

2023 KICCE PROJECT REPORT ABSTRACTS

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ECEC

Policies

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- Research on Diversifying the Operation of Kindergartens to Ensure Parental Choice and Enhance the Rationality of Institutional Management
- Policy Performance and Tasks of ECEC(I): Focusing on the Outcome Evaluation of the National plan of ECEC
- Monitoring and Improving Outcomes of the Integration of Early Childhood Education and Care (I): Identifying Key Tasks and Developing Outcome Indicators
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- Infant and Toddler Data Integration Status and Improvement Plans

Major Research Project

A Study on Improving the Quality of Kindergarten After-School Programs

Ja Yeun Koo / Mekyung Kwon / Ji-yeon Yun / Yu-jin Jang / Keon-Ryeong Park

Backgrounds and Purpose of study

- **As of April 1, 2023, it was reported that 99.9% of kindergartens nationwide were operating after-school programs, and 93.5% of young children attending kindergarten participated.**
 - Efforts by the Ministry of Education and provincial offices of education to enhance the quality of kindergarten after-school programs have continued. Nonetheless, there exists a high demand for improvements in both realms of operation and utilization.
 - After-school program services are experiencing quantitative expansion. Further, this is an opportune moment for their systematic and refined qualitative improvements.
- **This study aims to assess the current status of kindergarten after-school programs and gather demands for improvements from their operators and users. Furthermore, it seeks to analyze domestic and international policies and operational cases and derive insights to propose effective policy measures for enhancing the quality of kindergarten after-school programs.**

Research Methods

- **This study employed various research methods, including a literature review, case studies, and surveys.**
 - The case studies were conducted with eight kindergartens. They included unique features of kindergarten after-school program operations. These include professional learning communities' operation, Nuri Curriculum integration, and child-oriented and play-based after-school programs. Further, they incorporate after-school programs linked to the community, all-day care, and

care coordinated between kindergarten and home-based childcare centers or elementary schools.

- The survey involved 2,093 participants, comprising 552 kindergarten directors or vice directors, 525 personnel responsible for after-school programs, and 1,016 parents whose children were using after-school programs. This survey aimed to investigate the current status and demands for improvements in the operation and utilization of kindergarten after-school programs.

Results

The results of this study are summarized as follows:

- **Through the case studies, it was confirmed that it is necessary to operate high-quality after-school programs. Thus, there is a need for a change in perception, recognizing after-school programs as educational activities and substantial financial and resource support for their high-quality operations.**
 - It was particularly emphasized that kindergarten after-school programs should consider the local conditions and the kindergarten's specific situation when seeking to collaborate with other institutions within the community—these include elementary schools, childcare centers, and regional centers for children.
- **The responses to a survey on the operation of after-school programs indicate that:**
 - Regarding appropriate dismissal time, directors or vice directors, after-school program personnel, and parents predominantly favored dismissal before 4:00 PM. However, parents slightly preferred a later dismissal than directors, vice directors, and after-school program personnel.
 - As for the appropriate operational approach, directors or vice directors and after-school program personnel are mostly considered comfortable, restful, and play-based care activity-focused. In contrast, parents opted for a

strategy centered on play-based educational activities integrated with the curriculum.

- Related to emphasized aspects, directors or vice directors and after-school program personnel emphasized free play according to children's interests as the most crucial aspect. Conversely, parents highlighted various experiential activities while less favorably choosing comfortable rest.
- Regarding extracurricular activity programs, most groups (directors or vice directors, after-school personnel, and parents) agreed that it is necessary to continue with currently operating extracurricular activities despite some limitations (such as one activity per day, one hour per day). However, 31.3% of directors or vice directors and 33.7% of parents expressed the need to ease these restrictions.

