

Doing family education between experience-based exchange and science-based intervention. Participant observation on family education in Germany

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Family education encompasses a wide range of professional intervention programmes and presents diverse organisational forms in different countries. In Germany, it is anchored in the Social Code VIII and positioned in an intermediate space between the family – the central conjunctive space of experience – and society. Based on qualitative empirical material, conducted and analysed using the documentary method of interpretation, the following article provides insights into a research project on family education in Germany. In addressing the question of the inherent nature of the practice of family education, this article employs the heuristic of (un)doing family education to describe the fundamental pedagogical modes of family education in the sense of exploratory research.

1. Introduction

Located in a tension between child and youth welfare, family education is a heterogeneous social-educational domain. It is heterogeneous with regard to both access to this field of work and the different qualifications of its employees. This heterogeneity manifests itself in the various (organisational) structures of (institutional) family education, as well as in the diverse family constellations and topics that families face – topics that are reflected in the offerings of family education (Hermes, 2022; Hermes & Müller-Giebeler, 2023). In Germany, family education is regulated by federal law (Sozialgesetzbuch – Achtes Buch [SGB VIII]) and targets both families and societal requirements. Since the 2000s, German welfare policies have been shifting toward prevention and protection. This dual focus has led to a series of reforms emphasising early support networks at the federal state level (see Dahmen et al. 2025). Accordingly, family education is also viewed as an intermediate space between the family – as the central “conjunctive space” of experience – and society, characterised by special formats of dialogic and everyday exchange (see Lentz-Becker et al., 2024). Understanding oneself as part of one’s parents’ lineage can lead to differentiation and distancing. Although the age gap between parents and children remains unchanged throughout their lives, family relationship structures and social cohesion within the family’s experiential space are constantly vulnerable to change. Family education focuses on the generationality of families and offers support in dealing with generational relationships.

In family education practice, negotiation processes between prevention and education – as well as between instruction and reflection – have been documented (Lentz-Becker et al. 2024; Iller, 2017). These processes unfold in tandem with social developments that affect families through defamiliarisation (children spend more time in pedagogical institutions at earlier ages) and (re)familiarisation (families bear more responsibility for their children’s academic success), sometimes in contradictory ways (Krinninger & Müller, 2024).

Inherent heterogeneity of family education is similarly reflected in a diverse research landscape. In 2021, a nationwide inventory of family education and counselling services was published in Germany (Juncke et al., 2021). However, regarding the effectiveness of such services, only evaluation results of individual courses are available (e.g. Friedrich & Smolka, 2012). Research interest is also increasing in newly introduced structures (e.g. family primary school centers; see Hackstein et al., 2023; Harlow et al., 2023). The findings of the meta-evaluation by Lösel & Runkel (2012) provide a unique overview of family education projects in the Federal Republic of Germany:

- Lack of sophisticated longitudinal studies on the long-term effects of family education programmes is highlighted.
- On average, moderate but relevant effects are seen in parents and children after the implementation of projects.
- Some effects diminish over time, others continue.

- Stronger effects are seen in programmes that involve parents as well as children: multimodal approaches have a more lasting effect (influence on the behavior of parents in the home environment is/should be influenced).
- Targeted prevention approaches appear to be more promising than universal ones.
- Parenting-behavior programmes practiced together with parents are more likely to ensure transfer to everyday family life than theoretically imparted knowledge.
- The effectiveness of the educational programmes increases with their level of intensity.

We need to address the latter point more in details. Corresponding studies on the participation behaviour of parents (adherence) assume that educational offerings are attended in full when dynamic or varied activities are available and when the course can be completed in a relatively short time (Valero de Vicente et al., 2022). Fischer and Gorges (2023) also report corresponding findings on the (non-)participation of parents in parent education offerings and point out that the indicators “psychological stress” and “effort” in particular are to be seen as a cost component, which is detrimental to the motivation to participate.

For the entirety of family support services, the systematic literature review by dos Santos et al. (2024) provides insights that reflect the diversity of approaches and target groups – ultimately also family education. With the authors identifying relevant key qualifications of the professionals, different skills can be identified that are attributed to the professionals and are relevant in working with families. dos Santos et al. (2024) identify the following essential skills:

- Partnership and collaboration;
- Advocatory and empowerment;
- Good listening;
- Problem-solving;
- Building trust and confidence;
- Communication;
- Information and referral.

