



# The International Experience of Early Childhood Care and Zhejiang Practice Research

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## Abstract

With the comprehensive rollout of the three-child policy, childcare service has become the main factor restricting the implementation of the universal three-child policy. This paper expects to analyze the experience of the comprehensive community childcare service center in the UK and the childcare service model of the "early start program" in the US by analyzing the fertility encouragement policy and childcare service model in developed countries. It also introduces the current mode of "young child can be well cared in Zhejiang" and analyzes the mode of care service in Gongshu District of Hangzhou City, and finally forms a positive reference for the construction of care service in China, especially in Zhejiang Province. This paper puts forward three suggestions for the nursery care service in Zhejiang Province: continue to promote the balanced supply of public nursery care service, build a child-friendly society, and increase the supply of public nursery care service personnel.

## Keywords

Nurturing young children, young child can be well cared in Zhejiang, Childcare services

## 1. Question raising

With the opening of the comprehensive three-child policy, childcare has become a hot topic in Chinese society. Under the background of formulating a new round of population policies and economic stimulus policies and plans in many developed countries, the development of infant care services is not only an urgent problem for families to solve, but also an inevitable result of maintaining the healthy development of national population and sustainable economic development (Liu Zhongyi, 2017). At present, the international community is expanding the cause of childcare services to the field of public services, paying attention to the social attributes of its public services, in which childcare services are regarded as one of the most important public services, and childcare services are regarded as a comprehensive policy. Some developed countries have established relatively complete public service policies for childcare, including childcare service systems involving the care of 0-3 years old infants and supporting fertility policies. It has become an important goal for most developed countries to formulate and implement childcare service policies, and it has also become an experience that more countries with population aging crisis can learn from.

Understanding the development process of childcare services in various countries and grasping the latest trends and trends of childcare services can provide reference for childcare services in China. Zhejiang Province, as one of the provinces that launched childcare services earlier in China, has actively explored childcare services with Zhejiang characteristics in the context of common prosperity in recent years—"young child can be well cared in Zhejiang" (Xiao, G & Zhou, Y. H, 2022). This study, through sorting out domestic and foreign childcare services, grasps the educational philosophy and social background behind them, and thus grasps the latest trends and trends

in the development of childcare services in the world. Secondly, due to the late development of childcare services in China, although the development momentum is good, there are still many problems in the development process. For example, problems such as supply imbalance and uneven quality of teachers, this paper hopes to provide China with useful experience and reference from the development experience of childcare services in developed countries or regions, so as to make our childcare services more perfect and standardized, solve parenting problems for families, and ensure that the three-child policy is fully implemented.

## **2. Research content**

### **2.1 International experience of childcare**

#### **2.1.1 UK**

The childcare service in Britain came into being with the development of the industrial revolution, so childcare service has obvious service characteristics. With the government's attention to childcare services, childcare and education tend to be institutionalized, systematized and standardized, and gradually form a more perfect service model. The children's center in the UK childcare service is a comprehensive community childcare service center in the UK, which serves not only children, but also parents and expectant parents. As a comprehensive service center, the Children's Center provides the following services for infants and young children in the community: first, full-time, half-day and short-term childcare services; Second, health services for children and parents, including prenatal care, child health examination, and health knowledge popularization; Third, family services for parents' personal and family needs, including parents' personal learning, employment guidance and improvement of family environment; Fourth, scientific childcare guidance services for novice parents, including holding relevant childcare lectures, childcare classes, parent activities, etc. Encourage parents to participate in the operation of the center, participate in community activities, and participate in parent forums or advisory committees; Fifth, provide training support for nannies. In addition, in order to avoid the "maternal punishment" of women after childbirth, the British government also stipulated three kinds of protection rights for mothers, namely, the right of women not to be dismissed because of return after pregnancy; Women have the right to continue to work in their original positions after childbirth; And women have the right to ask their employers to pay wages pending childbirth. In 2013, the UK refined its efforts to establish a more effective early education service system and talent team. It mainly includes building a talent team engaged in early childhood education and care, improving the quality of services related to early childhood development, guiding market players to change to improve quality services, improving the quality of government free public services, and improving diversified options for parents.

#### **2.1.2 United States**

American educational circles generally believe that child care services began in the 1970s. Since the 1990s, the federal government has strengthened its research on childcare services and increased financial support. A series of policies and measures have been taken for families, special children, early education teachers, etc. On the whole, American childcare services have opened a new historical stage.

In 1995, the "Start Plan" formulated the "Early Start Plan" for infants and young children. It is a comprehensive service project, including physical and mental health, nutrition, child development, etc. The proposal of the early start plan shows that the government realizes that childcare service is a kind of participation of the whole society and not an individual behavior, which makes childcare more widely into the public's eyes. Secondly, the parental education proposed in the early start plan regards the family as an important place for infant education, and advocates co-education. The government improves parents' parenting skills through training, discussion and other means. With the continuous development of childcare services, community childcare has also been included. In order to serve younger children more conveniently, the state government has set up childcare centers in the community, equipped with professional guides and teachers, and provided door-to-door services for families in need. Childcare has truly become an act of "participation and benefit of the whole people". This is one of the most important changes in American childcare services. In addition, in order to ensure the quality of childcare and the scientificity and standardization of childcare institutions and their curriculum construction, the federal government requires states to establish a childcare supervision quality system to comprehensively supervise and evaluate the professionalism of teachers, institutional environment, curriculum content, etc. of childcare institutions. The most authoritative is the quality certification system of NAEYC, which divides the evaluation content into 11 aspects: teacher-student interaction, curriculum, teacher-child interaction, teachers, administrative management, teacher alloca-

tion, etc.