• **The improvement demands for kindergarten after-school program services were categorized by priority and secondary tasks in various areas.**

- Specifically in the operational environment, top priority or secondary tasks for its improvement were financial support for class operating expenses in after-school programs and enhancement of support to promote the psychological and emotional well-being of children who spend extended hours in after-school programs. Furthermore, it encompassed providing counseling and healing programs for after-school program staff and creating exclusive classrooms suited for childcare in after-school programs. It also ensured the stable and nutritious provision of meals and snacks during school breaks and established cooperative measures with relevant agencies to guarantee the safety of children and teachers.
- As for operational content, the selected tasks were conducting specialized programs in after-school programs. These focused on activities aligned with

child development and interests rather than primarily centered on academic learning. Thus, they emphasized the interaction between children and teachers, promoting cooperation and interaction among children of the same age and encouraging distinctive after-school programs tailored to the characteristics of kindergartens. Furthermore, they established an evaluation and feedback system for after-school program operations, aligning after-school program operations with play-based educational curricula, flexibly adjusting after-school program hours, and ensuring access to after-school programs for all children who wish to participate.

- Concerning the operational system, the opted tasks were strengthening administrative support to allow kindergarten staff to concentrate on educational and caregiving activities. The tasks also included establishing a pool of personnel who can be consistently utilized for after-school programs by education offices. Further, they ensured a sufficient number of certified full-time teachers to manage the after-school program operations, enhancing the professional competence of after-school program staff.

Policy Suggestions and Future Agenda

The policy objectives and directions set in this study are as follows:

- **The policy vision for kindergarten after-school programs is to create a tight, safe, high-quality educational and caregiving environment.**
 - This vision aligns with the policies for Consolidation of Early Childhood Education and Care and Neulbom School service at elementary school.
 - Also, the policy goal for after-school programs is to practice child-centered, sustainable education and caregiving within these programs. The study has selected diversity, equity, and professionalism as directions for

implementation to achieve the policy vision and goal.

• **In this study, various promotion tasks have been proposed according to the three identified directions for implementation. These proposed tasks for diversifying and utilizing after-school programs are:**

- 1) Guaranteeing the discretion of operation and the choice of utilization
- 2) Implement a substantial after-school program that considers children's interests and development.

• **The tasks for providing well-balanced support to build equity in after-school programs include:**

- 1) ensuring access to the program for all applicants
- 2) expanding budgetary support for after-school programs
- 3) protecting the psychological and emotional health of children and after-school personnel.

• **The tasks for maintaining professional responses are:**

- 1) strengthening administrative support
- 2) establishing a systematic personnel management

system, and 3) creating a community solidarity and collaborative ecosystem.

• **Conclusively, strengthening the national responsibility for education and caregiving entails systematizing a legal support and protection framework to ensure that young children can grow and live healthily and safely as integral members of the country and society.**

- The study's researcher proposes the establishment of a Support Center for After-School Programs (tentative name) as a significant foundation for implementing after-school program policies. This center would help create a comprehensive, high-quality operational system for after-school programs.

- Furthermore, the study has provided an execution roadmap. This includes detailed tasks for implementing the policy objectives to reinforce the quality caregiving and accessibility of kindergarten after-school programs.

Major Research Project

Research on Diversifying the Operation of Kindergartens to Ensure Parental Choice and Enhance the Rationality of Institutional Management

Eunyoung Kim / Ja Yeon Koo / Hyejin Kim / Sunghee Lee / Eun Kyeong Cho

Backgrounds and Purpose of study

- **Ensuring parental choice and improving the rationality of institutional management are essential considerations when tackling mid-to-long-term policy tasks for early childhood education in Korea.**
 - These tasks were developed within the “2019 revised Nuri Curriculum,” a collaborative initiative involving parents and the community.
 - Additionally, they hold significance in responding to the demands of parents seeking diverse experiences and personalized care for their young children.
- **This research seeks to propose kindergarten management models (or drafts) by exploring ways for diversifying management that ensure parental choice and improve the rationality of kindergarten management.**
 - The study further recommends policy approaches derived from varied management models to establish conducive conditions for the practical operation of kindergartens. Ultimately, these approaches empower parents to choose institutions for their children autonomously.