Against the background of an ongoing research project that – empirically guided – aims to work out facets of a theory of family education, the following section looks at communication practices. These communication practices are referred to as “exchange” in numerous places in the interviews conducted. This low-threshold form of interaction is also mentioned in the literature, in which family education is described as a “third social space” that is more associated with one’s own (family) immediate environment and is perceived less as an institution of public assistance (e.g. Bräutigam et al., 2019; Lentz-Becker et al., 2024).

Therefore, we see family education as a special space of experience. The family education expertise refers – as an expression of a specific subject orientation – to the immediate social environment of the addressees; the mode of interaction is then a specifically dialogic manner (Hermes, 2022). Euteneuer (2022) refers to “translation issues” in this context and notes that family education should not lecture or instruct parents, but rather communication must take place at eye level. But how can these descriptions be specified at the interaction level? The studies cited remain on a normative level or focus on the structure, such as in the study by Buchanan et al. (2025) in which technology-based parenting interventions are examined. However, no empirical evidence of modes of practice or communication of family education can be found in the studies mentioned. Only secondary interpretations with regard to an intended understanding of education could be made. For example, Knoll (2020) asks in his ethnographic study about appeals by a parent educator. He identifies two modes that can ultimately be characterized by the distinction between everyday and scientific knowledge. In addition, one could ask, for example, to what extent family education draws on corresponding parental competencies (to be imparted) when addressing educational childhood.

It becomes apparent that existing terms for the practice of family education as an exchange can be described as relatively imprecise. Existing evaluation studies, as well as quantitative studies (which often rely on a narrowly defined concept of education), should therefore be supplemented by a qualitative research approach. Against this backdrop, the present article, as exploratory fieldwork, inquires into the inherent characteristics of family education practice. This brings social figurations into the research focus. We understand the respective contexts of family education, following Bohnsack (2024), as so-called “people processing organisations”. In these organisations, interaction with the clients of social work is of central importance, within the framework of which “biography and identity are co-determined” (p. 9).

Based on praxeological knowledge sociology, the concept of people processing organisations reconstructs organisations as doubly affected by the everyday dual structure of norm and habitus, as postulated in knowledge sociology with regard to orientations to action. The “constitutive framing”, which is jointly produced by professionals and addressees as a special case of lifeworld construction of conjunctive experiential spaces and action-guiding orientation frameworks concerning interaction practice in pedagogical organisations, must not only bridge potential frame incongruences between the different milieus of the actors but also those between societal and organisational norms and habitus.

On the basis of empirical reconstructions of constitutive framing in organisations, Bohnsack (2024) subsequently distinguish between heterarchical and hierarchical forms of discourse or interaction organisation. Heterarchy is primarily characterised by a “negotiation about the different notions of normality” (p. 24) between professionals and addressees or between different milieus. However, constitutive framing can also take hierarchical and power-structured forms; additionally, empirically reconstructed cases of “arbitrariness” and “organisational frame loss” are distinguished, in which constitutive framing or a professionalised milieu can no longer be spoken of.

These insights led to the formulation of the following research questions:

1. How can the practice of family education be described as an interactional process?
2. Which incongruences with respect to organisational and societal norms and habitus of the involved actors are negotiated?
3. Under what conditions can the practice of family education be described as – does the professionalized milieu of family education exhibit a heterarchical or hierarchical basic structure?

2. Methodology

The empirical insights presented here are drawn from the authors’ ongoing research project on facets of a theory of family education. Overall, the project encompasses four components: interviews with experts in family education, interviews with professionals at family primary school centres, group discussions with parents and professionals, and participant observation. Within the research project, we analyse and reconstruct implicit/conjunctive knowledge, relating it to organisational, institutional, and standardization frameworks as well as to the intended addressees. Against this background, facets of “doing family education” are also derived from the empirical data.

