2021 KICCE PROJECT REPORT ABSTRACTS

Korea Institute of Child Care and Education

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Major Research Project

A Mid-term Plan for the Development of Early Childhood Education and Care(2022-2027) in Korea

Mugyeong Moon / Misun Yang / Kichang Song / Moonjeong Kim

Background and Purpose of the study

- The study intends to review the outcomes and limitations of the previous 5-year plans regarding early childhood education and care (ECEC), and suggest directions and key policy tasks for the next 5-year plan (2022-2027) for the new government by reflecting upon societal changes and international trends in the ECEC policy.

Research Methods

- Data were gathered from diverse stakeholder groups through questionnaires, including officials from 17 local governments and local offices of education, 56 academic experts, and about 3,000 citizens including 1,000 parents of children aged 0 to 6 years.
- More than ten meetings were held with kindergarten and childcare associations, and practitioners across different ECEC settings.
- Four regional workshops were held with a total of about 80 stakeholders to discuss future directions and key policy tasks for the ECEC in the next 5 years.

Results

- The major outcomes of the 2018-2022 ECEC Plan included securing finances for the Nuri subsidy until the end of 2022, increasing the number of public ECEC services, initiating a child-centered and play-based Nuri curriculum, and providing child allowances to all children aged 0 and 7 years, in accordance with the national agenda set by the current government.
- On the other hand, some limitations include the quality gaps in the ECEC services, lack of stable funding for the Nuri subsidy after 2022, low qualification, lack of initial training systems, low salaries of childcare teachers, high teacher-child ratio, operation of after-school services in kindergartens, and provisions for seamless childcare services during the prolonged COVID-19 pandemic.
- All respondents considered that low-birth rates caused dramatic decreases in the number of children aged 0 to 5 years and will continue to have a strong impact on the ECEC policies.
- The responding stakeholder groups emphasized on health, emotional regulation, and creativity as important competencies to be developed by young children to prepare for the future.
- Diverse stakeholder groups were identified as achieving free ECEC, integrating the ECEC systems, and enhancing the quality of the ECEC services as the policy priority areas.

Policy Suggestions

- Future suggested directions for the ECEC policies are as follows: prioritizing the sound growth and well-being of young children, enhancing the quality of the ECEC services by emphasizing children's agency and participation, strengthening inclusive education from the early years for social cohesion, establishing seamless childcare service systems and supports for parents raising young children, and pursuing balanced development and harmony across regions.
- Common key policy tasks between education and childcare sectors would be: achieving a free ECEC by increasing the unit cost of the Nuri subsidy and including the ECEC into the public school systems by implementing free education for children aged five. Another policy task would be integrate the ECEC by consolidating learning and caring. To achieve this, several tasks need to take place, including consolidation of teacher qualifications and training systems, and unified use of terminologies. To enhance the quality of the ECEC services, the child-teacher ratio needed to be reduced, professional development needs to be reformed, and a safe and creative learning environment must be developed.

Major Research Project

Effective linkage between daycare centers or kindergartens and Idolbom services

Hae-mi Yoo / Jinah Park / Jiwon Eom

Background and Purpose of the study

- While the government provides free childcare for children aged 0 to 5 years and supports extended daycare and kindergarten after-school courses for working parents, there still exist gaps in the childcare system. In addition, the absence of a childcare system is aggravated when the daycare centers or kindergartens are closed due to disasters such as the COVID-19.
- This study seeks to link the Idolbom services with the public sector to minimize the gap in the childcare system for families with children attending daycare centers or kindergartens.

Research Methods

- The study surveyed 502 households with children attending kindergarten and 1,121 households with children attending daycare centers, and conducted an additional survey to gather opinions from kindergartens, daycare centers, and the Idolbom providers.

Results

- Overall, the demands for minimizing the gap in childcare are divided into "occasional childcare" and "emergency childcare." Occasional childcare refers to a service system that operates only when there is a need for care outside the statutory service hours. Emergency childcare can be divided into general situations, such as when a child is sick or when the parents work at night, and disaster situations.
- Parents were asked to rate the need for the linking daycare/kindergarten and the Idolbom service on a 5-point scale. Parents emphasized the need for the link during the compulsory closure of institutions due to COVID-19 (e.93 points), when parents are sick (3.87 points), when parents have to work overtime (3.85 points), and for parents who usually work late hours (after 19:30) or having additional children (3.80 points).
- In addition, to allow a smooth linkage between the Idolbom services and daycare centers/kindergartens, information, in the form of the Idolbom support project-related guidebooks, online educational materials, manuals for responding to parental questions such as how to use the service and a hot-line of the official department in charge, and installation of furniture in consultation with child care service providers, was identified to be necessary.

Policy Suggestions

- Based on the results of the present study, as a prerequisite for linking the Idolbom services with daycare centers and kindergartens, improvement in the operation of extended daycare at daycare centers and kindergarten after-school programs and the establishment of an integrated care support system were suggested.
- Specifically, there is a need for: the contextualization of the target group and the level of support provision, the development of a comprehensive one-stop support system, and the development of plans to achieve system integration addressing all the service gaps.
- To overcome the service gaps, the study suggests improvements in the part-time Idolbom services accessibility, and the establishment of a bridging system for general emergency child care and emergency child care in the event of a disaster.

General Research Project

2018~2022 Childrearing Policy Analysis and Outcome Evaluation(IV): Focusing on 2020~2021 policies

Keun Jin Kim / Hae-mi Yoo / Hyejoo Cho

Background and Purpose of the study

- The purpose of this study is to analyze the outcomes of the 2020~2021 Korean childrearing policy and its impact on families and children in relation to its performance goals and the major indices around the overall childrearing environment.
- The main focus of this study is to evaluate the Moon government's national policy agenda for childrearing. This study classified the three main policy areas as cash assistance and medical support, the ECEC, and parenting time support.
- In addition, this study analyzed childrearing-related policy responses to COVID-19 and evaluated the 4-years outcomes of the Moon government's childrearing policies.

Research Methods

· **The evaluation of the childrearing policy outcomes is composed of four parts.**

- First, the self-evaluation results of the Ministry of Health and Welfare, the Ministry of Education, and the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family for the childrearing policies of 2020 were analyzed.
- Second, the data collected from the online survey of parents and professional stakeholders, including the ECEC experts, directors, and teachers of kindergarten and childcare centers regarding the 2020~2021 childrearing policies were analyzed.
- Third, in-depth interviews with parents, directors, and teachers of kindergarten and childcare centers, and elementary school care providers were conducted and analyzed to indicate the pros/cons, the areas for improvement, and the blind spots of the childrearing policies.
- Fourth, panel data analysis, using KOSIS (Korean Statistical Information Service) and Korean Labor & Income Panel Study data were reported to evaluate the effects of fertility and care policies.

Results

- The results have shown the overall evaluation of the childrearing policy and highlighted the areas for improvement.

Policy Suggestions

- Gradual increase in the amount and the target age of child allowance.
- Reducing teacher-child ratio in infant classes to improve the quality of childcare services.
- Reducing the gap in the use of childcare leave between different business sizes via financial support and mandating the use of such support among the employees of smaller businesses.
- Reducing the gender gap in the use of childcare leave by increasing the childcare leave benefits-income replacement ratio.
- Expansion of the company support program to reduce the working hours during the childcare period.
- Preparing the official need for after-school care services in elementary schools.
- Revision of teacher training courses and qualifications to reduce the gap between kindergarten and childcare centers.
- Develop a roadmap to integrate early childhood education and care.
- Rearrangement of the fertility policy budget to expand the provision for direct support for childrearing families.

Technological

media on Early Child

A Study on Policy Measures to Optimize the Media Use of Infants and Young children

Jeong Won Lee / Wonsoon Park / Jiwon Eom

Background and Purpose of the study

- Since young children nowadays start using media at an early age, there are growing concerns regarding the negative impact of media on the development of young children.
- This study is based on the perception that media use during infancy and early childhood requires special attention and an appropriate level of guidance from adults. Therefore, this study attempts to propose policies to enable children at home and at childcare and educational institutions to use media at an appropriate level for their development.

