

# Study on Chinese Care Service Support System by OECD Database of Children Aged 0 - 6

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**Abstract.** Based on the study of early childhood education and care system in OECD countries, the current situation of preschool care and education in OECD countries for children aged 0-6 years is analyzed, and the characteristics of the support system of children care provided by governments in terms of time, services and economy are summarized. It is found that OECD countries attach great importance to the system construction and development planning of pre-school children education care. Through legislation, the effectiveness and sustainability of public financial investment are clearly defined and regulated, and diversified care support is provided to guarantee the free choice of families. At present, China's overall investment in child care and preschool education is insufficient, the supply of child custody is weak, the quality of preschool education is uneven, and there is a lack of effective supervision. The burden of childcare is mainly borne by families, which is not conducive to the implementation of the long-term balanced development strategy of the population. It is suggested that the government should increase investment in early childhood education, increase financial and policy support, and build a friendly parenting environment.

**Keywords:** OECD countries; Child care; preschool education; financial support.

## 1. Introduction

After the implementation of China's comprehensive two-child policy, 17.23 million people were born in 2017, which have increased 1.62 million children compared with 2016 and is the second highest figure in history since 2000. In particular, the number of second children rose further to 8.83 million, and the proportion of second children in the total population continued to rise. The heavy economic burden of families and the great pressure of care have become the most important limiting factors affecting the second child's fertility [1]. The existing research generally reflects that "too much energy and no care" in the preschool stage is the main reason that the fertility behavior of the population of childbearing age is lower than the fertility intention.

The improvement of female employment rate and the change of family structure lead to the weakening of family care ability. In 2016, the female labor force participation rate in China was as high as 64%, which is higher than the world average level (53%), and the female employment rate in OECD countries (64.1%) was the same. Working mothers faced the dual pressure of child care and work [2]. At the same time, China's family structure is more core under the urbanization process. With the average number of family members (only 2.72), the residence is more discrete accounting for 64% of the core family. All the child-care costs are borne by families, which affects the fertility willingness of Chinese residents and is not conducive to the long-term balanced development of China's population [3]. Based on the data of OECD family database and EU statistics bureau database, this paper sorts out the development status of OECD preschool care and education, summarizes the characteristics and experience of the policy support system of care service, and puts forward suggestions for promoting the construction of supporting measures of fertility in China.

## 2. Early Childhood Education and Care Status in OECD Countries

The primary school enrollment period stipulated by OECD countries is generally 6 years old, and some countries are 5 years old. The preschool stage is divided into the preschool stage of 0 to 2 years old and the preschool stage of 3 to 6 years old. The institutions for children aged 0-2 years have not been widely promoted, and there are large differences in the development of various countries, and

the overall coverage rate is not high. On average, only about 30% of children under 3 years old receive the care of formal child-care institutions. The education institution for pre-school children aged 3-6 is relatively mature and has received policy attention and financial support from governments. The enrolment rate of children in formal education institutions at the age of three is more than 70%, after the age of four is more than 85%, and after the age of five almost all of them are enrolled in school.

## **2.1 Child Care and State Policy Support for Children Aged 0-2 Years**

There are two kinds of welfare concepts in OECD countries for supporting the care of children aged 0-2 years. One kind thinks that the weakening of family care function in modern society is inevitable, and it is neither necessary nor desirable to expect the recovery of family function. The public childcare institutions and pre-school education systems that provide universal and integrated care and early education services should be dominated by the government; Another concept emphasizes the importance of the family (mother) for child care, especially for children aged 0-2. Policy support aims to help families share the economic cost of child care time. Generally, extended maternity leave and parental leave are implemented, and the public finance provides tax relief or maintenance allowance in the form of cash.

In most OECD countries, full-time childcare facilities are not as common as preschool education facilities, and the government supports multiple forms of child care. The proportions of children aged 0-2 years are: relatives (grandparents and maternal grandparents), parents (21%), formal child-care institutions (31%), family nurseries (14%), and the remaining 4% use the form of hired care, among which 9% use multiple forms of care.

In order to promote family internal balance of parenting and encourage men raising families more responsibility, in the 1990 s , the Nordic countries in the OECD gradually increase "parents leave" the length of time, such as Sweden's parents fake from the original seven months increased from the current 60 weeks, Norway increased from the original six weeks to the current 88 weeks, German birth holiday and parenting vacation added up to 180 weeks, including paid vacation a year. Countries such as Denmark, Sweden, Austria and Belgium pay relatively high levels, with full parental leave accounting for more than half of the total vacation time, while the rest of the country provides only a proportion of the lower wage subsidies.

