

Research on Public Service of 0-3-year-old Childcare and Policy Support

Taking Tianjin as an Example

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Abstract—0-3-year-old childcare is an important way to solve the current problem of nobody caring for 0-3 year-old children and imbalance between work and family in urban family, especially the "two-child" family, which has paid attention by the scholars and government leaders. However, at present, there is a serious shortage of 0-3-year-old childcare services in China. The demand for 0-3-year-old childcare can't be satisfied, which seriously affects the fertility desire for a "second child" and the work-family balance of family composed by working couple. It has become a very urgent task to construct a public service system for 0-3-years-old children. Based on the requirements of 0-3-year-old childcare in urban areas and the survey of childcare service supply, this research explores the fundamental problems of 0-3-year-old childcare and the research results provide intellectual support for the public service system of 0-3-year-old childcare in China.

Keywords—0-3-year-old children; childcare services; major issues; policy suggestion

I. INTRODUCTION

Since the 21st century, especially when the "two-child" policy has been fully opened in 2016, the issue of 0-3-year-old childcare has become prominent. The main reason is that there is no one caring for 0-3-years-old children. The parents of children are generally aging, and are in a period of professional growth. Their grandparents are old and have difficulties in caring themselves. The second reason is that the parents "cannot afford to raise the child due to high economic pressure." Cost of family babysitting is high, and the qualities of babysitting services are various. The establishment of a diversified 0-3 year-old childcare public service system suitable for multiple need is an important measure to solve the problem of "no one caring for children" in the family, reduce the cost of childbearing and increase the economic ability to bring up children of family, as well as an effective measure to relieve the bearing responsibility of females and career development [1-2].

Currently, the issues of 0-3-year-old childcare have received attention from scholars and government departments. On June 13, 2017, Liu Yandong, member of the

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Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee and vice premier of the State Council, and director of the National Working Committee for Children and Women stressed at the forum on promoting the healthy development of children that "children's development is related to the future of the nation and the happiness of billions of families" and "we should consider the new demand after the implementation of the two-child policy and steadfastly promote the development of childcare services and inclusive pre-school education." The project was completed based on in-depth research on the demand of 0-3-year-old childcare in urban households in Tianjin and the supply of childcare services for 0-3-year-old children in Tianjin. The research results mainly provide intellectual support for the introduction of policy on the childcare service for 0-3-year children.

Survey sample of this project mainly comes from questionnaire of childcare service needs of 0-3-year-old children in urban households in Tianjin in the project of "public service and policy support for 0-3-year-old childcare". The respondents are mainly the persons from the married couples who have lived in Tianjin for more than six months and are about to give birth to a child, or those from the couples who currently have infants under 6 years old.

The survey area includes 4 districts in Tianjin, including 2 core districts (Nankai District and Hebei District) and 2 suburban areas (Beichen District and Dongli District). The samples of pregnant woman/husband of pregnant woman are mainly completed through maternity hospital or obstetrics department of hospital, including Shuige Hospital in Nankai District, the First Hospital in Hebei District, Obstetrics and Gynecology in Toray Hospital, Ruijing Street Community Health Service center in Beichen District. The questionnaires of parents of infants under 6 years old were completed mainly through the investigation of MCH / HC / CDC, including the women and children's health center in Nankai District, the Women and Children's Health and Family Planning Service Center in Hebei District, the women and children Health and Family Planning Service Center in Dongli District, Ruijing Street Community Health Service Center in Beichen, Fuzhen Community Health Service Center in Yixing.

Selection of survey site is mainly based on the feedback of pregnant women's experience. In the area under administration, the number of pregnant women accept pregnancy test in obstetrics department/ community health service center in above hospitals is more, so the investigation is more concentrated. The site of the questionnaire for parents of infants under 6 years old is selected because the number of people who conduct 0-3-year-old childcare and prophylactic vaccination in hospitals / community health centers is great, resulting in a concentration of 0-3-year-old children and parents in community hospitals. And after physical examination and disease screening for 0-3-year-old children, they generally stay in the hospital for half an hour for observation, which provide the convenience of time for the issuance of questionnaires and interviews with the respondents; the second reason is from the perspective of age distribution of the target children, the children who come to the hospital for regular physical examination and disease screening are 3 months, 6 months, 8 months, 1 year old, 1 year and a half, 2 years old, 2 years and a half, 3 years old. 0-3-year-old children in community hospitals are evenly distributed, so we can obtain the childcare needs of parents with children at different ages from 0 to 3; third is the childcare needs of object of the survey. This part of the population is in the support period of 0-3-year-old children, so their perception of childcare needs for 0-3-year-old children is more objective and true.