Research Methods

- The study included a fact-finding survey, focus group interviews, and a policy seminar.
- The survey was conducted with 508 homeroom teachers from daycare centers and kindergartens, and 1,500 parents raising children aged 0-6 years. The survey was conducted to understand children's media use, guidance status, and policy needs in regard to childcare activities.

Results

[Media use by infants and toddlers at home]

- The ownership rate of smartphones (99.6%), TVs (94.3%), PCs (90.7%), and tablet PCs (74.4%) was found to be high. A similar trend was observed in the ownership of artificially intelligent speakers (46.9%) and game consoles (35.3%). In addition, qualitative differences in the environment where children make use of media were detected. Unlike the past, when young children's media use was solely focused on watching TV, it was found that caution is needed in the use of tablet PCs-especially in the case of infants and young children-

due to the rapidly increasing number of households possessing such devices.
- It was found that the media use habits of adults -people responsible for instructing children's use of media at home-were generally undesirable. Parents of infants and toddlers showed high rates of media use while eating, driving, lying down, and before going to bed. They also showed patterns of using multiple media devices at the same time, indicating, as stated above, a generally undesirable habit of media use.
- It was found that smartphones or tablet PCs were often used by infants and young children as a means to remain engaged and spare some time for the adults. In addition, there were many cases where young children were allowed to use their media devices as a reward for completing a task or a chore (56.2%).
- The management of media use by infants and young children at home differed according to the parents' educational background, the household employment status, and the child's birth order. Specifically, children from dual-income families or with parents with lower education levels were at a higher risk of being placed in a more vulnerable media environment.
- Parents of infants and toddlers recognized the importance of media use for young children and tried to promote good media use habits through various educational methods. However, parents of young children rarely received any education on how to teach their children to use media responsibly, thus, the demand for such education was high.
- Infants and toddlers (66.8%) had increased their use of media devices since the COVID-19 pandemic.

[Media use by infants and toddlers at childcare and educational institutions]

- Daycare centers and kindergartens were found to be equipped with a variety of media devices and were using them for classroom education and childcare activities.
- Teachers provided guidance provided when using media."Limiting the time spent on media for young children of each age" was found to be the most common guidance, with 73.7% of respondents answering "always." The most common teaching methods included "use [media] with

the teachers"(58.4%) and "talk about the content with the teachers" (47.1%).

- Teachers' awareness of the guidelines for assisting media use among young children was found to be very low.
- Kindergarten and daycare teachers who had experience in guiding young children in media use (70.3%) responded that the education they had received for the purpose helped guide young children.
- Most teachers (96.3%) responded that activities using media devices and content were helpful for the smooth process of education and childcare activities.
- Regarding policies to ensure the appropriate use of media by young children, both parents and teachers perceived the "expansion of parental education to guide young children to use media properly" to be the most important support that needs to be implemented. Other policy agendas that were prioritized by the respondents included "strengthening public awareness around the use of media for young children," "preparing measures to protect infants when creating content," "development and dissemination of age-specific content standards that users can refer to," and "the restriction of advertisement and algorithm creation in children's applications and children's channels." In contrast, "preparing legal regulations for young children's media use (restrictions on usage time by age, sanctions for violations, etc.)" received a relatively low score from the participants.

Policy Suggestions

- The current policies must respond to the changing media environment for young children. A media environment suitable for young children needs to be created. To this end, it is advised that media use guidance education be mandatory for parents of infants and young children attending daycare facilities and educational institutions and this be reinforced during health check-ups.
- Other suggested policies include continuing education for service providers, mandating media use guidance education in early childhood teacher education, developing media use

guidelines and related educational activities for institutional childcare centers and homes, changing the law to include curricular content, reflecting the development of young children's media literacy, preparing measures to improve the suitability of content for infants and young children, and strategy development to support people who are exposed to vulnerable media environments.

Major Research Project

Measures to enhance the expertise of ECEC teachers through the use of EduTech

Changhyun Park / Sook In Cho / Youngsik Jeong / Ji-yeon Yun

Background and Purpose of the study

- The purpose of this study is to present measures for effective professional development of the ECEC teachers through remote education and EduTech technology and propose policies related to the ECEC teachers and their implications.

Research Methods

- The contents of the study include statistics, systems, prior research analysis, domestic and foreign remote education and education trends and status survey related to EduTech, and an analysis of policy needs and improvements through remote education and EduTech. Research methods include literature analysis, survey, expert Delphi survey, expert advisory meeting, and policy research practice consultation.
- The study focused on the following points. The survey presented the actual status of teachers' professional education through remote education and EduTech and the direction to be taken by the policy to strengthen teachers' professionalism through EduTech. The expert Delphi survey studied issues related to the use of EduTech in the future, core competencies of teachers, prospects of early childhood teacher education using EduTech, strengthening digital competencies of young children, and improving related policies.

Results

- The status of teachers' professional education through remote classes and EduTech indicated that 57.9% of teachers had "no experience" in teacher professional education related to EduTech. In addition, 44% of teachers acknowledged that "the burden of teacher work is high" and is a problem in teachers' professionalism education related to EduTech, while 35.5% of teachers said that they were "very poor" or "poor" to afford the institution's wireless Internet environment.

- In remote classes and teacher education, 71.9% of teachers answered "very yes" and "yes" for the perception of the gap between disabled and non-disabled. Regarding the competencies required by teachers for the application of EduTech, 34.0% of teachers considered "digital literacy competencies" important, and regarding the establishment of a platform for teacher education, 43.3% of teachers responded that "establishing a total operating system for various platforms (regional and local governments)" was essential.

Policy Suggestions

- The policy tasks were as follows: establishing guidelines and standards to verify the safety of early childhood digital devices, including the provisions for young children's safety in the Framework Act on Digital, developing digital civic education programs, developing and distributing early childhood education platforms and content production guidelines, and mid- to long-term plans.
- Establishing a multi-sector R&D team and expanding R&D development, supporting the information infrastructure environment for remote class operation, providing curriculum restructuring and evaluation standards for remote classes, and class operation guidelines.
- Establishment of an early childhood education data management system, establishment of an educational data environment based on the consent of teachers and parents, establishment of guidelines for data management of educational institutions, revision of copyright law, and revision of the Nuri curriculum.

Child Care Policies

coping with
COVID-19

- Restructuring the ECEC and childrearing support system for the post-covid19 time
- Cross-National Comparison of Early Childhood Education and Care Policies in Response to COVID-19 Across USA, Germany and Korea

Major Research Project

Restructuring the ECEC and childrearing support system for the post-covid19 time

Yoon Kyung Choi / Keun Jin Kim / Ick-Joong Chung / Young Choi / Shinyeong Song

Background and Purpose of the study

- The COVID-19 pandemic impacted the ECEC (Early Childhood Education and Care) environment and system in Korea by closing many of the ECEC public programs and facilities.
- Based on the collected data from multiple sources, this study analyzes how the pandemic reshaped the ECEC and childrearing arena by looking into the ECEC experiences and the daily lives of young children and their families during the past two years.

Research Methods

- To understand the impact and define the impending issues and problems, this study used multiple strategies, including a nationwide survey of parents and the ECEC and child-welfare facility workforce, and a review of national policies and guidelines for childcare centers and kindergartens.

Results

· **This study focused on three main themes concerning the restructuring of the childcare support system and policies for the post-pandemic period:**
- First, the dual ECEC system of childcare and education revealed a gap in the pandemic coping strategies of childcare centers and kindergartens. The implementation of a national curriculum and pedagogy during the closure of childcare centers and emergency care systems were found to be different from those of kindergartens.
- Second, the COVID-19 pandemic led to a huge change in the labor market for working parents and the on-off working style. Thus, parenting support programs needed to adjust their connection and compatibility with other services and cash support.

- Third, the most disadvantaged areas (blind spots), such as detection of child abuse, and coping guidelines for child welfare facilities were reviewed and areas for improvement were discussed and proposed.

Policy Suggestions

- Considering the future agenda of Korea (low fertility rate, climate crisis, digitalization, well-being, and competence), to achieve better functioning childcare support policies and programs, the three main themes and areas for improvement need to be considered during policy making and program implementation.
- Our findings suggest that the pandemic has highlighted already-existing problems in the fragmented ECEC, primary education and care, and the child-welfare system.
- Pandemic-related issues may give rise to greater support for better-integrated systems and consolidation in the public-private sectors and the ECEC (care and education)and reinforce the expansion and development of a comprehensive childcare support system, including the provision of mental-health care and counseling services, improvements in the primary school education and care, and greater community involvement.

