

KICCE POLICY BRIEF

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Parental Demands on Support for Raising Children Under Three and Policy Suggestions

Background

Physical vulnerabilities are more noticeable in infancy than in childhood, and thus, full-time care is required during this period.^{1,2}

- Among parents raising children under the age of 3, there is a contrast between those who choose in-home parental care versus those who care for their children primarily using institutional care.³

Regarding support for raising children under the age of 3, a tension exists between policies that promotes the utilization of daycare centers and strengthens direct support for parents who care for their infants and toddlers at home.⁴

- Promotion of daycare center by increasing the number of centers weights highly in preventing career breaks in female workers. However, the policy of strengthening childcare services through institutions may limit the parental right to care for children by themselves, and there is a concern that the services quality of childcare centers may be insufficient.
- In the case of in-home parenting support, more focus is placed on securing the right of direct parental care and the right of

children under three to be cared. However, in this case, the primary caregiver's right to engage in other activities or services, such as work, is likely to be impaired because he or she must reside physically with their children in order to provide care.

- In this context, it is necessary to identify the demand on parental care at home and center-based care, to clarify the main targets of each service, and investigate the appropriate level of supply.

A survey was conducted to analyze parental demands on support for raising their children under three.

- 1,400 mothers with children aged 0 to 2 participated in the online survey.

[Table 1] Survey Contents

Category 1	Category 2
Background information	Age, Education, Residence, Number of children, Type of work, Employment status
Type of Child-rearing	Primary(Actual) and Preferred forms of child-rearing, In-home parental care, Daycare, Personal parenting service
Child-rearing Costs	
Parental Needs and Policy suggestions	

Source: Kim, N.Y., Hwang, S.Y. & Eom, J.W.(2019). Analysis the demand of supports for raising infants and planning for comprehensive response policies. Korea Institute of Child Care and Education. pp. 137-138.

1. Sim, S. H. & Kim, S. Y.(2015). An Analysis of Job Satisfaction and Perception of Job Professionalism by Individual Variables in Child Care Teachers. *The Society for Open Parent Education*, 7(1), 1-17.
2. Yee, Y. H. & Oh, M. Y.(2006). A Comparative Study between fathers and mothers on the Parenting Efficacy, Knowledge of Infant-care and Sensitivity. *The Korean Society Of Human Ecology*, 9(3), 47-62.
3. Kim, E. J., Lee, J. S., & Choi, I. S.(2014). *Policy Improvement for Parenting Support: With Special Focus on Dual-income Household*. Korea Institute for Health and Social Affairs.
4. Ministry of Health and Welfare(2017). The 3rd Basic Mid- and Long-Term Child care Plan(2018-2022).

- The questionnaire included basic background information, forms and costs of child-rearing, parental needs, and suggestions for policy measures.
- By analyzing the demands on support for child-rearing in households with children under the age of 3, differentiated needs of each group were identified and directions and key strategies for supporting policies were suggested.

Forms of Child-Rearing Under the Age of 3

There was a clear difference in forms between the actual vs. preferred child rearing under the age of 1.

- Although only 22.2% of mothers preferred childcare centers over in-home care by parents, 29.3% of parents responded that they actually used childcare centers as the main form of child-rearing.
- Over two-thirds of mothers(67.4%) preferred in-home care by parents, but only 58.7% actually provided it.
- Of work-related variables, daycare centers appeared to be the primary child-rearing form for regular and full-time workers at small or medium-sized private companies.

The results from parents of 1-year-olds were similar to those from parents of children under the age of 1.

- 48.1% of respondents used childcare centers, and 41.7% of mothers cared their toddlers at home by themselves.
- The preferred child-rearing form was in-home care by parents and childcare centers were the second most preferred option.
- Interestingly, parents of 1-year-olds preferred childcare centers followed by half-day programs, whereas parents of children under the age of 1 preferred childcare centers followed by grandparents. This indicates that parents were more favorable toward institutional care for 1-year-old toddlers than infants under the age of 1.

Among parents of 2-year-olds, 79.5% of respondents answered that they use childcare centers for primary child-rearing.

[Table 2] Comparisons of Child-Rearing Form by Children's Age

Unit: %

	Age(infant)	Actual parenting form	Preferred parenting form
In-home parental care	0	58.7	67.4
	1	41.7	52.1
	2	17.6	28.8
Childcare center	0	29.3	22.2
	1	48.1	37.8
	2	79.5	62.4
Grandparents	0	6.6	2.9
	1	5.3	2.0
	2	1.1	1.5

Source: Kim, N.Y., Hwang, S.Y. & Eom, J.W.(2019). Analysis the demand of supports for raising infants and planning for comprehensive response policies. Korea Institute of Child Care and Education. p. 149.