Research Methods

- **Domestic and international literature reviews, FGI, surveys, and case studies were conducted to achieve the purpose.**
 - The FGI involved 28 individuals: seven kindergarten directors (or assistant directors), seven teachers, seven parents, and seven parents of preschool-aged children attending private academies.
 - The survey targeted 1,512 respondents: 402 kindergarten directors (or assistant directors), 602 teachers, and 508 parents.
 - Additionally, case studies were collected from five kindergarten directors (or assistant directors), 10 teachers, and eight parents from five domestic kindergartens.

Results

The findings of the study, analyzed through various research methods, can be summarized as follows:

- **Upon reviewing the systems of early childhood education institutions in Norway, the United States, and Singapore and examining various daily operation practices in kindergartens of each country, it was observed that:**
 - Institutions generally operate daily routines considering circumstances such as parents’ commute times to and from work. Further, they have a team of teachers in charge of the entire day, utilize specialized staff, and operate various types of kindergartens that meet the needs of parents and children.
- **Analysis of the survey and FGIs revealed that:**
 - Parents needed and desired longer hours of kindergarten services than the kindergarten teachers considered ideal.
 - Concerning staffing preferences, parents expressed a desire for classroom teachers to be available for a consistent amount of time. Moreover, their perception of an appropriate teacher-to-infant ratio was considerably lower than that of the kindergarten teachers.
 - Both kindergarten teachers and parents identified “Forest and Ecology Education” as the most desired distinctive program.
 - Regarding post-curricular program operations, kindergarten teachers perceived curriculum integration as the most appropriate, while parents showed a higher preference for specialized programs, indicating a discrepancy.
 - Regarding policies aimed at ensuring parents’ rights to select the institution, improving the efficiency of kindergarten operations, and implementing child-centered kindergarten policies, kindergarten teachers consistently highlighted adjusting the teacher-to-child ratio as the most crucial aspect.
 - However, parents’ responses indicated that diversifying operating hours was crucial for policies ensuring their

kindergarten choice rights. Further, regarding child-centered kindergarten operations policies, “program diversification” and “adjusting the teacher-to-child ratio” was most requested.

• **The case studies showed that:**

- The typical operational structure, in terms of operating hours, involved a daily average of more than 11 hours, consisting of morning care, educational programs, post-curricular activities, and evening care.
- In terms of staffing, there was a consistent pattern of deploying two teachers for the Nuri curriculum hours, providing short-hours auxiliary support, and assigning part-time or temporary post-curricular instructors.
- Regarding the curriculum, differentiated play-based educational programs, replacing specialized programs with distinctive curricula and experiential activities, had excellent educational value that influenced the parents to choose such kindergartens.
- Regarding educational conditions, specialized institutional conditions such as mixed-age classes and aligning kindergarten and elementary curricula significantly influenced the selection of kindergarten services. Moreover, a repeat teacher or teacher looping system, abundant indoor and outdoor educational spaces, skilled educators, and public education also emerged as significant factors influencing the selection of kindergarten services.

• **Based on the research results, four models (or drafts) of kindergarten operation were proposed:**

- (1) 6-hour or less Operation Model (Curriculum centered)
- (2) 8-hour Operation Model (Curriculum + Post-Curricular Program)
- (3) 11-hour Operation Model (Morning Care + Curriculum + Post-Curricular Program)
- (4) 13-hour Operation Model (Morning Care + Curriculum + Post-Curricular Program + Evening Care)
- For each model, an example of the daily schedule, staffing (or draft), and program operations was suggested.

Policy Suggestions and Future Agenda

• **Concerning policy directions to support these models, the following recommendations are proposed:**

- Setting clear standards, minimizing government regulations on kindergarten operations, recognizing and supporting various kindergarten operations flexibly, and reducing kindergarten burdens through collaboration and cooperation with local education authorities and the community.
- Additionally, support for minimizing parental burdens by providing kindergarten choices that align with parents’ situations and demands, collaborating with local education authorities and the community, and securing finances to support kindergarten operations are suggested.