The present article focuses on participant observation and argues that this method is particularly suited to uncovering the heterogeneous practices of family education. This approach refers to an interaction structure that pertains not only to the course proceedings but also to the context and the “in-between spaces” where participants meet around the course activities and organise a lifeworld-oriented learning environment on their own (Lentz-Becker et al., 2024). This immerses us in the everyday happenings of family education, and within the framework of observation, we are subject to the rules and behaviour patterns prevailing in practice.

At the same time, the observed actors are examined as constructors of family education practices, with the aim of uncovering the genesis and meaning of the rules and behavioural patterns that emerge (Hoffmann, 2022). The focal points of participant observation identified by Kalthoff (2006) can be elaborated for the context of family education practice as follows:

- Individuals’ practices (How is a shared practice negotiated among parents, children, and family educators in each concrete situation?)
- Individuals’ discourse (How do parents, children, and family educators communicate with one another about activities, events, and objects? What non-verbal and embodied forms of expression are significant?)
- Social and material setting (To what extent does the space of family education evoke specific actions and configurations? How can family education be conceptualised as an experiential space in spatial terms?)
- Temporal structure of practices and discourse (To what extent can family education practices be traced back to temporal patterns of speech and action in a distinctive manner?)

There are six observation protocols from four family education institutions. Field notes and protocols refer to the following settings:

- two parent-baby groups;
- three parent cafés;
- a back-fit course for seniors.

Given the described complexity, participant (open) observation was conducted by two individuals in each case. The aim was to minimise interference with the experiential space of family education while counteracting the situationally bound knowledge of the researchers – and thus potential subjective biases.

Bohnsack's concept of "people processings", from whose perspective we approach family education, is the result of qualitative research in (social-pedagogical) organisations using the extensively elaborated documentary method developed by him (Bohnsack, 2022). Consequently, our data analysis is also based on applying this qualitative interpretative method. The meta-theoretical foundation of the underlying praxeological knowledge sociology lies in Karl Mannheim's sociology of knowledge (Bohnsack, 2022). According to Mannheim (1980), every type of knowledge derives from a specific type of existential relationship. Conjunctive experiential knowledge, rooted in everyday practice, is untheoretical and implicit, structuring our actions (Bohnsack, 2022). Corresponding to Mannheim's "spaces of experience" (1980), facets of knowledge can be reconstructed and contextualized in family education, itself a distinct space of experience.

These conjunctive knowledge stocks, which can also become habitualised and autonomous, exist in difference to the "domains of normative expectations, role relations, and identity expectations – that is, to communicative knowledge with its propositional logic" (Bohnsack, 2022, p. 35). According to Bohnsack (2022), the formation of a professionalized milieu in people processing organisations is primarily based on a constitutive framing that produces a shared conjunctive experiential space for professionals and addressees, enabling them to jointly orient themselves around implicitly acquired knowledge stocks.

In order to form such an empirically substantiated, reflexive, conjunctive experiential space for family education – and thus a professionalized milieu – certain discrepancies are interactively processed by specialists and participants. This, according to our proposal, occurs within "Doing Family Education", conceived as a synthesis of the varied *modi operandi* of family education and analogous to the structural elements of "Doing Family" (Jurczyk, 2014). In this respect, analysing "doing family education" dovetails with analysing "undoing family education", clarifying who comes together, why they belong to family education, and how community is constructed. We follow the analysis of Jurczyk et al. (2025) and assume that a continuum exists between practices of doing and undoing.

This allows us to ask what the essential structures and processes of *doing family education* are and whether it is possible to identify the conditions and processes of *undoing family education*, corresponding to the "tipping points between doing and undoing" related to *doing family education*. This can be linked to the above question about the conditions for a successful constitutive framing of family education: Are hierarchical and power-structured practices already an *undoing family education*? Which processes of disintegration of constitutive framing potentially produce an *undoing family education*?

3. Empirical findings: Modes of *doing family education*

In the following section, two participant observations based on existing observation protocols are outlined in abbreviated form. These were carried out in a family education facility in different settings. First, there is data on an open parents' café (I). Further data relate to a parent-child course (II). The observation protocols were selected because the analyses represent the range of empirical counter-horizons in which the reconstructions of the modes of doing family education are shown. The following sections from the respective observation protocol are subjected to analysis.