The content of the questionnaire is mainly divided into four parts: the basic information of the family, the surveys of childcare demand, other opinions and suggestions for childcare. Basic family information mainly includes the respondents' age, relationship with the children (0-3-year-old children), occupation, family income and the number of births. The survey of childcare needs mainly includes the person who care for the children at home (0-3 years old), whether there are childcare service agencies for 0-3 year-old children, the distance of childcare service agencies from home, the nature of care services, whether they want to send children to childcare center, the age of children appropriate for childcare, the reason why they hope to resort to childcare center, the requirements of the childcare agencies, and which aspects of children's ability they want to enhance and so on.

In the survey of childcare needs of 0-3-year-old children, it is planned to survey 250 samples in each district, of which 90 are pregnant women/ husbands of pregnant women and 160 are parent of infants under 6 years old. The final size of valid sample is 1175, including 456 (38.81%) of the married couples in pregnancy and 719 (61.19%) of the non-pregnant parent of children under 6 years old. The respondents include 393 males, accounting for 33.4% and 782 females, accounting for 66.6%. There are 1,031 registered permanent residences in this city, accounting for 87.7% of the total and there are 144 persons without household registration in the city, accounting for 12.3% of the total. The age distribution of respondents is more evenly as in "Fig. 1". 258 people are over the age of 35, accounting for 21.96%, 455 people are aged 30-35, accounting for 38.72%, 414 people are aged 25-30, accounting for 35.23%, and 48 people are under 25, accounting for 4.09%. The level of education of respondents

involves multiple levels as in "Fig. 2". 210 people are under high school / technical secondary school / technical secondary school, accounting for 17.9%. The people with college degree are 265, accounting for 22.6%; 591 people have undergraduate degree, accounting for 50.3%; the people with master's degree or above are 109, accounting for 9.3%.

The supply of 0-3-year-old childcare service for urban family in Tianjin is formed mainly based on the investigation of Peace Nursery School in Tianjin, Tianjin Health and Family Planning Commission kindergarten, Huaxia future bilingual kindergarten in Hexi District, Shengsheng kindergarten in Hexi District, Hongqiao Longdi bilingual kindergarten, Nankai third nursing homes and other 0-3-year-old childcare service agencies.

II. BASIC SITUATION OF 0-3-YEAR-OLD CHILDCARE NEEDS

A. *The Problems of 0-3-year-old Childcare Is Prominent and the Fertility Desire for Second Child Is Low*

According to the survey results, in Tianjin 0-3-year-old children are mainly looked after by parents (48%) and grandparents (49%) under 1 year old during the daytime and 1-2-year-old children are mainly looked after by grandparents (61%) during the daytime.

About the survey of "Do you still want to give birth to another child?", the people saying "yes" account for 19.93% (175), while those saying "no" account for 53.76% (472), and those saying "uncertain" account for 26.31% (231). The families with one pregnant child that have the willing to give birth to another child account for 22.93%. The families with one child without the pregnant child that have the willing to give birth to another child account for 18.26%. The primary reason for not wanting to have a child is the economic burden (30%).

This shows that 0-3-year-old children are mainly looked after by the family (grandparents) in Tianjin. With the development of society, the age of marriage and childbearing of the younger generation is gradually delayed (60.68% of the respondents aged 30 or above are randomly selected), and the pressure of the grandparents taking care of 0-3 year old children after the childbirth becomes greater, which objectively leading the mothers to be forced to extend their maternity leave, interrupt their careers or seek nanny to take care. This will have a significant impact on the family's economic life and the development of women's personal career. The "Regulations of Protection on the Rights and Interests of Women of Tianjin Municipality" implemented in March 2017 stipulates that after the expiration of the maternity leave for female employees, they can apply for the consent of the employer to have a breastfeeding leave less than six months if it is not possible for them to take care of the infants. The survey finds that civil servants and employees of public institutions can basically enjoy the breastfeeding leave while it is difficult for employees of enterprises to really enjoy the benefits. Father-to-be and mother-to-be face the large pressure, so their fertility desire for a second child is far below the expectation of policy.