Major Research Project

Cross-National Comparison of Early Childhood Education and Care Policies in Response to COVID-19 Across USA, Germany and Korea

Sook In Cho / Nayoung Kim / Jaehee Kim / Youngmin Kim

Background and Purpose of the study

- This study's purpose is threefold: (1) To examine, from a cross-cultural perspective, the impact of the global COVID-19 pandemic on the lives of young children. (2) To compare the ECEC policies of the United States, Germany, and South Korea in response to COVID-19 for exploring similarities and differences. (3) Based on these findings, to discuss future ECEC policies in preparation for possible prolongation of the COVID-19 pandemic and the post-COVID-19 era.

Research Methods

- First, data collection was conducted by drawing primarily on the electronic databases and websites of a set of internationally recognizable public policy organizations (e.g., OECD, UN, UNICEF, UNESCO).
- Second, for each of the United States, Germany, and South Korea, we performed a manual search for all possibly relevant government articles, reports, documents, and data from early 2020 to 2021 that pertain to any of the following four particular aspects of the country's ECEC policies: (1) Operation of ECEC institutions, (2) Training support for teachers, (3) Learning support for children, (4) Financial support for ECEC institutions.
- Third, we conducted an online survey of 40 experts (USA=13, Germany=7, Korea=20) in the three target countries. We asked experts' opinions on (1) the effectiveness of local government policies, (2) the difficulties/challenges in implementing local government policies, and (3) the areas in which local government policies can be further improved.
- Fourth, we held an online international symposium in order to share findings of this study and discuss future directions for ECEC.

Results

- We found that all three countries provided emergency child care even when institutions were closed. Generally, in the US and Germany, the children of essential workers were eligible for emergency child care, whereas South Korea allowed all households to access the service as needed.
- he three countries included ECEC teachers and staff among the first eligible group for vaccination. South Korea enforced the strictest rules, mandating ECEC teachers and care providers to wear masks.
- In Germany, the government required ECEC teachers and staff to test for COVID-19 twice a week and "lollipop" test was introduced to make COVID-19 testing easier for young children.
- USA were generally active in funding institutions in response to the closure of ECEC institutions.

Policy Suggestions

- Based on the study results, we suggest a two-pronged approach-"prevention" and "education/care"-for a gradual return to normalcy in ECEC.
- For prevention, it is necessary to review and improve countermeasures in the event of confirmed cases within the ECEC institution; regularly test teachers, parents, and children; and ensure the quarantine guidelines within the institution are strictly followed.
- In terms of education/care, we should encourage outdoor activities for in-person education and effective use of interactive commutation media for distance learning.

Parenting friendly

culture

General Research Project

KICCE Poll on Parenting Policy
for Establishing Happy Child Care Culture(V)

Wonsoon Park / Yoon Kyung Choi / Heesue Kim

Background and Purpose of the study

- The "KICCE Poll on parenting policy" was conducted for 5 years (2017 to 2021). The goal was to contribute to a positive childcare culture.

Research Methods

- The main survey annually targeted 3,000 citizens, aged 15 to 75 years, nationwide, and questions were composed based on individual characteristics. It identified the trends in perceptions and attitudes toward parenting and childcare happiness.
- Focus Group Interviews by generation were held four times in 2021.
- A questionnaire was distributed to identify changes in childcare and education in homes due to COVID-19 of 800 parents of young children, including 269 parents who participated in the same survey in 2020, to compare the changes between the two years.

Results

- The burden of the cost of childcare has increased. Therefore, it is possible to estimate that economic difficulties were the cause of avoidance of marriage and childbirth, and the problem of low birth rate was more fundamental and structural.
- The policy for work-family balance was most successful in the government's parenting-related policies. There are, however, significant differences between male and female parenting responsibilities.

- It is confirmed that positive opinions about the government's parenting-related cash allowance policy have increased during the COVID-19 as a result of positive experiences of the government's child care allowance related to COVID-19.
- The degree of satisfaction with the government's overall parenting policy is steadily increasing.
- While the difficulty of raising children at home is increasing due to the prolonged COVID-19, the quality of childcare and education at home has been maintained to some extent. However, the number of learning activities at home is low. Hence, diverse programs should be provided to support home learning activities.

Policy Suggestions

- Based on the results of this study, we propose policies to support childcare, especially gender-equal parenting, and strengthen family relationships.
- In addition, it is necessary to increase birthrates with stronger welfare programs and expanded child allowance.

A Study on a Paradigm Shift Towards a Culture that Respects Parenting and Raising Positive Awareness on Parenting Culture(III): Creating a Culture of Respect for Childcare at Home and in Local Communities

MeKyung Kwon / Jihyun Kim / Youngmin Kim

Background and Purpose of the study

- This study, which started from the recognition that there is a largely negative view about childcare, is a three-year collaborative work designed to pave the way for a paradigm shift that would lead to a positive perception of parenting, i.e., a view that parenting is a joyful activity, parenting responsibilities are more equally shared between father and mother, and the culture is supportive of work-life balance and childcare.
- The purpose of the study is to examine the parenting culture at homes and in the local communities and suggest social and institutional strategies to address challenges while aiming to foster a positive parenting culture.

Research Methods

- Through a collaboration between the Korea Institute of Child Care and Education, the SBS Broadcasting Group, and the Seoul National University, this study used both qualitative and quantitative research methodologies.
- As part of a literature review, the study analyzed previous research, trends in parenting culture, and the system of childcare support delivery in local communities.
- A case study analysis was conducted of successful local community childcare support at home and abroad and ways to foster a culture that respects childcare.
- Focus group interviews (FGIs) with 48 parents, and a survey of 1,228 parents of infants, toddlers, and lower-grade elementary school students were conducted to understand their perception of childcare, factors affecting it, and the required changes to foster a culture conducive to childcare.
- In the hope of fostering a culture that respects parenting, a group of Parenting Culture Creators was organized and a 13-hour long program, titled "Every child is everybody's child" was aired on SBS "Hope TV" on November 19 and 20, 2021.

Results

- arents showed high levels of satisfaction in their "relationship with their child" and "the work they do to care for the child."
- Challenges and impediments to childcare at home differed by age group, with those in their 20s and 30s not finding enough time for childcare, while those in their 40s and 50s pointing out the differences in the approach of different family members towards childcare (philosophy and attitude).
- In the views of the parents, a good local community environment includes the presence of a playground or park for children and the availability of childcare/educational facilities.
- Survey respondents were of the view that parents and their families would be driving the change in parenting culture.
- The survey results showed that the key to fostering a positive change in parenting culture at home was parents having the time to take care of their children.

Policy Suggestions

- To improve the parenting culture at home, we suggest continuous promotion and spread of a positive childcare culture by the central and local governments, businesses, and the media, and operating "Parenting Culture Creators."
- We need to seek more childcare capacity-building opportunities for fathers and "fathers' playground" to provide institutional support to enable equitable family engagement in childcare.
- In addition, making programs that support life-work balance readily available, increasing opportunities for childcare capacity building, making information available, increasing parent education opportunities, and creating online/offline venues for information exchange and communication are important.
- Finding better ways to promote childcare support services, and expanding and reinforcing systems to deliver government childcare support services for improving the

A Study on a Paradigm Shift Towards a Culture that Respects Parenting and Raising Positive Awareness on Parenting Culture(III): Creating a Culture of Respect for Childcare at Home and in Local Communities

MeKyung Kwon / Jihyun Kim / Youngmin Kim

childcare culture and access to childcare support services in local communities.

- Creating local environments conducive to childcare (parks, playgrounds, and libraries) with the use of the "Diagnose KICCE childcare-friendly village" and policy recommendations within communities.

- To adjust childcare support services to the specific needs of the rural communities, consider expanding medical support services and operating early childhood cultural centers, unique to the rural areas. In addition, support for the creation of community-based childcare centers is needed. Consider providing common space (Yugajeong) for

parents and children and find ways to create healthy online communities.

- We suggest building childcare support networks within communities that operate around local businesses.

