

Role Analysis of Social Workers' Intervention in the Construction of Child-Friendly Community in China

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Abstract. With the release of two-child policy in China, the number of children has increased, and Chinese families have ushered in the “two-child era”. The children’s generation has always been regarded as “the flower of the motherland, the hope of the future”, with the development of modern economic society, commercial houses in urban construction has been uprooted, replaced by the deterioration of acquaintance social relations network established before, the reduction of public entertainment space in the community, more crises and challenges faced by children’s living environment, how to build a child-friendly community in China has also attracted more and more attention. This paper explores the role orientation of social workers in the construction of child-friendly community in China from the perspective of social workers.

1. Concept definition

Child-friendly community is a brand-new and fuzzy concept. Based on the definition of UNICEF, child-friendly community provides inclusive services in a wide range of dimensions including culture, education, health, etc. in safe and friendly community public spaces by relying on community, taking protecting children’s rights and promoting children’s development as the purpose, and taking children aged 0-18 years old as well as their guardians and other family members as service objects, which adheres to the three principles of child priority, common good, fairness and community resources. Chattopadhyay believed that child-friendly referred to living in a comfortable, protected and non-discriminatory social environment and having the power to pursue rights when neglected [1]. Li Shuwen regarded that child-friendly community referred to community where the overall environment was conducive to the healthy development of children’s physical and mental health [2]. Combined with the above views, this paper defines the concept of child-friendly community in China as: a comprehensive system provides children and their families with safety, education, entertainment, health, mental health and other services related to children by taking the community where children live as the carrier, and protecting children’s rights and promoting children’s development as the purpose.

2. The development status of child-friendly community in China

In recent years, in July 30, 2011, the State Council promulgated the “*Outline for the Development of Children in China (2011-2020)*”. It sets new goals and measures for the development of the Chinese government’s children’s cause, and put forwards targets to be achieved for child development by 2020 from five fields: Children’s health, education, welfare, social environment and legal protection, of which include improving the social service level of children’s work and creating a child-friendly social environment. In 2016, representative of Two sessions submitted a proposal “*On Incorporating ‘Child-Friendly Community’ into the Community Development Plan of All Levels of Government*”, and pointed out: Children play an important role in the development of communities, but currently, children in China face threats such as traffic safety, limited outdoor activities, and inability to enjoy targeted community public services, it is necessary and urgent to build a child-friendly community, which is also an exploration of an innovative model of social governance. On April 23, 2019, established by China Community Development Association, “*Construction*

Code for Child-Friendly Community in China” (group standard), in which Beijing Yongzhen Public Welfare Foundation took the lead in drafting and self-determination, passed the preliminary examination by the National Standards Committee, now, in order to promote its perfection and launch, the declaration has been open to pilots of country’s streets and communities.

Thus it can be seen that the wave of China’s friendly community construction is booming and flourishing, community construction more emphasizes grass-roots governance and children’s autonomy, therefore, social workers are playing an increasingly important role in it, many regions are also preparing for the construction of pilot units, and the development of child-friendly communities has a large space and broad prospects. But it is a slight pity that the development of child-friendly community construction in China is in its early stage, there isn’t internationally recognized child-friendly cities or child-friendly communities. At present, there are not many researches on social work in the construction process of child-friendly communities in China, which pay more attention to the child-friendly community studies in the post-earthquake first aid period. Most research modes make related conclusion on the basis of project experience, and summarize the role of social workers in child-friendly community as well as the experience of construction of child-friendly community, but there is no systematic comprehensive summary and research [3]. With the development of child-friendly community in China, more social work professionals must be involved and play a role.

3. Theoretical basis of social work’s intervention in the construction of child-friendly community in China

3.1 Psychosocial development theory

Psychosocial development theory was put forward by social psychology represented by ErikH. Erikson, they divided children development stage into: the first stage (0-2 years old), trust vs Skepticism; the second stage (2-4 years old), autonomy vs shame or doubt; the third stage (4-7 years old), initiative vs guilt; the fourth stage(7-16 years old), industry vs inferiority[4]. The law of children’s growth and development is the basis and foundation of children’s social work, only by fully recognizing the problems faced by children at different stages as well as the core tasks that need to be resolved urgently can targeted projects be carried out for children of different ages in the community, and help them grow sustainably.

3.2 Hierarchy of needs theory

Based on the hierarchy of needs theory of AbrahamH. Maslow (1943), people’s demands are divided into five categories: physiological needs, safety needs, love and belonging, respect and self-realization. Hierarchy of needs theory has two basic starting points, the first one is everyone has needs, the higher level will appear after the satisfaction of needs in one level; the second is when various needs are not met, the highest priority is to meet their urgent needs. In the construction of child-friendly community in China, first of all, the physiological as well as safety needs of children should be met, their love and belonging, respect and self-realization should be met secondly.

3.3 Social ecosystem theory

On the theoretical basis of “in situation”, ecosystem theory regards social environment in which human beings live as a kind of social ecosystem, focuses on the interaction of various systems between human beings and the environment, thus reveals the important influence of family and social system on personal growth. Charles Zastrow divided the human social system into three basic types: micro-system, meso-system and macro-system, and included the individuals, families, social groups, communities, institutions and organizations in the social ecological environment. The development of children is inextricably linked to their families, schools, and community systems, therefore, promoting the construction of child-friendly community in China needs to build

“School-Family-Society” trinity integrated system to promote the healthy development of children together.

