

STORIES FROM CAREGIVERS FROM ICDP CHINA, 2021

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Caregiver **Jing Jing** said:

"After learning ICDP, I know that I need to change my previous ideas. Not force my own ideas on the child. What I want may not be what the child wants. We must respect our children and give them what they want. You cannot treat your child as a child anymore, you should treat her as an independent person; respect and listen to your child's thoughts. When appropriate, you should let go, do a good job of scaffolding for your child, and help your child's growth. You cannot do everything for them, they must try and fail in order to learn to fly. ICDP has taught me the importance of spending quality time with my child. I have changed after I studied ICDP. I used to be very grumpy, and I never gave my child a chance to explain. The only thing I could do was curse at her. This resulted in my child having no confidence, and she would only keep her head down and answer with a faint voice whenever I would scold her. Now that I have changed, even though her temper sometimes is still fiery, she is much better than before. And we are a lot closer. My child is slowly becoming increasingly confident. I learned that children cannot just be beaten and scolded, but that I should listen to her thoughts and practices calmly, give her more opportunities to explain, not just quickly resort to beating and scolding. I now want to encourage her, reward her, and recognize her fighting spirit. I hope that I can become good friends with my child in the future, so that I can listen to her thoughts, difficulties, confusion, and even mysteries, and let her open her heart to me. Let me get to know her. Perhaps I can give her some input from my own life and some advice if she wants."

Maomao, the caregiver, said:

"The signal for help" (following the child's initiative) was the most shocking part of my study. My child used to tell me: "You don't care about my feelings at all, why don't you understand me?". It turned out that I had never understood the signals my child was sending to me. He was complaining that I did not understand him and did not feel what he was feeling. If I had not learned ICDP, perhaps I would have turned a blind eye to his needs. Gradually, the child would no longer give me any signals and would no longer share his happiness nor his sorrows with me. How terrible! The parent's word to the child influence so much of what the child thinks about himself. We need to see the bright points of the child. He also has the need to be loved,

comforted, accepted, and understood. We should try to interpret the child's behavior in a way that we can find out his emotional needs. I learned a lot from these eight meetings, and it made me realize that my previous way of communicating with my child was simple and rough. I would be incredibly angry if he did not do as I required, and I would even beat him. I didn't see him as a human being, I didn't notice his emotional needs, I talked too much about his weaknesses and not enough about his strengths...".

Caregiver **Yang Yang** said:

"Before learning ICDP, as a mother of two children, I didn't know how to prevent the children from fighting, nor how to teach them to put away their toys and do the housework they had agreed to do. Every morning it was so painful, because without constant reminders and fights it seems that they would not be able to leave the house in time for school. After school, they had homework, house chores and the inevitable quarreling. Before I learn ICDP, my "tips and tricks" included threats, yelling, and hitting. I did not like this method, and neither did the children. And this method does not work! I threaten, yelled, and hit them repeatedly for the same unruly behavior. I constantly found myself yelling at the children: "I have said it a hundred times, put away your toys! Hurry up and do your homework!" When I was eating, I was so frustrated, because I repeated it a hundred times before I could even realize that my method did not work...

Through studying (ICDP), I discovered that these problems are not my children's problems, but my problems! Now I use what I have learned from ICDP about raising my children. I try to let them do their homework independently and give encouragement. I patiently ask the child what happened at school and how they are doing, trying to start an intimate conversation. When I leave the house, I want to treat the children as independent people, let them do homework by themselves, and let my son help his sister with her homework if she needs assistance. When I am cooking, if my daughter wants to join in cutting vegetables; I try follow the child's initiative and give her a small knife to help me cut the potatoes. I also provide explanations for the many strange questions my son asks me. When my child helps me move flowers and plants, we pay attention to the formation of a leaf... Just like Chairman Wu said: "In fact, ICDP is everywhere in life", it is just that I have lacked patience and understanding for my children! After studying, I discovered that my children have a lot of good sides, but I only wanted them to do things my way. I did not empathize with my children! Now I am slowly changing. After changing myself, the children will change, and the situation at home will also change! I will continually be using what I have learned!".

Mr. **Li Hua** was introduced by a friend to join the third phase of caregiver training, and both husband and wife participated in the caregiver training. The couple

were both divorcees before they married each other, and they are raising the wife's daughter together. Li Hua is the stepfather of this child. There is no big gap between husband and wife in daily communication, but they are not very close. After being introduced to ICDP by friends, they attended the caregiver training together.

It is difficult to raise a child, and Li Hua, encountered difficulties in having a good relationship with his stepchild. After learning ICDP, he feels that he has changed, and his relationship with his stepdaughter has also undergone a profound change and improvement. He says: "The foundation of ICDP – that we should respect and understand every child - is important. Life is wonderful. Every child starts out as the champion of one in a million in his/her parents' eyes. It is important that the parents accept the child and recognize him/her as an individual, and that they can express their love for the child. Only through the heart can old thought patterns be changed to new ideas and concepts. Thoughts determines attitude, attitude determines behavior, and behavior determines outcome. From our thoughts we realize that we have love for our child, we are in close contact with her, and we recognize that she is an independent individual. Give her sufficient space, and she will gradually develop and grow. I asked my stepdaughter one day: 'What do you think of me?' The child answered quickly: 'You are pretty nice!'"

Li Hua continues to share: "During my studies of ICDP I have realized that to make contact my stepchild and have a good relationship with her, I must realize that she is not my property. I must treat her as my child, even though she is not biologically my own child. I play badminton with her, go swimming with her, make origami figures with her, read books with her, spend my time with her to narrow the distance between us. This way we can get a closer relationship!"

His wife, and the child's mother says: "Now my daughter and my husband are very close!"

Daughter: "My father never plays with me. Li helps me with everything, and spends time with me, helping me with my origami paper folding. Whenever I return home from school, I know he is there to help me."

Zhai Zhichun (father):

Before learning ICDP, when my child started middle school, I used to boast about how I let my child "grow up happily, healthy and freely", but I communicated something vastly different to my son: "You are not a child anymore, so you must invest all your time in studying. Try to get the top ten in the class in the first grade, get the top ten in the second grade, and get the top ten in the state after graduation from the third grade. "

This was the goal I set for my child. If he failed to reach it, I would have been very anxious on his behalf. At that time, the relationship with my child was strained. After the primary teacher learned about our situation, he suggested that I could attend ICDP meetings. At that time, I thought it was a ridiculous suggestion - why

should I study and attend trainings? I just want what is good for the child, it is the child that does not work hard – he should be the one going to trainings.

However, I joined the ICDP training, and in the meetings the teacher guided us in understanding our own parenting philosophy and parenting methods. Only then did I realize that my communication with my child was ineffective, not realistic, and that I did not empathize with the child. My child does not want to talk to be, how can I guide and influence him? I must change myself first so the child listens to me. Then I can help him achieve any goals.

To learn and practice the set rules should be reasonable. Unreasonable rules cannot be implemented. The goal should be combined with the child's reality, his nature, hobbies, personality, etc. Implementing rules can feel repetitive, but that is normal, so there is no need to rush or be impatient. It is important to provide appropriate help and follow the child's initiative. Now, my son is responsible for his own learning - I no longer dictate, I give him care and love.