

The Necessity and Strategy Exploration of Optimizing Kindergarten Care Services

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Abstract: Since the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, the call for “good parenting for young children” has continued to rise. The construction of a universal childcare service system is an important support measure for the current national fertility policy, and it is also a necessary path for “good parenting for young children”. Kindergartens are one of the important forces in the development of inclusive childcare services. The optimization of childcare services in kindergartens is of great significance in responding to parents’ high-quality childcare needs, improving the level of care and education of kindergarten teachers, and promoting the development of infant and toddler childcare services and management majors. Based on this, this article conducts research on the necessity and strategy exploration of optimizing kindergarten childcare services.

1. Introduction

According to the definition of the United Nations Children’s Fund, childcare services refer to the inability or disruption of the family’s normal care function for young children due to environmental factors. Young children must leave their parents and family for a period of time every day, and other people or institutions are required to supplement or replace their parents in fulfilling their care responsibilities. By providing high-quality childcare services, kindergartens can provide suitable growth environments for young children and provide guidance for parents in scientific parenting. Therefore, exploring strategies for optimizing kindergarten care services is of great significance for improving the quality of kindergarten care services.

2. The Necessity of Optimizing Kindergarten Care Services

2.1. Meeting Parents’ Requirements for High-quality Childcare

Since the issuance of *The Guiding Opinions of the General Office of the State Council on Promoting the Development of Care Services for Infants and Young Children under the Age of 3* in 2019, China has accelerated the construction of a universal childcare service system, and the number of childcare institutions has grown rapidly like mushrooms after rain. However, with the progress and development of parenting concepts, parents’ demand for childcare services is no longer just for simple care and feeding of their children, but also for more scientific care and education to promote their children’s better growth. Therefore, optimizing kindergarten childcare services to meet the childcare needs of different parents is currently one of the key tasks of kindergartens. It not only allows kindergartens to have a more suitable environment for the development of infants and young children, but also fundamentally responds to parents’ demand for high-quality childcare services.

2.2. Meeting the Needs of Kindergarten Teachers to Improve the Level of Care and Education

The Guiding Opinions of the General Office of the State Council on Promoting the Development of Care Services for Infants and Young Children under the Age of 3 point out that it is necessary to strengthen the professional and standardized construction of care services for infants and young children, follow the laws of infant and young child development, and gradually implement a professional qualification admission system for staff in accordance with the law. The evaluation

standards for the quality of childcare in various countries around the world emphasize the pre-service professional training and in-service continuing education of teachers. From this, it can be seen that the professionalism of caregivers is a key factor affecting the quality of childcare services. It is essential for kindergartens to establish a professional teaching team, and optimizing childcare services in kindergartens is also an opportunity to improve the level of childcare services provided by kindergarten teachers.

2.3. Providing Possibilities for the Professional Development of Child Care Services and Management

The optimization of kindergarten childcare services requires more professional talents, which puts higher demands on talents majoring in infant and toddler childcare services and management. In 2019, *The Guiding Opinions of the General Office of the State Council on Promoting the Development of Care Services for Infants and Young Children under the Age of 3* pointed out that higher education institutions and vocational colleges (including technical colleges) should establish infant and young child care related majors according to their needs, and accelerate the cultivation of talents in infant and young child care related majors. In March 2021, *The Notice of the Ministry of Education on Issuing the Catalogue of Vocational Education Majors (2021)* renamed the early childhood development and health management major to the infant and young child care service and management major, and adjusted the professional classification from the original public service category to the health management and promotion category in the medical and health category. The change in professional affiliation and professional name has brought development opportunities for the infant and young child care service and management profession.

3. Problems in Kindergarten Child care Services

3.1. Single Form of Childcare Services

At present, only a few kindergartens offer daycare classes, with full-time services being the main focus. Except for full-time and half day services, there are almost no other services available. From this, it can be seen that there is a shortage of supply in the number of kindergarten daycare classes, and the service forms provided are mainly full-time and half day, which are relatively single and difficult to meet the diversified childcare needs of parents. The government should encourage and support kindergartens that meet the requirements to set up daycare classes, increase the number of daycare classes in kindergartens, and also provide diversified and multi-level infant care services according to parents' needs.

3.2. Unreasonable Environmental Creation of Childcare Services

In terms of creating an environment for kindergarten daycare classes, reasonable and orderly district planning and material placement are carried out in accordance with the standards of the kindergarten, resulting in the creation of an environment for kindergarten daycare services that is not young enough and does not take into account the physical and mental development laws of infants and young children. For example, in the district corner planning, although there are multiple district corners such as doll's house, art area, and building block area, which can meet the needs of free choice and exploration for infants and young children, the planning did not consider the physical and mental development characteristics of infants and young children, and the district corners of the small class were used together with the kindergarten. In terms of material placement, although ball and equipment activities are also conducted, the equipment used is not young enough, resulting in extremely low usage rates of corresponding equipment among infants and young children. From this, it can be seen that the environmental design of kindergarten childcare services is mostly mixed with the corners and materials of small classes, which cannot meet the physical and mental development characteristics of infants and young children. Therefore, kindergartens should specifically plan and design the corners of kindergarten kindergartens, and introduce a batch of equipment that conforms to the development laws of infants and young children for placement.