3.1 Open parents' café

The parents' café is an open offer that does not require a binding registration. Nevertheless, there is a WhatsApp group in which participants often register or deregister. The course leader emphasizes that he mainly sits with the participants, listens and intervenes as little as possible. There are play elements scattered around the room. The wall is a large mirror wall. There are also mats for sitting on. [...].

Mother I reports on her positive experiences in the "small kindergarten" attended with two of her children. The course leader asks questions about this offer and then notes that the facility's gymnastics course is

currently still looking for a course leader. According to Mother I, it is difficult to find exercise courses that fit in with the schedule; especially with regard to a course start after 4 p.m. The course leader points out that his children also only started sports courses at an older age. Mother I notices that her children have a very strong need for exercise. Meanwhile, Mother II returns to the room and puts her child in an area separated by cushions. Child II immediately crawls out of the room again. The course leader then tells Mother II that no one else is coming in at the moment, so the door can be closed. Mother II then calls Child II back, closes the door and puts her child in another area. [...]

At first glance, this is a mundane observation: the course leader, although lacking a relevant professional qualification or academic background, can engage in experience-based exchanges solely based on their own experiences as a parent. The interactions and conversations among each mother are expressions of maternal concern, guided by their children's development. They recognise their children's needs and discuss ways to provide support and encouragement. Simultaneously, these interactions are normatively framed by their own experiences of parenthood or, in this context, by their responsibilities as mothers.

Mother III (she is part of the course for the first time) sees the fabric swing hanging in the middle of the room and says that she would like to put her child in the swing. She asks the course leader if she can. He then says: "Sure, you can do anything" and emphasizes that he only put the swing up so that they could have a better conversation. Mother III then puts her child in the swing and swings him. Then she asks if she can take her child's socks off. The course leader then says "Yes of course" and then addresses the child (III): "And you can do anything here!"

The successful experience-based exchange among the participants points to specific demands on the course leadership and can be empirically reconstructed, breaking down into various modes of *doing family education*. It is emphasized that children in the course room are allowed to use everything and move around freely. Apparently, within this open framework, parents can also maintain a specific quality of interaction. The course leader strives for empathetic guidance and attempts to sustain the exchange even in situations where they cannot be directly involved – due to factors such as gender, like in discussions about childbirth or breastfeeding.

Mother I comes back into the room with her child and greets Mother III, who then notices that her child (III) was a crybaby and that she had to take him to the crying clinic. Mother I and her child sit back down in their seats. Her child is only wearing a bodysuit, so she continues to dress him and listens to Mother III. She (Mother III) talks about her traumatic birth and that she and her child suffered serious consequences, which led to her child being delayed in development until they went to see an osteopath. All the mothers present ask questions for clarification. Mother III then talks about her birth experience and the difficulties that there were and that she explains her child's sensitivity against this background. In addition, she says her child also had psychological problems. Mother II agrees with her and mother III reports that she was scared to death during the birth.

Furthermore, the experiential space of family education, rooted in existential relationships, becomes apparent. Mother III is attending the parents' café for the first time. Nevertheless, she shares biographically significant topics regarding her birth experiences and finds a strong resonance with the other mothers present. This is followed by a dialogue-based, experiential exchange that is interactively extended within the experiential space by those present.

This initial data set can therefore be used to reconstruct interaction in family education as an experience-based exchange among participants:

She (Mother III) talks about her traumatic birth and that she and her child suffered serious consequences, which led to her child being delayed in development until they went to see an osteopath. All the mothers present ask questions for clarification

In this exchange, the course leader also recurrently participates by drawing on their own experiences: "The course leader points out that his children also only started sports courses at an older age". She otherwise ensures, on a formal level, that a space for free exchange and minimally normed interaction is created: "He then says: 'Sure, you can do anything' and emphasizes that he only put the swing up so that they could have a better conversation".

3.2 Parent-child course

Two mothers sit with their babies on a mat that is laid out on the floor. The course leader puts toys in the room and the babies occupy themselves and play on their own. The course leader asks Mother I about her vacation in Thailand and mother I reports on her time there. She mentions the arrival, the time change and the child's sleep problems. Mother II plays with her child, listens and occasionally joins in the conversation. At the same time, the course leader maintains eye contact with the children and plays with them.