- Overall, to create a positive parenting culture that respects childcare, the promotion of childcare-friendliness in the parental environment is required by ensuring that childcare support programs benefit those who need them the most, and through sustained efforts to improve and promote the childcare culture.

A Study on Development of Child-Care-Friendly Community for Coping with Lowest-Low Fertility Rate Social Phenomenon(III)

Nayoung Kim / MeKyung Kwon / Dongseok Oh / Yuna Jeong

Background and Purpose of the study

- The low birth rate in Korea has continued for a considerable period. As of 2020, the total fertility rate recorded the lowest at 0.84. In 2005, the government enacted laws to prepare for a decrease in the fertility rate, and the "Low Fertility and Aging Society Committee" was created under the direct control of the President.
- In addition, since 2006, related ministries have jointly announced the "Basic Plan for Low Fertility and Aging Society," with the fourth plan being announced in 2020, continuing the efforts to overcome the low fertility phenomenon.
- However, the lifestyle of households with children in Korea is rapidly changing. For instance, there is an increase in women's participation in economic activities and a change in household types.
- For the government's efforts to produce positive results, the paradigm of the policy that focused only on "childcare"- centered around infants and young children - has to shift. The concept of "creating a childcare-friendly environment," linked to the local community's nurturing environment, needs to be considered from a macro-paradigm perspective.

Research Methods

- This study attempted to support the creation of a practical child-rearing-friendly village by analyzing available statistical data and conducting in-depth interviews and identifying the required aspects for creating a local, childcare-friendly, living environment for families with children.
- The study conducted a survey on low birth rate and child-rearing-friendly perception, developed the KICCE child-rearing-friendly village certification procedure and certification manual, reviewed laws based on the KICCE child-rearing friendly village certification project, and held a seminar.

Results

- Most respondents (89%) considered the low birth rate a serious problem, confirming that the majority of Koreans perceive low birth-rate as a serious issue.
- Based on the two preceding studies (first and second studies), the certification procedure was prepared to be used with the launch of the certification project once certain improvements took place in the future. To prepare the relevant laws, the applicable laws were reviewed and possible scenarios were presented, thereby, providing a reasonable basis for fostering the certification project in the future.
- There is a need for consultation, as a prerequisite for the certification procedure, intended to substantialize a child-rearing-friendly environment and village development effectively.

Policy Suggestions

- The study proposes a comprehensive plan to support the creation of a child-rearing-friendly village that redesigns the child-rearing environment by examining the ways of implementing child-rearing support policies in the local community.
- It proposes a plan for preparing a legal and administrative basis for future childcare-friendly village development and certification projects.

Inclusive

Childrearing Support

Major Research Project

A Study on the Integrated Support for Childcare and Early Childhood Education Services in Rural Areas with a Sparsely Populated Infant and Toddler Population

Misun Yang / Yunjin Lee / Jaehee Han / Haejin Jang / Doyoung Jung

Background and Purpose of the study

- This study aims to assess the status of childcare and education service support in rural areas with a small population of infants and young children and presents a plan for integrated support for early childhood education and childcare services.

Research Methods

- This study collected and examined related laws and systems, prior research concerning educational and childcare service support in rural areas, population trends, and childcare education statistical data.
- Furthermore, this study collected and analyzed overseas cases (e.g., U.S, Canada, and Japan) regarding education and childcare service support for infants and young children in rural areas with a sparse population of infants and toddlers to derive implications.
- In addition, an online survey was conducted, targeting 401 daycare centers and 351 kindergartens, to understand the status and needs of daycare centers located in rural areas.
- A pilot project model for integrated support for daycare centers in rural areas was developed and implemented. Four models were established in this project: single-type, mixed-type, base-type, and integrated-type. A total of 38 daycare centers participated from three regions, namely Gangwon, Chungbuk, and Jeonnam.
- Discussions were held with directors and teachers of daycare centers and kindergartens in rural areas with a sparse population of infants and toddlers. Advisory council meetings were held with academics and experts in the field of early childhood education and childcare and officials in charge of related ministries to gather their views on the research directions and methods, the pilot projects (e.g., the development of integrated educational and childcare service models, the operation of pilot projects, and setting the target areas), survey questions, and policy measures.

Results

- According to the operation status and demand survey result of childcare centers and kindergartens in rural areas, due to the decrease in the number of children in rural areas, 84.8% of childcare centers experienced a reduction in their enrollment rate, even though most kindergartens were placed near childcare centers.
- Over 70% of private childcare centers were willing to convert into public childcare centers due to the reduction in service operations. They requested improvement in the resource cost support rate and standard per class.
- As the number of children in kindergartens decreased, 88.3% of respondents reported a reduction in the number of classes, and more than half had a kindergarten or childcare center nearby.
- However, only 58.9% of private kindergartens were willing to convert into purchase-type public daycare centers and 64.3% agreed with the policy of consolidation and abolition of public kindergartens. To improve the education services in rural areas, participants demanded improvement in the enrollment rate per class and an expansion of support for improving the facility environment, resource costs, and vehicle operating costs.
- A total of 38 childcare centers, comprised of 12 groups in the three regions of Gangwon, Chungbuk, and Jeonnam, participated in the pilot project for three months.

- In the pilot project, three out of four models were applied, including single-type, mixed-type, base-type, and integrated-type. Tasks related to the operations of the daycare centers were assigned and initiated, including the management of the overall operation, faculty and the program, support provisions for parents, and promoting local community integration.
- The pilot project provided an opportunity to form emotional solidarity between the childcare center directors experiencing the same difficulties, gave childcare teachers the confidence that the government and/or the childcare support center cared about teachers in rural areas, raised their morale through interactive consulting, encouraged their participation in the teacher learning community, and provided a venue for information, programs and teaching materials, and know-how exchange between the childcare centers.

Policy Suggestions

- Promote policies for increasing the number of public childcare centers and kindergartens customized for the rural areas. This can be achieved by converting private childcare centers into public ones and by restructuring public independent kindergartens, school-affiliated kindergartens, and purchase-type kindergartens.
- Support the operation costs or resource costs to secure the financial soundness of childcare centers and kindergartens located in the rural areas.
- Provide additional incentives for teachers working in special areas to improve the supply and demand of childcare teachers in rural areas.

- Minimize the childcare gap, caused by the issues related to the support of substitute teachers, by introducing non-homeroom teachers and the itinerant teacher system.
- Include kindergartens in the scale-up projects of the local offices of education by amending the Early Childhood Education Act and the Elementary and Secondary School Act.
- Centralize the integrated support project for childcare centers in the rural areas. Provide financial support, such as operating expenses and allowances, to encourage and revitalize program participation.
- Reinforce sharing and promotion of the best practices of the integrated support project for childcare centers in the rural areas.

Policy Support to Empower Multicultural Parents for Bilingual Language Development in Early Childhood

Eun Jung Park / Mugyeong Moon / Ji-yeon Yun / Dong Sun Yim / Weng-Feng Lai

Background and Purpose of the study

- This study aims to seek effective support policies to empower multicultural parents with young children with regard to bilingualism being a strength of multicultural families.

Research Methods

- This study analyzed bilingual support policies and services for multicultural families and conducted questionnaire surveys and in-depth interviews to identify the status of bilingual parenting in multicultural families with infants and toddlers. In addition, an expert opinion survey was conducted to determine the status of bilingual support and derive policy measures.

Results

- The results of this analysis showed that the notion that the use of two languages in everyday life hinders children's language development is incorrect.
- For the sake of simultaneous bilingual development of multicultural young children, it is necessary to strengthen bilingual support services for parents to use two languages appropriately at home.
- Strengthening parental education is required to improve parental competence, which affects children's bilingualism.
- Education for awareness of bilingualism within Korean families should be reinforced.
- Education to enhance the understanding of bilingualism is necessary for the ECEC (Early Childhood Education and Care) workers.
- It is essential to consider the differences and needs of individuals from different countries of origin in the provision of bilingual support services.

