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What Is the Role of the Music Department in the Connection Period?: To Smoothly Connect Early Childhood Education and Elementary School Education

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Abstract

In March 2017, the three laws and regulations related to early childhood education, including the National Curriculum Standard for Kindergarten, and the Elementary School Curriculum Guidelines were revised at the same time. The basic policy states the establishment of consistent learning and support for child development, which includes the connection between early childhood and elementary school educations.

The difference between early childhood and elementary school educations is that early childhood education is a directional goal, elementary school education is an achievement goal, and in contrast to the experience curriculum that emphasizes the life and experience of each individual in early childhood, elementary school is a subject curriculum that emphasizes the academic system. Each education has its own characteristics, and many first graders are confused by the differences and cause maladaptation. Therefore, from the viewpoint of smooth connection from early childhood education to elementary school, the curriculum at the beginning of the first grade was positioned as the Start Curriculum so children could be adapted to school life.

The aim of this study is to clarify the role of the music department in the connection period between early childhood and elementary school educations.

Method used is the examination and consideration of the Elementary School Curriculum Guidelines, and the Start Curriculum prepared by each local government.

In the music textbook used by the first graders, several songs sung in early childhood education are hidden on the spread page so that pupils can search while looking at the pictures. It is devised so that because those are the songs they know, pupils can feel and sing the songs with confidence throughout their bodies leading to smooth start of elementary school learning. The F prefecture's Start Curriculum takes advantage of lower grade characteristics such as the integration of thinking and expression to help pupils make new friends by cross-curricular approach, incorporating singing in activities and experiences in living environment studies, and playing with Japanese nursery rhymes. In other words, for children in the connection period, singing songs not only achieves the goals of the music department, but also has a function which leads to expressing feelings, and by uniting the voices together, uniting the heart with new friends.

The music department plays a role in stabilizing the minds of first grade pupils. Therefore, it can be said that it's important for teachers to be aware of this and teach especially during the connection period.