### **3. International experience and enlightenment of childcare**

#### **3.1 Strengthen government leadership and clarify the division of responsibilities of the diversified supply system**

The public childcare service for children aged 0-3 cannot meet the multiple requirements of families and regions by one department alone, so the government or other departments are linked to support it. If only the efforts of the government or a certain department cannot meet the current needs of family care, so the government and other departments must work together to provide support. Although the market and other departments can participate in the public childcare service to solve some of the difficulties for the government, the government needs to play a major decision-making and command role in the public childcare service, and carry out top-level design, system design and financial allocation (Hong, X, Zhao, S. J, & Zhu, W. T, 2021). This can not only ensure that public kindergartens and childcare service development can provide model childcare services for families; It can also supervise the financial assistance and management of the market or other public nurseries of the third party to the main body, the evaluation of the operation, et. including the long-term and orderly development of public nurseries, in order to adapt to the requirements of more families' childcare services, and create a good supply network (Li M Y & Cui Y F, 2022).

#### **3.2 Pay attention to multiple supply systems and promote the formation of multi-level childcare service supply network**

The diversified supply system shows that the government, the market, the third sector and the family are all involved in the public childcare services for children under 3 years old. China's current childcare services should form government-led, community-based, market-supplemented and family-based childcare services. At present, China's educational circles generally believe that 0-3 years old infants and young children are mainly nurseries and supplemented by education. Their family is the main body of care for infants aged 0-3, because parents and grandparents are the first responsible person for infant care and the most intimate group. Therefore, the status of the family as the main body of infant care services cannot be changed for a long time, but timely guidance and support to the family and improvement of family care level also need to be supplemented (Liu, G. Y et al., 2022). As a complementary market for childcare services, its role cannot be ignored, but market-oriented childcare services need to guide the reasonable optimization of limited high-quality resources through the three major adjustment mechanisms of supply and demand side, price and competition on the basis of meeting the existing standards, and at the same time meet the personalized childcare needs of different families through market channels.

#### **3.3 The Practice of Zhejiang from Childhood to young child can be well cared in Zhejiang—Taking Gongshu District of Hangzhou City as an Example**

Gongshu District, as the first area in Zhejiang Province to carry out infant care services, has now become a national demonstration area for infant care services, and has formulated the industry standards for nursery care services in Gongshu District and become the industry benchmark of other districts in Hangzhou. Among them, "Sunshine Children" nursery is the first "government-community-family" trinity nursery care model in Gongshu District (Xiao, G & Zhou, Y. H, 2022). That is, the new model of common prosperity childcare, which is a trinity of government funding, community venue and parents' carefree childcare. By 2023, Gongshu District plans to build hundreds of sunshine childcare service stations in the whole district, and on this basis, build a 15-minute infant care service scope system in Gongshu District, and finally realize the beautiful vision of 100% infant care guidance rate, community coverage rate and infant and child health management rate by 2023, realize the goal of balanced supply of childcare services in a real sense.

### **4. Recommendations**

#### **4.1 Continue to promote the balanced supply of public childcare services**

Increasing the number of public childcare institutions and accelerating the construction of inclusive private

childcare institutions are the key points to improve the supply structure of public childcare institutions. At present, the supply of public childcare services in Zhejiang Province is still prominent, and it is difficult to meet the people's urgent needs for childcare. The government should take measures to increase the supply of public childcare services, promote its balanced supply, and stimulate the public's desire for childbearing in the context of the comprehensive three-child policy. For example, the community should encourage the active development of childcare services and explore childcare service sites; Kindergartens with ability are provided with various forms of childcare classes, such as time care, half-day care and other forms of childcare services. Accelerating the construction of inclusive childcare institutions will, from a personal perspective, help solve the problem of "wanting to have children but not dare to have them" of school-age parents, thus improving the fertility rate; From the social perspective, carrying out infant care services can help more professional women return to the workplace without worries.

#### **4.2 Create a child-friendly society**

Since November 2021, maternity and parental leave have been extended in many places, which plays an important role in the overall implementation of the three-child policy. However, according to the actual situation, some women of childbearing age still have some concerns about enjoying the statutory maternity leave and are worried about the adverse career development; Some enterprises are concerned that they may have to bear the labor costs of women's maternity and parental leave, and there is certain employment discrimination based on gender. In order to eliminate women's concerns about statutory holidays and gender employment discrimination, it is recommended that all parts of Zhejiang Province speed up the exploration and implementation of the construction of a "child-friendly society", and further clarify the mechanism of childbearing related holidays. That is to explore that the cost of maternity is shared by the state, enterprises and families, which may appropriately alleviate the employment cost of maternity leave for female employees borne by enterprises through direct subsidies or tax relief and tax relief arrangements, and even encourage enterprises to hire more female employees, so as to eliminate gender discrimination in employment and boost the willingness to have children.

#### **4.3 Increase the supply of personnel for public childcare services**

At present, care institutions in Zhejiang Province are still extremely short of care practitioners, and the team of care practitioners is unstable. In view of this situation, we can adopt the way of "order-style" cooperation and strengthen the cooperation with vocational colleges, which can not only solve the problem of insufficient professional degree of care teachers, but also enhance the attraction of care positions. The most important thing is to promote the improvement of the quality of childcare institutions through the recruitment of childcare professionals, so that parents can feel at ease to send their children to childcare institutions. Under the background of the universal three-child policy, increasing the number of employees can optimize the construction of the team, truly meet the needs of the public, and eliminate the worries of families who want to increase the number of children.

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