Since the beginning of the 21st century, in order to effectively promote the practical effect of "parental leave" and encourage fathers to take care of their children, the Nordic countries have added the father leave quota in parental leave, which stipulates that the father leave cannot be replaced by the mother, and the absence of leave is abandonment, and a number of supporting policies have been formulated. On the one hand, more generous financial subsidies are being introduced for fathers who use parental leave, such as increasing the proportion of their salaries in the quota of paternity leave. On the other hand, more flexible leave methods can be implemented, such as applying for postponement or half-time use to better combine leave and work. This reform achieved more tangible results, rapidly increasing the proportion of fathers on leave from less than 10 percent to 82 percent.

## **2.2 Preschool Education and Policy Support for Children Aged 3-6 Years.**

In the 1990 s, as the important role of the human capital by the new institutional economics, children's pre-school education is endowed with multiple mission, for example through children's early education achieve anti-poverty policy, the government increase public investment in children's early education to cultivate the competitiveness of future workers, implement free preschool education for poor children in order to realize social justice, avoid class curing, etc. Governments increased public investment in early education, including pre-school education into compulsory education, and played an increasingly dominant role in the supply of pre-school education.

Children in OECD countries generally start to receive pre-school education after the age of 3. Children in different countries have slightly different levels of enrollment in different ages, and their overall coverage keeps expanding. The average education enrolment rate for children aged 3 in preschool increased to 71 percent in 2015 from 54 per cent in 2005, to 85 percent for children aged 4 and to more than 95 percent after 5 years. Pre-school nursery education is mainly a full-time

kindergarten, which is divided according to age, and the curriculum and activity contents are basically similar. Of course, mixed-age half-day kindergartens and other flexible and diverse forms of custody are also supported in areas such as Germany. An average of 68 per cent of children are in fully public pre-school institutions, expenses are all supported by public finance, 22 per cent attend government-funded private pre-school education institutions and schools, and the remaining 10 per cent attend fully private schools.

### **3. Features of OECD Children Education and Care Support System**

#### **3.1 Strong Support from National Policies and Finance**

##### **3.1.1 Pre-school Care and Education Should be Included in the National Top-Level System Construction and Development Plan**

Since the 1990s, under the influence of the new welfare concept oriented by European social investment, OECD countries generally regard pre-school education as the "education stage benefiting the most from investment" and use the action plan at the national level to promote the development of pre-school education.

While developing universal child care services for education, OECD countries generally value special support for children in need, providing them with a wide range of free health, education, nutrition and other specific services, and making every effort to ensure that children in need are as well prepared for school as other children. Hope from the early education as a starting point to break the intergenerational transmission of poverty. For example, to low-income families with priority of the right of entrance to the public nursery institution, to low-income families with children subsidies and tax breaks, even in the early days of the higher education marketization degree Italy, Japan and other countries, individuals into the education institutions to tuition also want to refer to the family income, the poor than the rich pay less fees or even for free.

Because the 0 to 6 years old children in the adult greatly depend on the time, to ensure the safety of pre-school institutions, countries generally used education quality monitoring system to monitor pre-school education, generally with the method of external monitoring and internal testing in parallel, to ensure the authority of supervision and objectivity, through accountability, intervention methods to provide information to the public, and constantly improve the teachers to provide quality care and education of university..

##### **3.1.2 Effective and Sustained Public Financing**

Care for pre-school children and education is an important component of public programs in OECD countries. Even in the years of tight social budget expenditure, the expenditure on child care and education is on the rise. On average, in OECD countries, the proportion of investment in education institutions to GDP reached 0.8%, among which, the investment in early childhood education institutions accounted for 0.2%, pre-school education institutions accounted for 0.6%, and 81% of the expenditure was paid by public finance. In countries such as Finland, Norway and Luxembourg more than 90% of pre-school education spending comes from public finances. To ensure the maximum value of public finance for pre-school education input, the British government also USES public finance to establish a minimum wage system for preschool teachers, attaches importance to the value of preschool teachers and guarantees their treatment.

Another aspect of financial support is in the form of child care allowances. In countries such as Australia, Colombia and Israel, the proportion of private spending on pre-schools is high at 50 per cent, but much of it is actually funded by the government in the form of subsidies to families. In New Zealand, for example, where pre-school education is almost entirely private, all pre-school education is paid for 20 hours a week by the government, free to families. In 2010 the OECD paid nearly \$9,000 in cash and tax subsidies for each child aged 0-1, and \$4,000-10,000 in annual education and care allowances for every child aged 1-6.