• **The research findings suggest support measures in operation hours, staffing, programs, and educational conditions.**

- First, regarding operating hours, providing flexibility based on parental demand and assigning education offices or local communities with tasks regarding care was suggested.
- Second, for staffing, suggestions included placing two or more adults during the day and clarifying job responsibilities. Further, they included ensuring collaborative operation, utilizing community human resources, enhancing a sense of belonging, and establishing and operating a leadership platform led by educational authorities.
- Third, regarding the programs, supporting kindergarten distinctive education and providing relevant information, supporting specialized programs in post-curricular activities, and activating on-site experiences using community infrastructure were proposed.
- Finally, for educational conditions, recommendations included providing physical and human-environmental support to improve the quality of education and activating parental education and counseling.

General Research Project

Policy Performance and Tasks of ECEC(I): Focusing on the Outcome Evaluation of the National plan of ECEC

Dong Hoon Kim / Yunjin Lee / Yoon Kyung Choi / Youngmin Kim

Backgrounds and Purpose of study

- **This study analyzes the performance of key areas in early childhood education and care policies in South Korea, focusing on national policy achievements.**
 - The study analyzed early childhood education and care policies in South Korea, which are in line with the government's five-year national agenda.
 - It assessed these policies' design, planning, implementation, and outcomes. This analysis helped identify significant achievements of the government policies, including areas where the plans fell short or were not implemented.
 - The study also proposed future improvements.

Research Methods

- **The detailed research content includes:**
 - First, developing a framework for evaluating the implementation level of government initiatives in early childhood education, care, and nurturing over five years.
 - Second, analyzing the performance of these initiatives over the past year.
 - Third, based on the analysis of policy outcomes, identifying areas for improvement and proposing future enhancements.

Results

- **Since the current government came into office in May 2022 under the administration of Yoon Suk-yeol, it may not have achieved significant visible results or progress yet. However, considering national projects typically span five years, uninterrupted execution and promotion of achievements in these projects could lead to expanded recognition among policy stakeholders.**

- **Regarding policy direction, parents prioritized cash support for parents, while experts prioritized improving service quality.**
- **The key achievements of the national tasks of ECEC**
 - Cash support such as parental allowance: Parents showed positive opinions. Experts viewed the upward support of parental allowance and granting of choice in home-based childcare centers positively. Nonetheless, concerns about expanding cash support methods have also been expressed.
 - Improvement of childcare service quality: Adjusting the ratio of kindergarten teachers to preschoolers outside daycare centers, mandating parental education, strengthening qualifications for childcare teachers, and reviewing the compatibility and complementarity of hourly childcare and babysitter services are necessary.
 - Childcare system: Experts positively assessed the introduction of a registration system for private childcare service providers and the implementation of a national qualification system for babysitters, as well as the expansion of community-based childcare services. However, they also identified shortcomings, such as the low wages of childcare workers and concerns about the potential weakening of public responsibility due to the introduction of qualification systems or registration systems for private childcare services.
 - Maternal and child health management: Experts expressed empathy for the need for various policies to support pregnancy and childbirth while expressing concerns about cost-focused services and shortages of obstetricians and pediatricians.
 - Implementing gender equality in employment: Experts suggested an increase in childcare leave benefits and return programs, as well as measures to address disparities in the dual labor market and enhance enforcement capabilities.

- Integration of early childhood education and childcare system: Experts viewed the designation of the integrated system as a national task positively, as well as the consolidation of the integrated system management agency under the Ministry of Education and the gradual implementation of the integrated system. However, they expressed concerns about the feasibility of a substantive integrated system by 2025, shortcomings in ongoing communication and information sharing with stakeholders, and the lack of legislation.

- Service support policies include enhancing childcare service quality, reviewing educational programs in kindergartens and daycare centers, improving treatment for childcare workers, and adjusting support for pregnancy and childbirth services.
- Time support policies suggest promoting systems for work-life balance post-childbirth and increasing maternity leave benefits.
- Finally, it recommends strengthening the promotion of early childhood education and care policies, publicizing safe food practices, and highlighting exemplary cases.

