

School Management to Improve the Psychological Well-being of Children at the RYB Parent-Child Kindergarten in Guangzhou, Guangdong Province, China

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Received: 8 April 2026 Revised: 5 June 2026 Accepted: 30 June 2026

Abstract

This study develops two research objectives: (1) to explore existing managerial challenges and practical developmental needs concerning children's psychological well-being improvement at the RYB Parent-Child Kindergarten based in Guangzhou, Guangdong Province, China; (2) to formulate a standardized institutional management guidance program targeting the enhancement of young children's mental health. A mixed-methods research design was adopted. The research sample consisted of 32 full-time preschool teachers and 210 parents of children aged 2 to 4 years. Data were collected via self-developed questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. Descriptive statistics including frequency, percentage, mean score and standard deviation were computed for quantitative analysis.

The empirical results reveal two key findings. First, the investigated kindergarten has established a basic service framework for early childhood mental health support, whereas obvious deficiencies remain in professional resource allocation, teachers' psychological counseling proficiency, comprehensive assessment mechanisms and in-depth home-kindergarten collaboration. Second, this study constructs a four-dimensional standardized guidance program covering activity implementation, teacher competency cultivation, institutional management guarantee and home-kindergarten partnership, alongside corresponding targeted optimization strategies.

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The research outcomes can provide empirically grounded references for similar parent-child kindergartens to conduct evidence-based mental health management.

Keywords: School management, Psychological Well-being of children, Kindergarten

Introduction

Guangzhou, Guangdong Province features a robust economy and abundant preschool educational resources. Even so, local toddlers aged 2–4 frequently suffer from emotional anxiety and maladaptive interpersonal interactions (Yang, 2025). RYB (Red, Yellow and Blue) refers to a well-established domestic early childhood education brand delivering specialized parent-child courses for children aged 2–4. In routine operation, most commercially operated parent-child kindergartens prioritize the completion of scheduled teaching tasks over long-term children’s psychological developmental goals (Zhang & Wang, 2023). Insufficient high-quality daily parent-child interactions consequently hinder children’s emotional regulation and social adaptation.

The 2–4 age bracket constitutes a critical formative period for young children’s psychological maturation (Izett et al., 2021). According to a regional industry survey of Guangzhou’s parent-child preschool sector (Li, 2024), merely 40% of local parent-child kindergartens have incorporated children’s psychological development indicators into daily administrative arrangements. Although all serving teachers at the sampled RYB kindergarten hold nationally recognized preschool teaching credentials, the institution fails to organize regular systematic vocational training focused on child psychological counseling skills. Official municipal statistical data from the same survey (Li, 2024) further indicates that only 30% of Guangzhou’s parent-child childcare practitioners received formal mental health vocational training throughout 2023.

Bronfenbrenner’s bioecological system theory underpins the present research (Tudge et al., 2022). This theoretical framework is elaborated at the introductory stage to avoid unintroduced theoretical citations in subsequent

discussion. Regrettably, the target kindergarten has not enacted permanent institutional policies for safeguarding children's psychological well-being, lacking standardized periodic psychological assessment protocols and sustainable home-kindergarten cooperative frameworks.

The current study carries notable theoretical and practical implications. Theoretically, it expands the empirical application scope of bioecological system theory (Tudge et al., 2022) within the domain of parent-child kindergarten mental health governance. Practically, it facilitates the cultivation of emotional regulation and social competence among 2–4-year-old children, assists the researched kindergarten in constructing an integrated mental health management system, and generates replicable operational models for comparable early childhood institutions across Guangdong Province. Accordingly, this research identifies practical managerial obstacles and developmental demands before developing a matched standardized management guidance program.

Research Objectives

1. To investigate the management problems and practical developmental needs of the RYB Parent-Child Kindergarten in Guangzhou, Guangdong, China for improving children's psychological well-being.

2. To develop a standardized school management guidance program for improving children's psychological well-being at the RYB Parent-Child Kindergarten in Guangzhou, Guangdong, China.