Policy Suggestions

- Based on the findings of this research, three basic principles for bilingual support policies were suggested from a parental empowerment perspective: improving the overall awareness of bilingualism, support for simultaneous bilingual development from the beginning (infancy), and substantializing bilingual support based on the development of a system that links support services and systems together.
- Six policy tasks were derived from the basic principles, which are as follows: 1) to establish a cooperative bilingual support system, 2) to provide education to improve awareness of bilingualism in multicultural families and educational institutions for young children, 3) to activate and utilize self-help groups according to the country of origin of the parents, 4) to provide customized bilingual support for families using two languages at home. 5) to improve access to bilingual services and information, and 6) to expand professional bilingual human resources and strengthen their professionalism. Specific plans were presented to practicalize the derived policy tasks and implementation strategies were suggested to actualize these policy tasks.

Major Research Project

A Study on Support for early Children of North Korean Defector Families for Reducing the Social Gap

Yunjin Lee / Changhyun Park / Moonjeong Kim

Background and Purpose of the study

- To empirically understand the growth, development, and child-rearing environment of young children of North Korean defector families.

Research Methods

- A comparative analysis was conducted between North Korean defector family groups, young children from ordinary families, and general vulnerable groups.
- Survey: 151 primary caregivers, Interview: 26 primary caregivers by family types

Results

- The result of the survey indicated a generally weak child-rearing environment. It was revealed to be worse than the ordinary family groups. The main caregivers in North Korean defector families were often identified to be unhealthy or severely depressed.

- However, North Korean defector families had higher expectations for their children compared to the ordinary family groups and followed the basic rules for the safety of their children. While the number was small, we could see positivity and hope in North Korean defector families.

Policy Suggestions

- Based on the research results, three policy goals, four policy measures, and twelve policy tasks were presented to provide a fair starting point for infants and toddlers of North Korean defector families and support the health and economic stability of their primary caregivers.

Childrearing

Cost

Major Research Project

A Study on the financial projections of parenting support policy and improvement of sharing structure

Dong Hoon Kim / Hyo Mi Choi / Geun Seok Hong / Tae Woo Kim

Background and Purpose of the study

- To estimate the mid- to long-term financial projections of the expenditure related to parenting support policies through the establishment of a financial projection model.
- To ensure the financial security of the parenting support policies, which are expected to continue to increase, and improve the financial sharing structure between the central and local governments.

Research Methods

- Review of literature and previous studies related to the topic.
- Expert consultations to set the target and scope of parenting support policy, develop a financial estimation model and construct scenarios, and find ways to improve financial distribution.
- A joint academic conference was held to discuss the financial projection results and the status of financial distribution of early childhood education.

Results

· **The sum of the additional financial scales, according to the financial projection scenarios, for the four parenting support policies is as follows:**
  - For the next five years, the total budget for the parenting support policies, including childcare allowance, universal child allowance, the subsidy of childcare, and the Nuri curriculum support, is estimated to be KRW 58,213.7 billion.
  - According to the estimation of the fiscal scale, under the assumption that the current level of financial support is maintained for the next five years, the estimated cumulative fiscal scale varied from a minimum of KRW 5,958.7 billion to a maximum of KRW 18,654 billion.

· **The budget for children and childcare takes up 17.54% of the total allocated budget for social welfare.**
· **Among the sub-projects in the childcare sector, four projects accounted for almost the entire allocated budget - the subsidy of childcare support project, the child allowance support project, the labor cost and operation support for childcare teachers project, and the family childcare allowance support project.**
· **Most of the parenting support policies are under the social welfare sector and are transferred to local governments as state subsidies, whereby, the state and local governments share their financial resources.**
· **As the size of the national subsidy project related to parenting support policy increases, the absolute share of local expenses proportionally increases.**
· **Although the conflict over the financial sharing of the Nuri curriculum support has been temporarily suspended due to the enactment of the Act on the early childhood education support special account, it is necessary to secure the stability of the financial sharing of the Nuri curriculum support in the long run.**

Policy Suggestions

· **Except for the Nuri curriculum, all childcare support projects are supported in the form of state subsidies and local government expenses, hence, securing stable financial resources is necessary.**
  - It is necessary to review the adjustment of the standard subsidy rate for childcare-related projects.
  - It is necessary to transfer some projects to the local governments according to the nature of the government-subsidized projects.
· **It is necessary to clarify the ratio of the Nuri curriculum's financial distribution for stable revenue.**
· **Abolition of the sunset deadline for the Act on the early childhood education support special account.**

General Research Project

KICCE Spending Survey: A Study of Childrearing Costs and Demand for Childcare Services (IV)

Hyo Mi Choi / Jeong Won Lee / Jayeun Kim / Jaehee Lee / Taewoo Kim

Background and Purpose of the study

- This study represents the fourth wave of the KICCE Spending Survey, which is being conducted over a period of five consecutive years. We collected information on the childrearing costs and usage of childcare services among childrearing households to inform policies that can help alleviate the cost burden associated with such spending. To this end, the "KICCE Spending Survey" has been conducted annually to inform support policies targeting childrearing households.
- In particular, for the 2021 study (fourth wave), we focused on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic with regard to childrearing costs and the use of childcare services.

Research Methods

- In the fourth year survey, non-face-to-face services, in-home care, and parent support services were included to capture the changes caused by COVID-19.
- In the present study, an in-depth analysis was performed to analyze the changes in childrearing costs during the early stages of COVID-19 and the effect of public subsidies on childrearing costs, using data from the previous waves (second and third).
- In-depth interviews were conducted with low-income households with infants and toddlers.

Results

1. Overviews of the KICCE Spending Survey Fourth Wave

· **The total sample of the fourth wave included 1,933 households, equivalent to a retention rate of 87.1%.**
  - Out of the 1,679 sample households, 1,463 were successfully contacted. 216 households were replaced with new households.
  - As with the previous wave, a total of 254 households were included as part of the newborn sample.
  - A total of 2,832 children (including 2,401 infants) responded to the children's survey.

· **Among households with young children, the average monthly household income in the fourth wave (2021) was KRW 4,856,000, a decline from the third wave (2020) at KRW 5,023,000, but an increase from the second wave (2019).**

2. Childcare Cost Expenditure among Childrearing Households

· **Among households with young children, the average monthly expenditure on living expenses in the fourth wave (2021) was KRW 2,874,000, up by KRW 112,000 from the third wave (2020) and [amount] from the second wave (2019).**
  - Food accounted for the largest share of living expenses. The third wave (2020), which corresponded with the early stages of the pandemic, revealed large increases in food expenditure. The figure for the fourth wave (2021), while slightly lower than the previous wave, remained at relatively similar levels.
  - Engel coefficient: 28.5 as of the fourth wave (2021), which declined from the third wave (2020), but increased from the second wave.
  - Schwabe index: 8.1 as of the fourth wave, exhibiting little variation.
  - Angel coefficient: 26.8 as of the fourth wave (2021), at relatively similar levels compared to the third wave (2020).

· **The total average monthly childcare costs for the fourth wave (2021) stood at KRW 1,196,000, the highest figure recorded since the study initiated in 2018.**

· **The average monthly childcare costs per young child for the fourth wave (2021) was KRW 612,000, increased by KRW 29,000 from the third wave (2020), but decreased by KRW 18,000 from the second wave (2019).**

· **The average monthly childcare cost per elementary school-going child, as of the fourth wave (2021), was KRW 799,000.**

KICCE Spending Survey: A Study of Childrearing Costs and Demand for Childcare Services (IV)

Hyo Mi Choi / Jeong Won Lee / Jayeun Kim / Jaehee Lee / Taewoo Kim

3. Use of Childcare Services by Childrearing Households & Policy Demands

· Use of Childcare Services by Households with Young Children

◦ *Facilities offering half-day or longer programs*

- Types of facilities used: As of the fourth wave (2021), 50.4% of the 2,371 young children had made use of childcare centers, followed by 28.8% of kindergartens, and 1.3% of study centers. In sum, 80.5% of young children made use of available facilities.
- Time spent: As of the fourth wave, the time spent per type of facility was 35.0 hours for childcare centers, 34.5 hours for kindergartens, and 29.5 hours for study centers.
- Usage cost: As of the fourth wave, the average monthly fees paid to each type of facility was KRW 66,000 for childcare centers, KRW 132,000 for kindergartens, and KRW 856,000 for study centers.
- Online classes: 2.6% of the users of childcare centers used online classes, with the figures being 5.8% for kindergartens, and 6.9% for study centers.

