the People's Bank of China, the Ministry of Transport and the China Banking and Insurance Regulatory Commission.

The notice asked banking institutions to devise goals and work plans to lend more support to the sector and develop additional credit products in accordance with the needs of companies and people working in the sector.

Institutions are also encouraged to moderately increase their tolerance toward the sector's unpaid debts during the pandemic and while the economy is still recovering, among others.

National purchase of pork aims to control hog prices

Some 20,000 metric tons of frozen pork will be purchased to add to national central pork reserves in a bid to better manage hog prices, the National Development and Reform Commission said on Friday.

The hog-to-grain price ratio has fallen below 5 to 1, triggering the "level one early warning", which requires central and local authorities to purchase and store pork, according to the commission.

Fluctuations in the price of hogs are being closely followed, and efforts to regulate price and production capacity will continue to be strengthened to support a stable market, the commission said.

The country has a three-level warning system to monitor excessive increases or decreases in pork prices.

Ministry wants to help veterans find work

The Ministry of Veterans Affairs has issued a document with seven other departments calling for greater support for veterans who are having difficulties finding a job.

Authorities should maintain regular contact with veterans to build an accurate understanding of their situation and help them find suitable work, according to the ministry, which encourages veterans to participate in vocational skills training programs.

Government departments, employment services, social organizations and companies should introduce more job opportunities to veterans, and they should receive employment assistance.

Veterans unable to find work even with the help of employment assistance should be offered government-subsidized jobs, according to the ministry.

The document also voiced its support for entrepreneurship and flexible employment.

WANG QINGYUN

Various measures put in place to help parents teach their children

By ZOU SHUO

The government has taken a variety of measures to improve family education and offer guidance to parents on educating their children so that students grow up in a healthy and harmonious environment.

For example, the Family Education Promotion Law, which officially took effect on Jan 1, last year, encourages parents to give their children a proper moral, physical and psychological education.

Parents and guardians need to learn about family education and develop teaching skills, according to the law, which also states that they bear the primary responsibility for educating children, while the government, schools and society should offer support.

The law bans parents from burdening children excessively, stating

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that they should organize time for study, rest, recreation and physical exercise.

Parents and guardians should also help ensure their children do not develop an addiction to the internet.

They should pay attention to the physical, psychological and intellectual development of their children and respect their right to voice their opinions on family affairs.

They should not use violence to discipline their children, nor should they discriminate against their children based on their gender or physical condition, the law added.

Furthermore, the Ministry of Education, the All-China Women's Federation and nine other departments issued a five-year plan in April last year focused on the guidance and development of family education.

The aim is to develop a guidance system that serves both urban and rural areas and ensures that chil-

dren can grow up healthily.

By 2025, it is expected that the number of family education service providers will have increased greatly, and a team of professionals specialized in the topic will have been formed, the plan said.

Bian Yufang, a professor of education at Beijing Normal University, said that currently, many parents are more concerned about their child's academic performance.

This is a shortsighted view, she said, and shows that many parents are only wishing for quick success and monetary gain for their children.

Parents should remember that they are their child's first teachers, so they should develop clearer ideas of parenting and improve their parenting skills, Bian said.

They should also work with schools and communities in teaching their children, increase com-

munication with schools and actively take part in family education activities organized by schools, she said.

Kang Liying, dean of the college of preschool education at Capital Normal University, said that while educating their children is every parent's right, some lack parenting skills, so society as a whole should help them improve their skills to be able to better educate their children.

“Parents should educate their children through words and deeds, teach them good family values and maintain harmonious relationships with family members,” Kang said.

They should support the efforts of schools, exchange good educational concepts with other parents and encourage their children to learn and grow by participating in social activities, she added.