Research Methods

1. Population and Sample

One RYB Parent-Child Kindergarten located in Guangzhou was selected as the research case. The original sampling population included all 32 in-service teachers and parents of 450 enrolled children aged 2–4. Census sampling was applied for all teachers, while 210 parents were selected via random sampling. Parent sample size was statistically calculated with the Yamane formula (Yamane, 1967) under a 5% sampling error and 95% confidence interval. Five kindergarten principals were added

as supplementary qualitative informants outside the questionnaire sampling pool to obtain exclusive administrative insights unavailable from regular teachers and parents.

2. Research Instruments

The self-designed questionnaire is divided into demographic information and scale items measuring mental health-oriented kindergarten management. Three field specialists examined content validity via the Item-Objective Congruence (IOC) index, with all item scores ranging from 0.80 to 1.00, which meets the acknowledged validity threshold for educational research (Polit & Beck, 2006). Cronbach's alpha values across all dimensions exceed 0.8, demonstrating acceptable internal consistency (Gliem & Gliem, 2003). Apart from questionnaire distribution, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 7 teachers, 5 principals and 7 parents to collect in-depth qualitative data.

3. Data Collection and Analysis

After obtaining written informed consent from all participants, electronic questionnaires were distributed via email, and interviews were completed either face-to-face or via online video platforms. SPSS 26.0 software was utilized for quantitative descriptive analysis. Standardized Five-Point Likert Scale Definition: 1 = Very Low, 2 = Low, 3 = Moderate, 4 = Medium-High, 5 = Very High

All transcribed interview data was coded and analyzed through thematic analysis.

Research Results

Objective 1: Current Management Status, Existing Problems and Developmental Needs Related to Children's Psychological Well-being

Table 1 Teachers' Perception of Current Working Status

Indicator	Mean	S.D.	Level
Design parent-child activities integrating psychological development goals	3.844	1.247	High
Activities effectively facilitate children's emotional expression and social participation	3.563	1.366	High
Provide targeted psychological support and on-site guidance during daily activities	4.125	1.157	Very High

Table 1 (Continued)

Indicator	Mean	S.D.	Level
The kindergarten establishes regular children's psychological development assessment mechanism	4.063	1.243	Very High
Parents actively cooperate with kindergarten mental health educational arrangements	4.031	1.121	Very High

Table 2 Parents' Perception of Current Working Status

Indicator	Mean	S.D.	Level
Kindergarten activities help children cope with daily frustrations and negative emotions	4.038	0.973	Very High
Activity setting matches psychological developmental characteristics of children aged 2-4	4.019	0.948	Very High
Teachers properly mediate interpersonal conflicts among young children	4.024	1.004	Very High
Teachers patiently listen to children's inner thoughts and emotional demands	4.019	1.012	Very High
The kindergarten regularly carries out standardized children's psychological assessment	4.000	1.040	Very High

Table 3 Teachers' Developmental Needs for Mental Health Management Optimization

Indicator	Mean	S.D.	Level
Provide personalized family mental health consulting service for student parents	4.188	0.998	Very High
Develop age-differentiated mental health activity resource materials	4.094	1.058	Very High
Formulate unified standardized mental health evaluation criteria and operational procedures	4.031	0.999	Very High
Build complete psychological crisis early warning and emergency support system	4.031	1.121	Very High
Supply unified standardized mental health activity plans and teaching documents	4.063	1.105	Very High

Table 4 Parents' Developmental Needs for Mental Health Management Optimization

Indicator	Mean	S.D.	Rating Level
Adopt professional assessment tools to identify children's potential psychological risks in advance	4.095	0.825	Very High
Develop abundant social adaptation training activities suitable for 2–4-year-old toddlers	4.048	1.127	Very High
Add resilience cultivation games to improve children's psychological stress resistance	4.038	1.039	Very High
Offer targeted intervention guidance for children's abnormal behaviors such as tantrums and social withdrawal	4.071	0.948	Very High
Adjust mental health activity plans dynamically according to periodic assessment results	4.076	1.028	Very High

Qualitative Interview Analysis

Teacher: “We fully recognize the significance of children's mental health guidance, yet the absence of systematic professional training prevents us from distinguishing normal mood fluctuations from clinical psychological issues.”