- The preferred child-rearing form for 2-year-olds was childcare centers. The result is different from that of parents with children under the age of 2, whose preference was in-home parental care.

When the primary child-rearing form was in-home parental care, 57.9% were not satisfied with the Child Home Care Allowance (CHCA), and 61.9% of respondents used additional supportive measures.

- Regarding the appropriate amount of Child Home Care Allowance, 77.2% of respondents chose “300,000 KRW⁵ or more”.
- Many households whose parents directly cared for their children under the age of 3 received subsidiary parenting assistance for childcare services during daytime in order to secure personal time of parents (38.0%).

Parental Demands on Support for Rearing Children Under the Age of 3

In general, cost-support policy showed the highest level of utilization by parents.

- Service (program) support and time support policies generally showed a low level of utilization by responded parents, but the overall satisfaction was not low.

5. Korea Won. As of Sept 3, 2020, \$1 is equal to 1,188.30 KRW. Currently, the amount of child home care allowance is 200,000 KRW for infants under 12 months, 150,000 KRW for 13 to 24-month-old.(<https://online.bokjiro.go.kr/a/pl/info/aplInfoNurView2.do>, Accessed on Sept. 28, 2020)

- **Most respondents(86.9%) answered that government support for rearing children under the age of 3 was insufficient. In particular, insufficient support was indicated by 90.3% of self-employed workers or employers and 97.0% of unpaid family workers.**

Among various support policies, respondents considered the cost support policy the most insufficient(46.7%), followed by the time policy(35.4%).

- Response differences in cost support policy depended on the types of mother's work and of workplace. Among full-time workers, 41.7% reported a need for more subsidies which was similar to responses on time support policy (40.6%).
- Respondents indicated that public finances should be used to improve the quality of childcare services and support in-home care by parents at the same time.
- Besides, expansion of public childcare centers was considered most urgent(22.7%).
- A need to increase family support allowance was indicated by 21.8% of respondents and 7.4% also demanded strengthening family support policy, such as providing education and counseling programs for parents.

Parental Satisfaction and Demands on Supporting Policies

Analysis on factors affecting parental satisfaction regarding child-rearing forms revealed the following:

- Parental satisfaction with current child-rearing forms was statistically positively associated with the average monthly household income, willingness to pay additional taxes to support child-rearing, and the number of children.

Analysis on factors associated with a match between actual and preferred child-rearing forms revealed the following:

- Children's age had a statistically positive relationship with a match between the actual and preferred child-rearing forms, whereas a statistically negative effects were observed with respect to mother's employment status (0 = unemployed, 1 = employed) and average monthly household income.

- The older a child, the higher the probability of a match between the actual and preferred child-rearing forms. However, the probability of a match among the employed was lower than the unemployed, and the probability decreased as the average monthly household income increased.

Policy Suggestions

It is important to differentiate policy directions to support parents in accordance with age of children under the age of 3.

- The younger a child is, the less likely that actual child-rearing form aligns with preferred child-rearing form.
- Cost support policy, which has become universal, is used by most caregivers with a high degree of satisfaction.

In addition to expansion of public childcare centers and improvement of the service quality, an 'allowance for children under the age of 3' could be newly initiated to meet a high parental demand for cost support.

- To improve the effectiveness of cost-support, one might provide an integrative support using the existing financial support for childcare services and family childcare allowances.
- Given that the proportion of childcare center use increases once a child reaches the age of 1, policy targets should be specified by dividing children under and above the age of 1. An allowance that integrates existing childcare support and home care allowance could be provided for children below 12 months, and for children aged 1-2 years the existing support system can be maintained.

In the case of dual-income non-wage workers, the use of time policies such as paternity leave could be improved to alleviate the burden of child-rearing. In the case of in-home rearing, income reduction due to leaving the labor force needs to be addressed through the payment of an additional childcare allowance for children under the age of 3.

To respond to parental demands on diverse childcare support, it is necessary to guarantee the options to use time policies, such as reduced and flexible working hours, and so on.

- The (tentatively named) '*Urgent Early Parental Leave*' could be a new time policy for working parents of children under the age of 3, which allows parents to use 3 to 4 times of leave

during a year for urgent childcare purposes.

- For dual-income households who are returning from parental leave yet facing long waiting periods for daycare centers, 'Temporary Childcare Support' should be provided, even for a short time.
- As part-time workers do not receive *Employment Insurance*, dual-income households with a part-time worker could represent a group excluded from the use of time policies; thus, it is necessary to expand the policy beneficiaries.

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