Here too, a sequence from a family education course that initially appears basic is presented. However, even in this short sequence, facets of family education practice can be identified. The course leader actively shapes the space – and thus the activities for parents and children – across different sequences. Additionally, they proactively introduce topics in conversations with the parents and observe the children's play behaviour.

The course leader informs the children that they would like to drink tea now. She goes to the window, where the pot of hot water, the cups and tea bags are on the windowsill, and hands a cup with a tea bag to a mother. The other mother also stands up, chooses a tea bag and fetches the cups, which are now filled with hot water. Then everyone sits back down in their seats. The children play and the course leader and the mothers watch them. The course leader then changes the subject and asks Mother I to continue talking about her holiday.

The course leader structures the flow of the session and informs both parents and children present about the next steps. At the same time, they try to resume a conversation and stay engaged with the parents present.

Child II sits in a small ball pit and the course leader sits down next to her while she continues the conversation about the Thailand holiday. Mother I now talks about her child's eating habits. Child II throws a bowl at the course leader and smiles. The course leader says: "She is now in a phase where she likes to throw things, is that possible?" and smiles. She then asks Child I whether she can walk yet and holds out a ball to the child to test this. The child sits down, however. Mother I tells her that her child always walks a few steps at home. The course leader then remarks: "I can see that she is now interested in walking, the motivation is there now." She then talks about children's first steps (usual movement sequence and how nice it is for children to be able to use their hands when walking).

The course leader interacts with the children and mothers present. There is a clear orientation towards the stages of child development, which in this context is evident in relation to the throwing of objects (part of sensory exploration) and walking. Accordingly, the course leader comments on these occurrences and relates what is observed back to the respective developmental stage. Moreover, implicitly, the mother in the presented sequence feels prompted to relate to the course leader, almost apologetically noting that her child has (actually) already taken a few steps at home.

This sequence thus documents a different mode of *doing family education*. Here, the mode of dialogical, spontaneous exchange is formally maintained. The course leader continues to act on an equal footing, engaging in those moments of the interaction that naturally emerge from the exchange. However, unlike in the first example, this course leader does not use their speaking time for experience-based contributions but rather to reference knowledge drawn from their professional qualifications – specifically, here, relating to milestones of biophysical development in young children: "Child II throws a bowl at the course leader and smiles. The course leader says: 'She is now in a phase where she likes to throw things, is that possible?'"

These insights into the empirical material are analysed in more detail against this background in the following chapter.

4. Discussion

These analyses hinge on the differences in the formats of the two course offerings. The open parents' café (I) contrasts with the parent-child course (II), which offers a content framework. A more "familial" atmosphere appears to define the open café, highlighted by the course leader's frequently stated "You can do anything here." This atmosphere – characterising family education as a kind of conjunctive experiential space – seems to hold preventive potential. For example, Mother III, who is attending the café for the first time, shares personal, intimate details about her birth experience. The ensuing dialogic exchange among the mothers draws on real-life experiences, with family education thus providing the setting for a dialogic, experience-based exchange.

By contrast, the parent-child course (II) is more clearly connected to content-related objectives. The mothers consistently talk about child-rearing and development. This difference also applies to the course leaders: their interaction is oriented toward children's respective developmental stages, which they comment on as "phases".

Though often implicit, these comments invite the mothers to respond – exemplified by a mother justifying her child’s early walking at home. Hence, questions arise concerning whether appeals to the mothers are conveyed implicitly or explicitly, with the parent-child course tending toward more directive elements.

In both cases, a constitutive framing of family education is documented that has been effectuated and ratified in the process by the actors, representing the successful creation of a professionalized milieu based on “exchange”. Whether both data sequences indicate a heterarchical discourse organisation remains to be discussed. By referencing developmental models that generate a “diagnostic” perspective, the course leader clearly moves toward a “setting of normality conceptions”; however, our data sequence is not sufficiently rich to assess how directive or instructive, how heterogeneity-affirming or deficit-oriented, how accepting or sanctioning this professional handles these developmental models overall.

Further data obtained through group interviews within the broader research project – which are not included here – actually document, besides the shown modes of experience-based exchange and the implementation of expert knowledge within a dialogical format during the course, also modes that can be reconstructed both formally and semantically as “instructions” (the imposition of “educative” imperatives on specific topics by the course leader).