Principal: “Formal assessment guidelines exist in written form, but constrained funding and insufficient teacher competence hinder deep home-kindergarten cooperation.”

Parent: “We expect customized home-based parenting suggestions whenever our child displays sudden social withdrawal or frequent tantrum outbursts.”

Summary: Teachers struggle to strike a balance between recreational activity design and evidence-based mental education; institutional administrators are restricted by funding and staffing shortages; parents have prominent demands for individualized family guidance.

Objective 2: Formulated Four-Dimensional Standardized Management Guidance Program

Activity Design and Implementation: Develop tiered mental health activity resource libraries categorized for the 2–3 and 3–4 age cohorts.

Teachers' Counseling Competency Development: Deliver case-driven and simulation-based regular training to upgrade teachers' psychological assessment and basic intervention capabilities.

Institutional Management Support: Construct a closed-loop “monitor-assess-intervene-feedback” administrative system and complete individualized psychological development files for every enrolled child.

Home-Kindergarten Cooperation Mechanism: Establish fixed periodic communication platforms to elevate parental family-based mental health education competency.

Research Discussion

Discussion for Research Objective 1

Survey outcomes align with previous research by Izett et al. (2021) and Loeb et al. (2021), confirming the target kindergarten has laid preliminary foundations for routine mental health services via regular psychological assessment. Nevertheless, shortages in specialized resources, teachers' professional capacity and in-depth home-kindergarten cooperation remain prominent drawbacks.

Causal Interpretation: First, profit-oriented operational goals drive most commercial parent-child kindergartens to ignore long-term investment in children's mental health infrastructure (Zhang & Wang, 2023). Second, low coverage of formal mental health training among local practitioners results in industry-wide shortages of qualified instructors (Li, 2024; Yang, 2025). From a bioecological perspective (Tudge et al., 2022), fragmented home-kindergarten ties break the holistic developmental ecosystem and impede sustained psychological advancement.

Discussion for Research Objective 2

The four-dimensional guidance program is fully tailored to practical demands extracted from questionnaire and interview data. Age-segmented activity design conforms to the inherent psychological development laws of young children aged 2–4 (Izett et al., 2021; Loeb et al., 2021). Practical case-based training replaces abstract theoretical instruction and effectively upgrades teachers' on-site guiding proficiency (Yang, 2025; Tudge et al., 2022). Combined closed-loop management and standardized family partnerships build a holistic supportive ecosystem consistent with Bronfenbrenner's bioecological system theory (Tudge et al., 2022).

New Knowledge

Rooted in Bronfenbrenner's bioecological system theory (Tudge et al., 2022), this study delivers novel empirical findings for parent-child kindergarten mental health management research. Its core original finding is that high-quality psychological cultivation for 2–4-year-old children cannot solely rely on classroom activities; standardized institutional administration, regular teacher professional training and stable home-kindergarten coordination are three irreplaceable foundational pillars. The critical developmental window from 2 to 4 years requires joint kindergarten-family collaboration to deliver personalized psychological support matching individual developmental disparities.

Research Suggestions

1. Practical Implementation Suggestions

First, construct a standardized closed-loop management system: define the full workflow of goal setting, implementation, evaluation and optimization; appoint full or part-time psychological instructors and reserve 5% of annual operating funds as exclusive mental health funds; compile a unified institutional operation manual with differentiated developmental objectives for 2–3 and 3–4 age groups. Second, optimize resource development and teacher training: develop differentiated family-oriented resource packages and arrange no fewer than four annual specialized

mental health training workshops; build an exclusive internal online resource-sharing platform. Third, deepen multi-level home-kindergarten communication: host regular scientific parenting lectures, provide customized guidance for special-needs families and fix periodic group meetings plus one-on-one parent consulting channels.

2. Future Research Suggestions

First, conduct continuous 3–5 year longitudinal follow-up research to verify the long-term practical effectiveness of the compiled guidance program. Second, integrate bioecological system theory with localized Chinese preschool empirical data for further contextualized exploration. And Third, expand research samples across multiple regions and various kindergarten types to improve conclusion generalizability.

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