B. *Parents Have Misgiving in Sending 0-3-year-old Children to Care Center, so the Nursery Needs Are Suppressed*

According to the survey results, 64.1% of the respondents answered that there are 1-2 childcare agencies for children aged 0-3 within the distance of 15-minute walk from their homes, but the 0-3-year-olds of respondents are mainly taken care by the parents and grandparents during the daytime and the care of domestic workers / infants' nurse, kindergartens, nurseries and other institutions is less than 5%.

The reason for being willing to send children to care center: let their baby obtain professionally care for and education (29.9%) and have baby play with more children (23.9%). The nature of the organizations that they are willing to send their children are public (84.43%), private enterprises (11.32%) and government participation (such as government support with private operation) (3.54%). They want to send their children aged 0-3 to care institutions at the age of 2-2.5 (46.54%). It is hoped that the institution can be located near the "living communities or neighborhoods" (77.44%).

Reasons for reluctance to send their children to childcare institutions are mainly due to the insecurity, accounting for 16.06%, the high cost of nursery fee, accounting for 12.82%, and the poor condition of childcare institutions, accounting for 9.02%.

71.75% of the respondents are willing to accept the nursery fee less than 2000 yuan, but the cost of 0-3 year-old childcare in profit-making private institutions is generally higher than 2,000 yuan, and the greening and fire control measures in most of the profit-making private agencies are not up to standard, where there are huge security risks.

C. *Public Care Services Will Promote the Balance between Work and Family and the Fertility Desire for a Second Child*

According to the survey results, the stage where the conflict between work and family is most prominent of the respondents is mainly the period when children are at the age of 0-3. As for the problem of "Do you think the development of childcare services can help you balance the work and the family?" 40.1% of the respondents (471) think "it is very helpful" and 38.6% of the respondents (453) think "it is relatively helpful". "Are you willing to give birth to another child if there is a better child public service and welfare policy?" 46.58% of the respondents answered "yes". The proportion of answer is higher than that of the answer "yes" (19.93%) of the problem "Do you still want to give birth to another children?" in the previous survey of fertility desire by 26.65 percentage points. Among this, the fertility desire of the respondents with one pregnant child increases by 26.11 percentage points, and that of respondents with one child currently instead of a pregnant child increases by 26.95 percentage points.

III. BASIC SITUATION OF SUPPLY FOR 0-3-YEAR-OLD CHILDCARE

At present, kindergartens in Tianjin are roughly divided into public-run kindergartens, private-run profit-making kindergartens, social early education centers and community-based nurseries.

0-3-year-old children parenting agencies in Tianjin includes health and family planning Commission, and Education Commission and so on. The objects of public kindergartens are mainly the children of workers in the organization of this system, and they only provide nursery services for the workers in the system. At the same time, relying on its own characteristics and educational experience of 3-6-year-old children they continue to explore the childcare work of 0-3-year-old children. For example, Peace Nursery School has a pre-school teaching room, which mainly research on the issues of childcare for 0-3-year-old children and provide theoretical guidance for 0-3-year-old childcare. Affiliated kindergarten of Tianjin Kindergarten teacher nursery retains the early education major, providing teachers for early education institutions and kindergartens in Tianjin. However, because there is no unified competent department, the childcare center of public sector only carries out communication and exchange in business problems and the management is relatively decentralized.

Private 0-3-year-old childcare services in Tianjin are mostly profit-making. In order to attract more children to enter the nursery, early education will be added to care services, with corresponding increases in fees. However, due to the limitations of its own hardware conditions, it is hard for private kindergartens to achieve the standard construction of public kindergartens in the classroom area, green area, health, and fire control. High fees and no security are the main reason why parents are reluctant to send their children to private kindergartens.

There are still some community nurseries left in Tianjin, which are mainly operated by the community households. Firstly, the nurseries solve the problem of the income source of this part of family; secondly, they solve the problem of no body caring for the 0-3 year-old children in the families within community. Because community nurseries are mainly provided by their neighbors in the community, the fees are relatively cheaper, with free pick-up and drop-off time, and people are familiar with their neighbors. Some parents are willing to entrust their children to nurseries. However, there is a gap in the government's management and guidance of community families.