Policy Suggestions and Future Agenda

- **This study proposes developing balanced support policies in early childhood education and care (ECEC). It emphasizes integrating and eliminating redundancies between policies and services. It also recommends prioritizing policies that ensure the safety of young children as a fundamental direction.**
- **The policy suggestions focus on enhancing early childhood care and education through various approaches:**
 - The study proposes various policies: cash support policies tailored to household characteristics, extension of cash support age, and additional vouchers.

General Research Project

Monitoring and Improving Outcomes of the Integration of Early Childhood Education and Care (I): Identifying Key Tasks and Developing Outcome Indicators

Mugyeong Moo / Changhyun Park / Yuna Jung / Minhee Kim / Yong Kim / Moon-yeong Eom

Backgrounds and Purposes of study

- Over the past 3 decades, the Korean government has been striving to integrate early childhood and care (henceforth, ECEC) to alleviate the educational gap that accumulates from early years due to the current split ECEC system.
 - The current government prioritized the integration of ECEC as a national agenda, and expectations for the integration have been heightened nationwide.
 - The Korean government designed the “step-by-step implementation of the integration of ECEC integration” and designated the Ministry of Education as the leading ministry.
- This study is a three-year project (2023–2025) to improve the outcomes of ECEC integration by monitoring implementation processes, identifying challenges, and suggesting alternative solutions.
- The focus of the first year of study was on:
 - analyzing the preparation status and needs for the integration of ECEC at the central and
 - local government levels
 - developing outcome indicators
 - highlighting a case of the integration of ECEC at the local levelsuggesting ways to improve the outcomes of the integration

Research Methods

- A range of methods were employed to gather different views of various stakeholders including Delphi surveys to develop outcome indicators, surveys and workshops with officials from 17 local education and provincial offices nationwide, webinars with international experts, and a policy seminar.

Results

- The results of the Delphi survey show that the five top priorities for mid- to long-term outcome indicators based on the objectives of the ECEC integration are as follows:
 - ① Bridging the educational gap in young children (17.3%)
 - ② Enhancing policy stability, consistency, and efficiency through the consolidation of administrative systems (16.8%)
 - ③ Promoting holistic development and well-being of young children (12.6%)
 - ④ Enhancing the professionalism and job satisfaction of teachers (11.2%)
 - ⑤ Improving the quality of curriculum implementation (10.7%).

Policy Suggestions

- Measures to enhance the outcomes of the ECEC integration are suggested: amending relevant legislations, securing administrative personnel and financing for the integration, developing manuals to guide the implementation process at the local level, finalizing and utilizing outcome indicators, and providing consulting to various stakeholders regarding the integration processes and issues.

General Research Project

An Analysis of Childcare Infrastructure Trend and the Responsive Policy in the Era of Low Fertility (II): Focusing on the Education and Childcare Support Infrastructure for Infants

Jahee Lee / Misun Yang / Sojeong Yun / Jong-geun Kim / Hyeongmo Koo

Backgrounds and Purpose of study

- This study examines the current state and trend of childcare centers and kindergartens while low fertility is accelerating. It also seeks to suggest responsive measures for the future by diagnosing regional imbalance and forecasting childcare centers and kindergartens.

Research Methods

- First, this study investigated the population trend among children between 0 and 6 years old. It examined the trends of the number and capacity of infant education and childcare institutions by region. It also forecasted the trends of the number and the capacity of such institutions, as well the number of infants enrolled in such institutions and the number of childcare center or kindergartens in the future based on the demographic project made by the Statistics Korea.
- Secondly, this study diagnosed the balance in the demand and supply of childcare centers and kindergartens among the region's demand and supply of childcare centers and kindergartens.
- Third, this study investigated the state of people's use of the childcare centers and kindergarten around their residences and identified the demand for policy to improve the accessibility to relevant infrastructure.
- Fourth, through the GIS analysis, this study checked the supply-to-demand ratio of each region's childcare center and kindergartens and named the vulnerable areas.
- Finally, it suggested a policy direction based on the research results. .