It remains an open question within the progress of our research project to what extent such practices disrupt the constitutive framing of family education, for which “exchange” plays a central role, or potentially evoke an *undoing family education*.

The empirical material reveals that the experiential space of family education is influenced by shared knowledge frameworks. Normative attributions to childhood, parenthood, and implicit notions of good social pedagogical practice become apparent in the respective interpretations. Furthermore, family education has already become a part of the dynamics surrounding the institutions of childhood (Kessl, 2022), and families themselves are specifically addressed through welfare state frameworks, finding themselves at the intersection of the demands of various institutions (Hank, 2025). The negotiation of these knowledge bases characterises the constitutive framing of family education practice and simultaneously defines its professional milieu (Bohnsack, 2024), which can be described using the criteria presented in the following table.

All in all, one can differentiate situations in which participants introduce topics on their own from those in which professionals proactively offer thematic prompts. Furthermore, many situations stem from group interactions (family education typically involves a high level of group-based interaction), where participants or the professionals highlight a specific issue as important.

Table 1
Modes of doing family education

Topics	Topics of doing value-based difference (named by parents)	Technical/methodical topics (implemented by specialists)	Community Topics based on each families different experience
Modes of doing family education	Reinforcement / reassurance / confirmation	Exchange / deliberation / discourse	Irritation by (opposite) instruction

The topics and the modes of their handling can all be combined with one another; table 1 above is a listing, not a fixed scheme of combinations. Summarising these modes of *doing family education* involves distinguishing between (1) various topics, (2) who introduces these topics, and (3) the ways in which they are handled by professionals or parents. Social and socio-political demands are relevant as they shape the families’ living situations. The modes of *doing family education* range from an experiential exchange that calms and encourages parents to occasionally contradictory instructions meant to stimulate educational processes from the professionals’ perspective.

The results presented in table 1 show on a primary level, how the practice of family education can be described based on the pressing issues. At the same time, the identified modes of *doing family education* allow for specific distinctions in the interaction between parents and professionals. Furthermore, the relevant course format can be identified as one of the key conditions for distinguishing between heterarchical and hierarchical discourse organisation.

All in all, we see that a low-threshold exchange can partly be interpreted as a staged activity that is simultaneously guided – with educational intent – by the respective course leader. Here, instructional practices must be distinguished from the so-called “exchange”, which is initiated by the course leaders – more or less intentionally

– with a view to (implicit) orientations and, where appropriate, to the explicit imparting of knowledge. An orientation toward the respective family “experience spaces” can be reconstructed, which is documented in the parents’ desire for an experience-based exchange and day-to-day support. At the same time, the course leaders are addressed by the parents as initiators and providers of knowledge. As a result, modes of pedagogical interaction in family education that are inherently normative – described here as instructions – are then identified.

5. Conclusions and limitations

The modes of doing family education that have been developed initially differ according to the context and mandate of the respective family education practice. Different facets of a family education experiential space are revealed depending on whether it is a course or an open offer (such as a parents’ café). At the same time, demands on family education professionals are highlighted, which also vary depending on the context and mandate of the respective offer, but in all cases go beyond mere moderation between parents and professionals.

Embedded in an ongoing research project on facets of a theory of family education, the analyses presented encourage the definition of basic concepts of family education such as learning or education in an empirically sound manner and their application to practice. Nevertheless, limitations of the approach presented here are apparent: the analysed participant observations are a case study that needs to be expanded by a multi-perspective sample. At the same time, the results need to be communicatively validated with parents and professionals. In addition, common sense structures of society and the respective organisation must be reconstructed, especially from an international perspective. In this context, from a professional theoretical perspective, external framings are to be expected based on the differences between the professional perspective and the participants’ perspective on motherhood. Incongruities may be linked to specific experiences related to social milieu, migration, or gender. Future research projects should focus on the constitutive framing of the professional milieu (Bohnsack, 2024), especially in light of these incongruities within the experiential realm of family education.