◦ *Part-time Private Education*

- Types of facilities used: As of the fourth wave, the most frequently used facility used was short-term study centers (21.3%), followed by in-person workbooks (15.0%), culture centers (5.7%), non-visit workbooks and activities (2.1%), and individual/group tutoring (1.4%).
- Time spent: Children spent an average of 4.2 hours a week at short-term study centers. This was the most prevalent type of part-time private education service used by young children.

- Usage Cost: Individual/group tutoring incurred the highest average monthly costs, which stood at KRW 198,000.
- Online classes at short-term study centers: About 3.0% of children had experienced non-face-to-face (i.e., online) classes, mostly for scholastic parts of the curriculum.

· Use of Childcare Services by Households with Elementary School-age Children

◦ *Public facility-based services*

- Type of facilities used: As of the fourth wave (2021), elementary school care classes (23.1%) were the most prevalent type of service used, showing an increase from 16.6% in the second wave (2019).
- Usage of after-school care was 38.5% in the fourth wave (2021), indicating a recovery following the sharp drop to 4.5% in the third wave (2020) during the early stages of the pandemic. However, it still falls significantly short of the 62.7% usage level in the second wave (2019).
- As of the fourth wave, local/community/neighborhood childcare centers accounted for 1.7% of usage, showing a decrease from 2.6% in the third wave (2020).

◦ *Part-time Private Education*

- Type of facilities used: As of the fourth wave, short-term academies (84.6%) were the most frequently used care facility, followed by in-person workbooks (26.3%), educational online content (9.2%), individual/group tutoring (5.0%), non-visit workbooks/online classes (4.8%), cultural centers (3.0%), and visiting teaching activities (1.9%).
- Time spent: The average weekly time spent in short-term study centers was 7.3 hours, while none of the other services exceeded 2 hours of weekly usage.
- Usage cost: The fees for short-term study centers rose steadily, from KRW 220,000 in the second wave (2019) and KRW 232,000 in the third wave (2020) to KRW 244,000 in the fourth wave (2021).

4. Changes in Childcare Costs during the Early Stages of the Pandemic and the Effects of Public Assistance

· **In-depth analysis was conducted by linking the findings of the second (2019) and the third (2020) wave as panel data.**

· **Compared to the previous year (2019), the third wave (2020) data showed an overall drop in childcare costs.**

· **As of the third wave (2020), 7.0% of respondents reported having received COVID-19-related public assistance.**

· **Using a panel data DID model, we found that the public assistance provided during the early stages of the pandemic had little significance in reducing the total childcare cost of households with young children.**

- It should be noted that this result only covers the early stages of the pandemic as it is based on data from the second (2019) and the third (2020) wave.

Policy Suggestions

· **Strengthening the social safety net to assure an equal starting line**

- Introducing a "child allowance plus" program
- Strengthening medical support
- Improving the usability of sports/culture vouchers
- trengthening support for the independence and childrearing realities of low income/single mothers
- Preparing for "Living with the Coronavirus" and the future society
- Securing a framework for the stable implementation of public care services

- Strengthening support for in-home care
- Developing and providing public services featuring EduTech
- Diversifying online support services for parents and improving their usability

· **Strengthening the efficacy of childcare support policies**

- Building an integrated platform for supporting childcare-related policies and employing relevant experts
- Strengthening support for the establishment of policies to achieve work-life balance
- Expanding short-term care and improving its usability

A Study of the KICCE Childrearing Price Index(IV)

Jinah Park / Mira Cho / Hyemin Lee

Background and Purpose of the study

- This study marks the ninth year of the Childrearing Price Index (CPI), produced by the Korea Institute of Child Care and Education (KICCE), and the fourth year of the second research theme - the Study on the Consumption Status of Households with Young Children and Childrearing Costs. The CPI is produced regularly to monitor the market price trends of childrearing-related products and services.

- The purpose of this study is to monitor whether the government support policies have reflected in the childrearing products consumed by actual households with infants or children, and analyze the effects of the current policies to extract the basic data for future policy-making.

Research Methods

- This study calculated the KICCE Childrearing Price Index by analyzing data provided by the Bank of Korea and Statistics Korea and through a childrearing market research.

- It analyzed the KICCE Childrearing Price Index from 2013 to 2020.

- A nationwide survey of perceived childrearing prices among parents of infants and young children was conducted.

Results

- The KICCE CPI (I) in 2021 dropped by 0.9% during the 2.6% increase of the CPI of Statistics Korea (KOSTAT).

- The KICCE Childrearing Price Indexes (Ⅰ, Ⅲ-1, and Ⅲ-2) investigated in this study until 2020 were not produced this year. Instead, the indexes from 2013 to 2020 were used to analyze the annual average increase/decrease and contributions. According to the result, the annual average fluctuation rate was around 2%, approximately the inflation targeting number announced by the Bank of Korea in 2019.

- In terms of the childrearing-related products, child insurance and home study material for young children ranked highest in all the three index production methods.

- Additional kindergarten and childcare center costs ranked at the bottom of the list, indicating the impact of price regulation policy after the expansion of policy supports for free childcare and the national Nuri curriculum.

- nationwide survey of the perceived childrearing cost among the parents of young children was conducted in 2021. As a result, similar price fluctuation patterns were noted in all the consumer goods, durable goods, and service goods. Durable goods were perceived to have the highest level of cost and added the most to the household burden. This result indicated that, of all the identified childrearing items, households with younger children felt a heavier cost burden due to durable products such as strollers, car seats, and bicycles.

Policy Suggestions

- The authors suggest producing the Childrearing Price Index perceived by the households with young children as a sub-index of the CPI of the KOSTAT and adding indices of households with young children to the Consumer Survey Index and Composite Sentiment Index.

- Moreover, as the KICCE Childrearing Price Index is designed to indicate market price fluctuation perceived by households with infants and children, we recommend that the government policies reflect these results in the level of financial support provisions and suggest ways to close the price gap between the local kindergartens and childcare centers.

Development

of Children

2021 Longitudinal Study of Growth and Development of Korean Children: Panel Study on Korean Children (PSKC)

Jihyun Kim / Dong Hoon Kim / Mira Cho / Yun-Jin Bae / Hyejin Kim / Eunyoung Park

Background and Purpose of the study

- The Panel Study on Korean Children (PSKC) is the first longitudinal study targeting newborn children in Korea. The PSKC is a meaningful study as it provides researchers with data on the development of children and allows an analysis of the environmental influences on the children, including family, school, policy, and community.

- The PSKC has provided longitudinal and cross-sectional data every year and offered the annual research reports by analyzing the major characteristic variables children and parents.

- The 14th wave of the PSKC in 2021 contains data about children's development and parent-child relationships in adolescence. As children who participated in the panel study entered junior high school in 2021, the scales were partially modified with variables that can be used for adolescents with several questions concerning them, which were formerly answered by the parents, being answered by the children directly.

Research Methods

- In the 2021 annual report, we analyzed the data that were collected in 2020 (13th wave) and provided the characteristics of children, parents, households, and communities. In total, 1,397 families and 1,359 children participated in the 13th year of the survey.

Results

- The following are some representative points from the research results of the 13th wave.

- In the sixth-grade panel, the mean height of the boys was 155.93 cm (SD = 7.36) and of the girls was 154.89 cm (SD = 5.88). The mean weight of the boys was 52.22 kg (SD = 11.34) and of the girls was 47.72kg (SD = 8.87). The percentage of children possessing a cell phone was 94.34%, an increase of 88.8% compared to the 12th wave. The average time spent on media was 2.80 hours per day (SD = 1.55), an increase from 1.80 hours per day (SD = 1.03) in the 12th wave.

- The mean score of overall happiness in the 13th wave was 2.96 (SD = 0.48) on a 4-point-scale, slightly lower than the overall happiness in the 12th wave (M = 3.25). The average score of children's life satisfaction was 3.13 (SD = 0.54) on a 4-point-scale.

- About 41.78% of children responded that they plan to get married in the future (boys: 44.41%, girls: 39.07%). In addition, 36.70% of children responded positively regarding their intention to have a child (boys: 41.51%, girls: 31.74%).