Results

- The population trend revealed that as of December 2022:
 - The number of infants aged 0–6 years was 2,204,950. Further, the infant population has continued to decline due to the low fertility rate, while the degree of decline was found to be different depending on the region.
 - The number of childcare centers across the country was 30,923, while that of kindergartens was 8,562, showing a decreasing trend of more than 20% for the last 5 years.
- The study examined the trend of the number of childcare centers and kindergartens for the next five years using the future population projection. It concluded that the number should be reduced by more than 10,000.
- The present study also analyzed the balance in the supply of childcare centers and kindergartens.
 - We calculated the coefficient of inequity in the supply rate of cities and provinces throughout the country based on the capacity of the total childcare centers and kindergartens. Jeonnam-do had the highest inequity coefficient, while Chungbuk-do had the highest when the analysis was restricted to national and public institutions.
 - When the equity analysis was performed by city, county and district, the regional variations were larger than when the analysis was performed by city and province. The highest inequity coefficient was found in Busan.
- As a result of investigating the demands for the childcare center and kindergarten infrastructure, most parents answered that national or public childcare centers and kindergartens were necessary.
- According to the case study, the residential areas in which the waiting time to enroll in a childcare center or kindergarten was 500 days or more were 35, of which the majority were in the metropolitan areas of the larger population, such as Seoul and Gyeonggi-do.
- The current study performed the 2SFCA(Two-step Floating Catchment Area) analysis among the GIS analysis methods. The infants and toddlers were also

separated in the analysis. The results of the analysis showed a significant difference between the vulnerable regions concerning the institutions for infants and those concerning the institutions for toddlers.

- In the case of infant institutions, Eups and Myeons in Jeollado and Gyeongsang-do were found to be more vulnerable. Simultaneously, populous metropolitan regions became more vulnerable in the education infrastructure for toddlers.

• **For the short-term demand estimation of the childcare centers and kindergartens, this study used the artificial neural network model in the machine learning methods and searched for a method to diagnose the supply. In detail, it divided the cities, counties and districts throughout the country into two groups. It built a model forecasting the number of children enrolled in childcare centers or kindergartens in 2022.**

- The variables inserted to forecast the number of children enrolled in the childcare centers or kindergartens in 2022 were those aged 0–5 years as of 2021. The number of newly married couples in 2022. Finally, the number of employed, the female employment rate, the total employment rate, and the net migration rate of the 0–4-year-old population.

- As a result of building a model, more stable forecasting was possible in the regions of larger populations, while it was more unpredictable in the areas of smaller populations.

• **We integrated the results of the GIS analysis on the pregnancy and childbirth infrastructure of the last year and the results of the GIS analysis on the childcare centers and kindergartens. Thus, this study has selected regions with low childcare infrastructure index.**

- The regions with a low childcare infrastructure index were 25, including Ulleung County in Gyeongsangbuk-do, Ongjin County in Incheon Metropolitan City, and Sinan County in Joellanam-do.

Policy Suggestions and Future Agenda

- Based on these research results, the study has suggested a supply plan for childcare centers and kindergartens and policy development using a scientific method, enhancement of the support for the childcare center and kindergarten infrastructure in the vulnerable regions, and the improvement of regional equity in the childcare centers and kindergartens.
- The number of small childcare centers and kindergartens is increasing overall, alongside the closures of institutions due to the low fertility rate phenomenon. Therefore, further expanding the shared programs of small childcare centers and kindergartens is necessary.
- Dispatching childcare teachers to the child's home or nearby locations after employing them at a base institution should also be considered.