IV. MAIN PROBLEMS IN THE 0-3-YEAR-OLD CHILDCARE PUBLIC SERVICE

A. *Positioning of 0-3-year-old Childcare Service Is not Accurate and the Management Mechanism Is Poor*

Currently, 3-6-year-olds childcare predominantly belongs to education, so 3-6-year-olds are mainly managed by education department. Whether 0-3-year-old children should be based on "nurturing" or "education" has been concluded, so there is no department to co-ordinate. Public 0-3-year-old

childcare institutions were established mainly based on the special background at that time, and belongs to the Health and Family Planning Commission, Education Bureau, and Ministry of Civil Affairs respectively. Public 0-3-year-old childcare institutions don't have unified planning in professional management, such as 0-3-year-old childcare content, daily activities norms and teaching materials, which mainly rely on their own resources and original service features to provide care services. Most of the private childcare institutions register in the communities / streets and obtain the business license of the health department and the business sector. There are serious deficiencies in starting qualification and supervision and so on.

B. Public 0-3-year-old Childcare Services Are Gradually Shrinking

The public nursery represented by peace nursery in Tianjin Health and Family Planning Commission system initially enrolled children mainly under 3 years old. In recent years, with the increase of children, the demand for 3-6-year-old childcare has been increasing year by year. However, there is no corresponding increase in the construction of public kindergartens and supply of teachers, resulting in the unmet childcare needs of 3-6-year-old children. To address the nursery needs of 3-6-year-old children and increase the enrollment rate of children aged 0-3, the public nursery school can only reduce the number of enrolled children aged 0-3, which directly leads the enrollment of 0-3-year-olds be occupied. Institution-based nursery is mainly operated by public institution and state-owned enterprises. In the 1980s, with the reform of state-owned enterprises, the social functions of state-owned enterprises were gradually peeled off. At present, there are only a few institution-based nurseries.

C. The Title Problem of Public Nursery Staff Is Difficult to Solve and Childcare Personnel Is Insufficient

In order to meet the psychological and physical needs of 0-3-year-olds, nursery schools basically implement the teacher staffing of two teacher and one nursery person for 0-3 years old children. Among them, the teacher is included into the teacher sequence to solve the title problem. However, nursery person and health workers are mainly doctors and nurses who graduated from medical schools. At present, the title problem of this part of staff is difficult to solve. Second, the authorized strength of public kindergartens is limited. The number of nursery person for children aged 0-3 is not enough while the society is not familiar with the public kindergartens such as nursery, and they do not know the main areas of work of two teachers and one nursery person, resulting in reluctance of graduate to work in nursery and the lack of nursing staff and health workers.

D. The Charges and Security Factors of Private Nursery Are the Major Concerns for Sending 0-3-year-old Children to Nursery

0-3-year-old childcare for ordinary workers and families are mainly based on profit-making private kindergartens and community nurseries. However, it is very hard for

kindergartens in the market under for children 3 years old to meet the standards of formal kindergartens in the aspects of places, personnel, health care, and fire-fighting. However, the problems of high fees and safety of private nursery have become the main concerns of parents when they send children aged 0-3 to nursery. At present, Tianjin is standardizing the quality of private kindergartens, but this policy is not implemented now.

E. 0-3-year-old Childcare Services Lack Policy Support

According to the survey, at present, there is no policy document specifically for children aged 0-3 in Tianjin, and the only one that deals with children aged 0-3 is the content about early education for 0-3-year-old children in the Article 2 of the Tianjin Pre-primary Education Promotion Plan (2013-2015). That is "to comprehensively popularize early education to ensure the coverage of early education for all children aged 0-3 in the community reach 100%." Meanwhile, the second clause of Article 3 of "Tianjin Pre-primary Education Promotion Plan (2013-2015)" stipulates that the scale of public resources should be expanded [3]. All districts and counties should strictly implement the "Opinions on Further Strengthening the Construction and Management and Utilization of Kindergartens in Residential Areas" (Tianjin Office No. [2011] 81). The planning department in charge does not approve the plan for a newly-built residential quarter that fails to meet the requirements of construction of supporting kindergartens or specify the layout, location and construction indicators of suppurating kindergartens to be constructed. Governments at all levels should step up supervision and inspections, thoroughly check the supporting kindergartens that are idle or misappropriated for other purposes, and hand over the education kindergartens to the administrative departments of education within a specified time limit to resume the operation of kindergarten. However, the contents of the policy don't have unified regulations on 0-3-year-old childcare management, scheduling, and textbooks compilation, so kindergarten organization can only arrange according to their own existing conditions.

V. CONCLUSION

With the open of "two children" policy, the burden of taking care of children aged 0-3 increases and the demand of parents for 0-3-year-old childcare service is gradually increasing. However, the supply of childcare services for 0-3-year-olds in Tianjin is obviously insufficient. The top-level design of childcare services for 0-3-year-olds should be strengthened to build a universal coverage and multi-level public care system for children aged 0-3, so as to solve the problem of "no one caring for 0-3-year-old children", relief the conflicts between woman's family responsibility and career development and promote the balance between family and work of parents.