4. Role of social work in the construction of children-friendly community in China

4.1 Service provider

In the construction of children-friendly community in China, as the community child service provider, social workers need to carry out various children services by combining with children from different age groups, different family environments, and different personalities and behavioral characteristics. Firstly, when children are treated improperly or abused in the community, family or school, which results in the violation of children’s psychological, physiological and social rights, social workers directly carry out case intervention services; Secondly, when the child has been victimized, social workers should provide psychological intervention and counseling services in time; Thirdly, establish community children’s files, carry out dynamic management, and timely discover and monitor community children’s problems, and take relevant measures to reduce these risk factors. Meanwhile, through community culture construction and community education, social workers can help community develop a child-friendly culture, establish active, civilized, healthy and scientific way of life, and purposeful resistance to community vulgar culture that is not conducive to children’s development; Integrate educational resources within the community, provide day care centers for children in the community and carry out childcare services, in order to provide short-term and timely care services for children in the community who are experiencing a sudden or emergency and lack parental care.

4.2 Space builder

Planning and design of space environment for community children’s activities shall base on the psychological as well as behavioral characteristics of children, and carry out exploration by combining the environmental space as well as children’s environmental space behavior psychology [5]. The community is the most closely linked social unit to every family and residence, neighborhood space is the main place of public activities in community, and is also the main place for children to carry out outdoor recreation, learning and other activities, it is an important social environment for the formation of children’s character and behavior. The community environment plays an role in the physical and mental development of children’s development, excellent environmental space design will promote the natural nature of children, the formation of good character and development of physical and mental health. Therefore, social workers should make reasonable use of their expertise, take participate in the planning and construction of community, construct a natural play facility that is in keeping with children’s nature and that develops children’s imagination and creativity by combining the activity characteristics of children of all ages and behavioral abilities with the outdoor space layout of the community, and take good security measures. At the same time, build a certain area of community interior space, set up children’s homes or community service centers, equip with children-only indoor activity rooms as well as play space, set up children’s library, “school closing at 4:30pm”, letting children feel a good cultural atmosphere, making them constantly improve themselves, and cultivate various functions for all-round better development.

4.3 Right supporter

Social workers play a supportive role in the construction of child-friendly community, who provide community children material, spiritual and institutional support, protect children’s rights to live, life and development according to the needs of children, letting children grow healthily and happily [6]. Compared with as providers of services, social workers put more emphasis on the initiative and enthusiasm of children in the construction of child-friendly community in China as supporters of rights and interests, support children to put forward their own opinions and suggestions, participate in the system construction, space construction, cultural construction and service delivery as the

main body. Social workers support the establishment of voluntary committees for children, participate in the community affairs settlement, hold regular meetings, meet their needs to realize their rights, and give children's rights and interests support. Meanwhile, social workers tutor relevant organizations, kindergartens and school teachers, property, jurisdictional enterprises to complete the training of child-friendly community in China promotion plan, so that they can actively use social work methods to interact with and serve children, and provide good community environment support for children to realize their rights and interests.

4.4 Resource linker

The construction of child-friendly community in China needs a coalition of governments, communities, families, social workers and other forces to participate in the construction. As the resource linker, social workers mobilize and integrate various material, organization, culture, and human resources in the community to provide more effective services to individuals or groups in need [7]. On terms of linking material resources, social workers provide children with good infrastructure by linking materials, venues, equipment and so on in the development of child-friendly community activities; On terms of linking organize resources, introduce professional children's institutions to provide various services to community children as well as families while promoting the upgrading of community children's services; On terms of linking cultural resources, establish information-sharing platform to disseminate ideas and gather ideas from child-friendly community, encourage children to participate in and provide feedback, distribute child-friendly community brochures to students and parents in community kindergartens, primary and secondary schools, and create a good child-friendly atmosphere; On terms of linking human resources, establish community volunteer service teams, especially parent volunteer service teams, at the same time, enhance the professional competence of child service personnel in this community.

4.5 Policy advocate

Social workers can publicize related concepts of children's social work and construction of child-friendly community by organizing community events, letting the general public correctly recognize the importance of social workers in participating in the construction of child-friendly community in China. At the same time, the publicity of social workers enables the concept of building a child-friendly community in China deep into the hearts of the community from policy advocacy, providing a good public opinion atmosphere for mobilizing broad community participation, so as to promote the vigorous development of construction of child-friendly community in China. As the grass-roots workers in community construction, the group closest to the implementation of the policy, the social workers can feel the contradiction between the policy-making level and the actual social implementation level at the first time, and find social policy issues. At the same time, social workers are the speakers of the public, after extensive public opinion collection, social workers give feedback on problems, public opinions as well as put forward feasible suggestions to government departments from a professional perspective, finally promote the equity and justice of the society, protect children's rights and interests, so as to better promote the establishment and implementation of new child-friendly policies.

5. Conclusion

Social workers' intervention in the construction of child-friendly community in China has a very important significance, which play the role of service provider, space builder, right supporter, resource linker, policy advocate by combining professional theoretical knowledge to promote the construction of child-friendly community in China. Although, there are not many actual construction of child-friendly communities in China at present, with the State attaches great importance to the rights and protection of children, there will be more cities and communities join the construction of child-friendly community in China in the future.

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