Nonetheless, insights into the empirical material provide first clues for a more precise description of the practice of family education, which has so far been little differentiated. The modes of doing family education that have been worked out can expand existing descriptions of experience-based dialogic exchange (Lentz-Becker et al., 2024) and communication (dos Santos et al., 2024) and are available for further interdisciplinary discourse (Herrera-Pastor et al., 2020). This could, for example, analyse the extent to which the modes of doing family education presented here enable or prevent processes of transformative learning (Hoggan, 2016). At the same time, the identified modes can be further differentiated. Family education takes place even when directive approaches to family education can be reconstructed. In this context, Nohl (2025) refers to “directive forms of education”, which can also be empirically distinguished from learning processes. Furthermore, the analysis can address the welfare-state dimension of family education on a meta-level. The distinctiveness of the practice of family education lies in implementing a dialogical interaction that ultimately is not subject to welfare state constraints, thereby distinguishing itself from case management or individualized assistance in social work.

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Data availability statement

The data that support the findings of this study are available on request from the corresponding author. The data are not publicly available due to privacy or ethical restrictions.

Declaration of conflict interests

The authors declare no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research.

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Keywords: documentary method; adult education; family education; prevention; participant observation

Doing family education zwischen Erfahrungsaustausch und fachlicher Intervention Analysen zu teilnehmenden Beobachtungen der Familienbildung in Deutschland

Zusammenfassung

Die Familienbildung bietet ein heterogenes Portfolio an Kursangeboten vor dem Hintergrund heterogener Organisationsformen in verschiedenen Ländern. In Deutschland ist die Familienbildung im SGB VIII verankert. Sie wird verstanden als ein Zwischenraum zwischen der Familie – als zentraler konjunktiver Erfahrungsraum – und der Gesellschaft. Auf Basis qualitativen empirischen Materials, analysiert mit der Dokumentarischen Methode, gibt der Beitrag Einblick in ein laufendes Forschungsprojekt zur Familienbildung in Deutschland. Vor dem Hintergrund der Frage nach dem Eigensinn familienbildnerischer Praxis, wird die Heuristik eines (*un*) *doing family educations* genutzt, um grundlegende Pädagogische Handlungsmodi zu unterscheiden.

Schlagworte: Dokumentarische Methode; Erwachsenenbildung; Familienbildung; Prävention; Teilnehmende Beobachtung

Doing Family Education : entre échange d’expériences et intervention professionnelle Analyses d’observations participantes dans le champ de l’éducation familiale en Allemagne

Résumé

L’éducation familiale se caractérise par une offre diversifiée de cours, organisés selon des modalités variables d’un pays à l’autre. En Allemagne, elle est ancrée dans le Code social VIII et se conçoit comme un espace intermédiaire entre la famille – en tant qu’espace central d’expériences conjointes – et la société. À partir de données empiriques qualitatives analysées selon la méthode documentaire, cet article offre un aperçu d’un projet de recherche en cours sur l’éducation familiale en Allemagne. En interrogeant la logique propre des pratiques éducatives familiales, il mobilise l’heuristique d’un (*un*) *doing family education* pour distinguer les modes d’action pédagogiques fondamentaux.

Mots-clefs : méthode documentaire ; éducation des adultes ; éducation familiale ; prévention ; observation participante

Doing Family Education tra scambio di esperienze e intervento professionale Analisi di osservazioni partecipanti nell'ambito dell'educazione familiare in Germania

Riassunto

L'educazione familiare comprende un ampio ventaglio di programmi di intervento professionale e si presenta in forme organizzative diverse a seconda dei paesi. In Germania, è ancorata al Codice sociale VIII e si colloca in uno spazio intermedio tra la famiglia, in quanto principale spazio esperienziale congiuntivo, e la società. Basandosi su materiale empirico qualitativo, raccolto e analizzato con il metodo documentario di interpretazione, il contributo offre uno sguardo su un progetto di ricerca in corso sull'educazione familiare in Germania. Nel rispondere alla domanda sulla natura intrinseca della pratica dell'educazione familiare, l'articolo si avvale dell'euristica di un *(un)doing family education* per distinguere i modi fondamentali di azione pedagogica dell'educazione familiare nell'ottica di una ricerca esplorativa.

Parole chiave: metodo documentario; educazione degli adulti; educazione familiare; prevenzione; osservazione partecipante

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