- The proportion of using private education for sixth grade was 89.8%, excluding the after-school classes. The proportion differed based on the household income. Children from higher-income households used a higher proportion of private education compared to those from lower-income households.

Policy Suggestions

- The year 2020 was the year when COVID-19 started to spread around the world and brought changes to children's lifestyles. For example, children in 2020 participated in fewer leisure activities and had more media involvement than the previous year. Therefore, it is necessary to develop guidelines for children to ensure healthy lifestyle management during the pandemic.

General Research Project

Korean ECEC(Early Childhood Education and Care) Panel Study

Jeong Rim Lee / Eun Jung Park / Jayeun Kim / Shinyeong Song / Hyemin Lee / Jaehee Lee / Kee Jae Lee

Background and Purpose of the study

- Multifaceted and complex developmental trajectories are known to affect children's healthy growth and development.
- A longitudinal approach for childhood growth is required, with a time dimension, from the beginning of life to adulthood, and, multi-surroundings from the uterine environment to community levels.
- The Korean Early Childhood Education and Care Panel study (K-ECEC study) was designed to resolve the issues related to low birth rates and to support children's healthy growth.
- Particularly, the K-ECEC study aimed to collect information on educational and child-care-related factors from children's early stage of life up to the next decade.

Research Methods

- Literature review was conducted to sort and organize prior research related to child education and care.
- Sample design and sampling strategy were developed to invite hospitals and expectant mothers from different regional backgrounds.
- Advisory groups, including medical doctors and professionals in childhood development and education, were created to design the study and develop the protocols. These groups also assisted in the sampling design, development, and finalization of the survey domain and questionnaire. Questionnaire domains and variables were sorted from the first year (2022) to the ninth (2030) wave and were inspected and examined by the advisory groups.

Results

· **A sampling strategy and protocol were developed, which included panel management, survey domain and variables for the next decade, and survey preparation.**
  - In accordance with the developed sampling strategy and protocol, the target population was set to include newborn babies (those born in 2022) and their families, and the complex sampling method was applied, considering the regional classification and level of hospitals. The overall sample size was 3,500, including 400 households with varied income disparities and multicultural families.
  - The main survey domains were composed of the characteristic of children, parents, family, education and childcare service, community, and policy based on the theoretical background. Survey variables for each domain were explored and developed by the advisory groups and the survey questionnaire was scheduled according to childhood developmental stages. As a result, Basic Survey-I and II focused on the socio-demographic characteristics and health conditions of expectant mothers and their spouses, scheduled at 16 weeks and 32-37 weeks of pregnancy, respectively.
  - Basic Survey-I was conducted right after the enrollment of the expectant mother, recruited from the hospitals, and face-to-face interviews have also proceeded. The online Basic Survey II was conducted during the third trimester of pregnancy. The hospital and participant registries are ongoing.

Policy Suggestions

· **The K-ECEC study was launched in 2021 and has a long way to go.**
  - Survey of children and their parents will be conducted by visiting each household every year between 2022 and 2030. Particularly, variables related to institutionalized education and teachers will be examined once the children become 3-years old.
  - Data collection through the Basic Survey-I and II will continue in the first half of 2022 and the basic analysis will be conducted during the second half of 2022.
  - In addition, the first extensive survey will be conducted when the participating babies turn 4-months old, by visiting individual households.
  - Furthermore, activities to maintain the presence of the same survey participants would continue throughout the study period, along with the production of academic knowledge and evidence for the development of adequate policies.

Play and

Nuri-curriculum

Major Research Project

A Study on Ways to Disseminate Young Children's Play Culture Using Traditional Korean Games

Ja Yeun Koo / Eunyoung Kim / Eunyoung Park

Background and Purpose of the study

- Dissemination of play culture amongst young children is only possible when every generation shares the value and importance of playing. In this study, we noted that traditional games are used as priming water to diversify play resources and as a medium for sharing the values and fun of play across generations. In this study, we collected and built a list of traditional games to provide fundamental data for future studies and suggest ways to utilize traditional Korean games in local communities, early childhood education and childcare institutions, and homes for policymaking in the future.

Research Methods

- Through literature review and council meetings, we collected and enlisted existing traditional Korean games.
- We conducted surveys, case studies, focus group interviews, polls, and held play seminars and expert advisory meetings to identify ways to utilize the data in the local community, early childhood education and childcare institutions, and homes.

Results

- As a result of collecting traditional games by region, 145 games in Seoul and Gyeonggi, 262 in Gangwon and Chungcheong, 165 in Gyeongsang, 159 in Jeolla, and 43 in Jeju were identified. Many of these traditional games were similar nationwide due to the nature of the games enjoyed by children, mainly consisting of group and outdoor games.
- We investigated and assessed how traditional Korean games are played, focusing on the local cultural infrastructure/ facilities where people usually experience them. Regarding the infrastructure, excluding spaces designated for these games and rural theme parks, people use them in one-off events such as festivals around holidays. In addition, the traditional games played in museums, folk villages, and hanok villages often use traditional Korean playthings and reenact these games according to the methods written in the literature.
- We surveyed 528 directors of kindergartens and preschools to find out the state of usage of traditional games in early childhood education and childcare institutions. They indicated that the hours spent playing traditional Korean games accounted for 1-10% of the total playtime per year in early childhood education and childcare institutions. As regards the times when children play traditional games, many responded that it was during a special occasion like holidays or special seasons. They also reported that the games were usually played in places like auditoriums and playrooms and indicated the utilization of traditional play-related books as references at the time of playing the games. Regarding the difficulties of playing the games, teachers' lack of experience with these games was rated the highest. Many suggested implementing the games in the Nuri curriculum as the most appropriate way to conduct them. They rated the need for an introduction to traditional Korean games and the provision of age-appropriate activity materials as necessary support in promoting the use of traditional play activities in the institutions.
- According to the findings of a previous study of 350 mothers with young children, the use of traditional games in families was low. When comparing mothers' childhood experiences with those of their children, mothers perceived that their children had a more diverse and greater number of toys, however, the rate of playing outside and the number of friends had decreased.
- Through case studies, it was found that the perception about traditional games needs to be changed and opportunities to experience these games need to be provided in the local community to improve playing experience.

Policy Suggestions

- The core tasks to meet the demands of practicing traditional games were as follows. At the community level, these tasks

included (1) setting up a central office base where information and human exchange could occur (e.g., responsible for continuously developing and supporting Korean-traditional play content), (2) supporting training for teaching personnel to integrate traditional play, traditional tunes or children songs, and folk tales into the regular curriculum, and (3) adopting traditional play activities within communities in places like children's parks, apartment community facilities, and village communities. At the level of early childhood education and childcare institutions, they involved (1) providing learning opportunities so that teachers encounter various traditional games, and (2) introducing and distributing activity materials (e.g., booklets/tools) for young children. At the individual household level, they involved (1) introducing traditional games and their applications, (2) providing campaigns and promotional resources like media programs, short videos, and SNS to increase parents' awareness about traditional Korean games, and (3) supporting activities to link the institutions and the homes, involving traditional games as a part of parental education.

- This study entitled its vision and goal of spreading the play culture amongst young children through traditional Korean games as "Creating and Spreading Young Children's Play Culture that Harmonizes Sustainable Traditional Games in Everyday Life." Improving awareness and accumulating and expanding play experiences were proposed as strategies to achieve the vision and the goal. To this end, it emphasized that more work was needed to advocate the idea through various means to spread these games more widely. In this study, 37 categories of traditional games were selected and presented as "good" games that diversify the play method.

- As for the action plan in early childhood education and childcare institutions, it proposes to publish and distribute case materials (case study data), titled "Traditional Korean Games: Following One after children songs, and folk tales into the regular curriculum, and (3) adopting traditional play activities within communities in places like children's parks, apartment

community facilities, and village communities. At the level of early childhood education and childcare institutions, they involved (1) providing learning opportunities so that teachers encounter various traditional games, and (2) introducing and distributing activity materials (e.g., booklets/tools) for young children. At the individual household level, they involved (1) introducing traditional games and their applications, (2) providing campaigns and promotional resources like media programs, short videos, and SNS to increase parents' awareness about traditional Korean games, and (3) supporting activities to link the institutions and the homes, involving traditional games as a part of parental education.