3.3. Insufficient Professionalism of In-service Teachers

At present, individuals with a professional background in preschool or early education in kindergartens do not involve much content on early childhood education in their academic education. Other teachers who are not in the field of preschool education or early childhood education have not received systematic education and training in early childhood education. Overall, kindergarten teachers are not familiar with the knowledge of care and education for infants and young children under 3 years old, and are not proficient in the operation of care methods for infants and young children. Professional teachers are responsible for providing childcare services in kindergartens. Teachers not only need to have scientific educational concepts, rich knowledge of infant and young child rearing, and professional care abilities, but also need to be able to carry out appropriate parenting activities according to the actual needs of infants and young children. Only in this way can teachers carry out scientific care and education work, create a favorable environment for the physical and mental development of infants and young children during the critical period of their development, deeply explore the development potential of infants and young children, and promote their healthy growth.

3.4. Lack of prominent professional characteristics in curriculum design

Most universities confuse the educational philosophy of infant and toddler care services and management with that of preschool education when offering the program, using the same curriculum system. However, caring for infants and young children under the age of 3 requires a strong knowledge of feeding and care. Students have little experience in raising children, and there is an insurmountable gap between theoretical knowledge learning and practical operations. If students are not equipped with sufficient professional knowledge and skills to cope with job tasks during the learning process, it will be difficult for them to be competent for the position. Students majoring in infant and young child care services and management should have a better understanding of the daily care knowledge of infants and young children, including nutrition, food hygiene, and scientific feeding.

4. Strategies for Optimizing Kindergarten Care Services

4.1. Increasing the Effective Supply of Childcare Services



Figure 1 Optimization of corner material placement and corner layout in kindergarten small classes.

Providing full day care, half day care, timed care, temporary care and other childcare services for infants and young children under 3 years old can meet the childcare service needs of different types of families and different working hours. Kindergartens should provide diverse care services based on parents' needs. At the same time, optimize the facilities, equipment, and environmental materials of the kindergarten to provide a suitable growth environment for infants and young children. In terms of district corner planning, kindergartens should set up district corner activity rooms that meet different age groups in accordance with relevant national regulations and meet corresponding construction standards (Figure 1). In terms of environmental materials, create a family style

environment, plan space reasonably, ensure hygiene and safety, and create a warm and childlike atmosphere. In kindergarten, daily necessities, natural materials, and non structural materials are often used, equipped with sufficient toys and books to support children's exploration and meet their cognitive development needs.

4.2. Attaching Importance to Professional Training for Childcare Teachers

Kindergartens should attach importance to professional training. The quality of kindergarten childcare services depends to a certain extent on the training received by childcare personnel. Kindergartens should provide training for in-service teachers on the care and education of infants and young children under the age of 3, with professional content and methods. Firstly, the training content should be rich and diverse. The training content should involve theoretical knowledge in infant and young child health, psychology, nutrition, and other aspects, as well as increase the training of teachers' professional concepts and skills. The training content can be adjusted according to the actual needs of the teacher. If the teacher needs to guide parents in carrying out family education in their actual work, they can carry out training in scientific feeding, parent-child education, and tutoring guidance. Secondly, the forms of training should be diverse. Kindergartens can often invite early education experts to give lectures and provide guidance, helping teachers learn professional knowledge and skills, organizing teachers to observe and learn from other kindergartens and institutions, and guiding teachers to identify their own shortcomings and learn from the experiences of others. Kindergartens can also encourage teachers to obtain relevant certificates, create a lifelong learning atmosphere in the kindergarten, and help teachers continuously improve their professional skills and literacy.

4.3. Optimizing Course Offerings and Improving the Quality Evaluation System of Childcare

To optimize the curriculum, while balancing theoretical and practical courses, some ideological and political courses can also be set up to cultivate students' sense of social responsibility and professional mission. Under the guidance of professional concepts, students' love, patience, and sense of responsibility can be cultivated, and the development of students' views on children, education, and scientific service awareness can be promoted. In addition, before students officially enter the workforce, pre job training and a certain degree of psychological counseling should be provided to avoid students having difficulty adapting to real-life work or experiencing psychological disparities after entering the workforce.

Developed countries such as the United States have established corresponding evaluation standards to improve the quality of childcare services through scientific evaluation and supervision. The government should continuously improve the quality evaluation system of childcare, clarify evaluation tasks, standardize evaluation methods, and strengthen supervision. On the one hand, relevant government departments and expert teams evaluate the quality of kindergarten care services, objectively and fairly supervise and manage kindergarten care services, and provide targeted guidance. At the same time, kindergartens can publicize the evaluation results to society, providing reference for parents to choose childcare services, and thus promoting kindergartens to actively improve the quality of childcare services. On the other hand, kindergarten managers, teachers, and caregivers evaluate kindergarten care services, understand and learn evaluation standards, and improve the quality of kindergarten care services through continuous reflection.

5. Conclusion

In summary, as one of the important forces in developing inclusive childcare services, kindergartens should comply with the trend of the times and continuously optimize the quality of childcare services. This has positive significance and practical necessity in responding to social childcare needs. The optimization of kindergarten childcare services has a long way to go and requires more long-term planning.

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