## **3.2 Child Care Education is Rich and Diverse.**

### **3.2.1 The Diversity of the Institutional form of Managed Education**

At the early childhood education stage, OECD countries attach great importance to improving the comprehensive ability of young children in all aspects, usually through creative games and activities to achieve interactive learning between young children. Therefore, education, aged from 0 to 6 years old, does not have "catch-up nature" or "primary school" curriculum guidance with the trusteeship, and the institution values diversified education. School form also presents the diversity, the flexible characteristic. For example, child care centers in the United States are divided into infant care centers, child care centers, toddler care centers, school-age child care centers, and mild disease care centers based on age.

In addition to the more common kindergartens and day-care centers, pre-school education institutions include Montessori school, children art school, children with intellectual disabilities school and children music school. In addition to various forms of hosting centers, there are also specialized game group courses in the UK. Sweden and Australia have child care centers, pre-school education centers and other forms of care such as toy libraries and playgrounds. In Japan, there are "day-care centers," where housewives can leave their children for hours on end or in emergency situations. Ten per cent of Japanese institutions also offer night child care, considering the needs of women working at night. The diversity of preschool education institutions meets the needs of all levels of society and promotes the comprehensive and healthy development of children.

### **3.2.2 Diversity of Institutions**

Since the 1990s, European countries have generally implemented the market-oriented reform of the welfare system. The central government allows the municipal government to outsource the child care services to qualified institutions to enrich and develop the forms of child care services and increase parents' freedom of choice. Driven by this reform, private child care agencies were given legal status and began to occupy a certain proportion of child care services. The most important form of the private model is child care cooperatives, which are jointly organized and managed by the parents of the children being cared for. There are also child care cooperatives made up of teachers and child care institutions set up by churches and businesses, all of which are eligible for public subsidies from the government.

### **3.2.3 The Government Supports Diversification of Child Care**

First of all, the OECD's national policy to support the family child-care options, parents can choose public nursery for children under 3 years old, day care institutions, family hosting, professional, family nanny, a nurse can also choose to personally take care of in the home, choose a vacation at home to take care of the child's parents may obtain a month child allowance, monthly average 100-150 euros, the diversification trend of increased parents on parenting freedom of choice.

Secondly, OECD governments increase the supply of professional child care service personnel in various forms to ensure the quality of child care services. France, for example, offers free training, Labour protection and employment information to professionals to encourage them to pursue such careers. In order to ensure the employment of professional caretakers, the subsidy for families with children aged 0-6 years who employ professional child-care workers can cover 40% to 70% of the expenses of professional child-care workers.

Third, the government gives private childcare education institutions support development policies. By implementing the education voucher system, private pre-school education has a better funding guarantee and an equal opportunity to compete with government-run pre-school education. The charter school lies between the public school and the private school. The sponsor and the public school jointly draw up the charter. After being approved by the local decree, the charter school is established according to the charter.

## 4. Summary

The government should pay great attention to early childhood education. With the social stratification and social mobility in China's social transformation, there are obvious differences in income and occupation among the fertility groups. The family capital advantage behind this birth group will be transformed into the double opportunity advantage of children's school education and shadow education, thus leading to the social stratification starting from pre-school education, and eventually leading to the social stratification of different family capital students in employment opportunities and employment results.

It is necessary to improve the construction of preschool institutions. In 0 to 2 children aged care system, can draw lessons from OECD countries concept of care for the welfare of the policy, on the one hand, to stress the significance of family care, and gradually perfect the fake paid maternity leave, parental leave, parents and family allowances system, set up children take care of the family support system, set up in the maternity leave with parental leave quota "father", advocate within the family to take care of young children's gender balance; Establish the right of working parents to take care of their children in work regulations. On the other hand, respect the employment rights of women, explore the construction of various forms of child-care institutions, and replace some family care with social care.

Increase public investment in pre-school education institutions over 3 years old. In 2015, China spent less than 0.1% of GDP on child care services, far less than the 0.7% of OECD countries. The state should clarify the financial input responsibility of pre-school education, increase the supply input of public kindergartens, and formulate the standardization construction of pre-school education. At the same time, we should pay attention to the quality of preschool education for migrant children and rural poor children, increase the help for distressed children, and narrow the urban-rural gap and regional gap of preschool education.

It is important to build a friendly child-rearing environment in the whole society. Based on China's traditional concept and actual economic development, the family is still the main body providing child care and education. The time opportunity cost for women to take care of children is higher, and it is difficult for young mothers to find a balance between work and home care. Under the background of the globalization of population aging, the quasi-public property of children is more and more obvious, and taking care of children is the undertaker of the future of social responsibility. Therefore, the government should vigorously promote the construction of a friendly parenting environment. In addition to the government, communities, enterprises and various social organizations should play an important supplementary role in child care and create a social environment conducive to women's reproduction and employment through various ways. For example, explore flexible work schedules in the Labour market and encourage employers to implement innovations that respect employees' rights to care for their children

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