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- As for the action plan in early childhood education and childcare institutions, it proposes to publish and distribute case materials (case study data), titled "Traditional Korean Games: Following One after Another." In addition, it suggests providing training and services to empower teachers' play capabilities and provide young children the environment to enjoy these games.

- As for the action plan at home, it suggests a survey of the play preferences of young children and parents in the present era, familiarizing them with traditional games using media, developing and sharing institutional-family linkage models, and finding its use in parent education.

General Research Project

Monitoring and Support Planning of 2019 Revised Nuri Curriculum(II)

Eunyoung Kim / Ja Yeun Koo / Hyejin Kim / Hong-Ju Jun / Myunghee Choi

Background and Purpose of the study

- To ensure the successful implementation of the revised Nuri curriculum, monitoring curriculum operation in kindergartens and childcare centers is necessary.
- In this regard, the Korea Institute of Child Care and Education (KICCE) has planned a three-year research, "Monitoring and Support Planning of 2019 Nuri Curriculum (2020~2022)," to ensure the appropriate implementation of the revised Nuri curriculum.
- This paper presents the results of the second year of the project, which focuses on monitoring teacher professionalism and curriculum operation, and proposes several government and delivery system-level policies with regard to the policy direction of the Nuri curriculum settlement proposed in 2020. It also suggests detailed supporting measures with regards to the characteristics of kindergartens and childcare centers, and teachers.

Research Methods

- Domestic and foreign literature review, surveys, and case studies were conducted. Surveys were conducted among the officers accountable for the delivery system, field teaching staff, directors, and parents.
- The participating delivery system officers included 17 officers from 17 local departments of education, and 18 directors of central and local support centers for childcare, which support the operation of the curriculum.

- A total of 2,000 directors/assistant directors and teachers, from 1,000 institutions (500 each from kindergartens and childcare centers), participated in the study.
- The parent survey was conducted among 1,000 parents of five-year-olds, attending kindergartens or childcare centers.
- Case studies were conducted in six kindergartens and six childcare centers with 12 directors (vice-directors) and 28 teachers - two sessions in each service.

Results

- The Department of Education carried out a national-level project to enhance the educative power of early childhood education, based on its "Measures for Early Childhood Innovation," from 2018 to 2020 to support the implementation of the kindergarten curriculum. In 2021, the department carried out the project, "Future Kindergarten Curriculum Operation Support and Education Content Development and Support." Various sub-projects were also conducted by the local departments of education. In 2020, the Nuri curriculum consultation project was conducted through the local departments. In 16 local departments, operations of professional learning communities, teacher training, resource development and dissemination, and support provisions for improving the physical environment were implemented. Local support centers for childcare, in charge of supporting childcare centers, also provided various support services. In 2020, the centers invested in the teacher training project, which was provided by 16 local centers, followed by the Nuri curriculum consultation, which was provided by 12 local centers. The scale and budget for these projects differed based on the service. The local department of education officers highlighted the need for parental awareness improvement and the necessity of national publicity, while the heads of the local support centers for childcare emphasized the need for the provision of teachers and expenditure for the revised Nuri curriculum operation, the revision of the service evaluation system, the promotion of play-centered curriculum, the development and

provision of various resources from the central government, and national support to bridge regional financial gaps.
- Parents' survey revealed that parents had the highest expectation from their children regarding personality and attitude development, followed by social skills. Parents' expected their children to develop basic self-care skills and daily habits while enrolling them in kindergartens or childcare centers. Teachers' perceptions of the director's leadership and their self-evaluation regarding their competence in implementing the Nuri curriculum were mostly positive. About 62.7% of parents were aware of the revisions in the Nuri curriculum, similar to last year. Most parents perceived that play-oriented education was necessary, however, the majority had concerns about their children adapting well in elementary school with play being the dominant experience during their pre-school years. It was found that 85.5% of directors and 95.4% of teachers completed the revised Nuri curriculum training and 30.1% of directors and 36.0% of teachers received supervision or consultation related to the revised Nuri curriculum. Self-supervision was highest with 47% of teachers participating to enhance professionalism; however, teachers highly desired to visit other services (30.8%). Weekly planning was dominant and recycling of materials was common when implementing the Nuri curriculum. The content of the evaluation was mostly children's play and was conducted through the recordings of the observations. Regarding parents experiencing distance parent education or suspension of service due to COVID-19, 35.9% had received distance education, while 72% had experienced service suspension. About 59.5% of parents noticed changes in kindergartens and childcare centers due to the implementation of the revised Nuri curriculum. The directors and the teachers perceived the biggest change in their roles due to the implementation of the revised Nuri curriculum. An increase in the initiative was noticed in young children by the teachers and the directors due to the implementation of the revised Nuri curriculum. About 59.1% of parents noticed positive changes in their

children, predominantly reporting an increase in happiness and enjoyment. Both the directors and the teachers cited the high child-teacher ratio as their biggest difficulty and demanded the adjustment of this ratio in the policy change.
- It was found in the case studies that, in some cases, confusion was experienced about the implementation of the 2019 revised Nuri curriculum, however, most of the directors (vice directors) and teachers perceived it positively. Although there were differences in degree, depending on the characteristics of the kindergartens and childcare centers, it was reported that the organizational culture gradually changed to become more supportive, communicative, and cooperative. With the introduction of the revised curriculum, kindergarten and childcare center teachers perceived the need to improve their professionalism, such as the observational ability to comprehend children's play, the ability to enjoy play, quick judgment skills, the ability to ask developmentally-appropriate questions, flexibility, sensitivity, initiative, creativity, and analytical thinking. Following the implementation of the revised Nuri curriculum, teachers at kindergartens and childcare centers have been striving to establish democratic relationships with the children, respecting their choices and attempts. Both kindergartens and daycare centers showed changes that were suited to the purpose of the revised Nuri curriculum of strengthening the participation and initiative of the children. On the other hand, some parents were unaware of the change or lacked an understanding of play, while some still wanted their children to learn for elementary school preparation, thus, implying the need for efforts to improve parents' understanding of play. To integrate the revised Nuri curriculum, a common demand of kindergarten and childcare center directors and teachers was an increase in assistive staff and a decrease in the child-teacher ratio. In addition, there were demands for case-oriented training, rather than theory-based training, for guiding and supporting children's play, training for establishing teachers' educational viewpoints, increase in training opportunities for play-oriented curriculum

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for directors, consultation provisions regarding curriculum that meets individual needs, and an increase in the budget allocated to support the implementation of the Nuri curriculum.

Policy Suggestions

· **The policy direction, based on these research results, and the direction pursued in the revised Nuri curriculum corresponds to that of 2020.**

- To narrow the existing educational gap, the quality of the curriculum must be maintained at or above a baseline, while encouraging diversity.
- The autonomy of the teachers must be guaranteed while encouraging self-directed professional enhancement and voluntariness to reflect and build upon their practice.
- Children's participation in curriculum implementation and play initiatives must be enhanced.
- The reciprocity and cooperation between service providers and parents should be maintained by improving parents' comprehension of the play-centered curriculum.
- Supporting the implementation of the curriculum in line with the purpose of the Nuri curriculum despite possible outbreaks of infectious diseases, such as COVID-19, and future social changes.

· **In accordance with these policy directions, policy measures at the governmental and delivery system levels are proposed.**

- On the governmental level, cooperation among, and within departments, for supporting elementary and secondary education, adjusting teacher placement and teacher-child ratio for high-quality curriculum implementation, establishing a training credit bank system for teachers' autonomous training improvement for curriculum implementation support, conducting research and providing support provisions for the continuity of early childhood and elementary education, conducting research and providing support provisions for children with disabilities, promoting and campaigning to improve public awareness, and differentiated support provision to reduce the qualitative gap in the Nuri curriculum implementation are suggested.
- Regarding the delivery system, customized support provision for curriculum organization and implementation according to the level of each region, sharing and reciprocating resources through cooperation among local governments, invigorating advanced training and expert-tailored consultations, support for teachers' autonomous training such as the learning communities, sharing best practices and information through the operation of demonstration institutions, and parent education support and encouraging parent participation are suggested.

2021 KICCE PROJECT REPORT ABSTRACTS