A. To Promote Top-level Design of Public Services for 0-3 year-olds Childcare

The unclear positioning of competent authorities and poor management mechanism are the fundamental reasons

for the lack of childcare services for 0-3-year-old children. They should jointly promote the construction of 0-3-year-old children's public care service system through integration of education and nursery based on the public service characteristics of 0-3-year-old children in Tianjin, with the Health and Family Planning Commission and the education sector as main body and civil administration, women's federations, and the municipal labor unions as supplement. Specifically, we should give statutory management status to the Health and Family Planning Commission and the education sector by formulating a management measure for childcare of 0-3-year-old children, raise the overall level of 0-3-year-old childcare, and clear the system barriers in planning, programming and designing the management approach for 3-year-old childcare services to effectively promote the comprehensive implementation of 0-3-year-old childcare services [4].

B. To Increase Financial Input to Build a Full Coverage and Multi-level Public Care Service System with Multiple Simultaneous Efforts

First, we should increase financial input, continue to encourage and promote the existing nursery school mode of Tianjin Health and Family Planning Commission, education sector, relevant public institutions, and state-owned enterprises. On the basis of the existing nursery schools of various departments, we should strengthen construction of the kindergartens and the training of teachers and expand the number of students enrolled to strive to meet the needs of children aged 0-3 in more families. Second, through new construction, reorganization and expansion, resource adjustment and taxation, we can encourage and support institutions, public institutions and state-owned enterprises to revitalize and re-start the nursery schools and expand the proportion of public nurseries. Third, relying on the streets / communities and large-scale residential quarters, we can take the government-provided venue and the way of buying social services to establish the community childcare center of public construction with private operation or public operation with private support to give full play to the strength of grassroots institutions running childcare center [5]; fourth, we should encourage, support, and explore the conditional kindergartens in the area and early education institutions to provide care services for 0-3-year-old children relying on its kindergarten service and early education experience.

C. To Formulate 0-3-year-old Childcare Management and Service Policy and Strengthen the Supervision on 0-3-year-old Childcare Services

First, a clear start-up qualification of 0-3-year-old childcare services should be made to develop management standards of childcare services. Specifically, we can adhere to the principle of increase after promotion to develop the standards of kindergarten in line with the actuality of nursery and easy to popularize and provide hardware facilities and software facilities for 0-3-year-old childcare institutions; Second, the education and nursery programs of 0-3-year-old childcare and the corresponding standard of care services

should be standardized to provide clear guidance for the content of care services so that the content of care services is gradually standardized and the institutionalization of care services can be enhanced [6]. Thirdly, we need to strengthen the joint management responsibilities of Health and Family Planning Commission and the education department to strengthen the examination and supervision of the childcare institutions and childcare services for 0-3-year-old children and ensured the safety and quality of childcare service of 0-3-year-old children.

D. To Construct Talent Training and Assessment System for Nursing Service of 0-3-year-old Children

First, we should draw lessons from the service experience of public childcare institutions such as pre-school research room of peace nursery and early education major in Tianjin Normal University to build and support the personnel training of childcare service for 0-3-year-old children and provide personnel guarantee for 0-3-year-old childcare nursery in Tianjin; second, we can encourage qualified institutions of higher learning to set up childcare-related majors and the core curriculum related to education and childcare to train professional childcare personnel. The third is to allow relevant government departments to build a professional training system for nursery practitioners, coach maternity matron, nannies and other groups to obtain certification of nursery person to supplement the team of nursery person [7-8]. Fourth is the establishment of job evaluation system for childcare talent of 0-3-year-old children The 0-3 year-old child health care teachers are included into the teacher sequence, which guides more health care teacher to join the childcare team. At the same time, we can establish a title assessment channel for nursery person for 0-3-year-old childcare to provide a titles ascending channel for nursery and health care personnel and improve the evaluation mechanism for nursery and health care personnel.

E. To Strengthen the Construction of Accident Insurance System for 0-3-year-old Childcare

We should cooperate with the insurance company to set up a special childcare accident insurance to reduce the handling risk of the childcare agency and ensure the healthy development of the nursery cause. First is to include the nursery accidental injury into the scope of reimbursement of urban health insurance as a new insurance for health insurance; second is to establish the sharing way of government subsidies and the individual payment to increase the input of childcare accident insurance fund.

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