Major Research Project

Infant and Toddler Data Integration Status and Improvement Plans

Nam Hee Do / Jinah Park / Moonjeong Kim / Soojin Shim

Backgrounds and Purpose of study

- This study aims to establish an indicator system suitable for the development period of infants and toddlers through Delphi (expert) surveys. In particular, this is to realize the integration of infant and toddler data and to review domestic data that matches the indicator system.
- Therefore, we would like to identify the degree of data integration that can track the growth and development of infants and toddlers. Further, the current status of infant and toddler data integration will be reviewed, and policy measures will be proposed to improve this.

Research Methods

- We conducted a literature review on the importance of early childhood and its critical indicators. Additionally, we reviewed the current status of domestic and international data to determine what data is currently being produced.
 - In particular, the production status of infant and toddler data was inspected, focusing on approval statistics, and necessary data was identified.
- An indicator system was created through expert surveys to construct the necessary infant and toddler data system.
 - We constructed key indicators by identifying the needs and importance of infant and toddler data and the importance of each developmental period. We compared them with data that can currently be produced.

Results

- Experts who participated in the survey agreed on the need for infant and toddler data.
 - The reasons for needing it were the need for evidence when establishing policies related to infants and toddlers and understanding the lives of infants and toddlers. Moreover, it was necessary to collect infant and toddler data at a national level, as there was a lack of infant and toddler-related data,

including personal collection.

- Additionally, infant and toddler data differ from other developmental periods. Further, they were well aware of infant and toddler development characteristics and the data collection difficulties.
- Regarding the importance of the ecological environment of infant and young child data, parents and family were recognized as the most important. Furthermore, all five areas of physical health, emotional, social, cognitive, and language development were identified as necessary in the growth and development of infants and young children.
- The importance and appropriateness of each period of infancy development were investigated. The results were reflected and broadly reduced to eight areas to form areas aligning with the child's quality of life indicators.

Policy Suggestions and Future Agenda

- Based on these research results, it was determined that there were not many surveys targeting infants and toddlers and that there were limitations in the measurement content.
- The research confirmed that a comprehensive survey that can measure various areas of cycle development is necessary to ensure the validity and reliability of infant and toddler data.
- For an infant and young child data production system, it is necessary to utilize existing data or design a new comprehensive infant and young child survey.
- Additionally, securing an organization or workforce is necessary to regularly manage the continuous production of infant and toddler data. It is expected that this will contribute to the construction of a continuous infant and toddler database.

Management

and Staff of ECEC Center

- Employment Trends and Measures to Improve Treatment of Child Care and Kindergarten Teachers
- Future-Ready Kindergartens and Childcare Centers Development Plan Research (II): Ways to Leverage SW and AI in Early Childhood Education

Major Research Project

Employment Trends and Measures to Improve Treatment of Child Care and Kindergarten Teachers

Misun Yang / Eun-Young Choi / Yong Nam Cho / Sojeong Yun

Backgrounds and Purpose of study

- This study aims to identify childcare and kindergarten teachers' career development process and provide appropriate support plans according to their experience.

Research Methods

- This study examined related laws, systems, and prior research and derived implications for preparing measures and improving the working environment and treatment. It also examined support programs for childcare and kindergarten teachers promoted by the central government and local offices of education.
- Furthermore, the study explored employment trends for childcare and kindergarten teachers over the past 10 years (2013–2022), together with the employment status and dynamic changes in quantitative and qualitative aspects of childcare centers and kindergarten teachers. It identified improvements and needs related to teacher working environment and treatment and presented measures to improve teachers at child care centers and kindergartens workplace and their employment environment.
- The detailed research methods are as follows:
 - This study examined and collected laws and systems related to childcare centers and kindergarten teachers. It collected data on the national treasury budget, local government special childcare policy, and local education office labor cost support projects. Further, it conducted surveys targeting teachers working as homeroom teachers or assistants and non-homeroom teachers currently in childcare centers and kindergartens. It conducted in-depth FGI interviews with

teachers working or moving to similar jobs.

- An advisory meeting comprising law-related experts and government officials in charge of ministries was held to determine research directions, research methods, survey questions, and policy recommendations. Furthermore, a round-table meeting was held to increase the reliability of empirical research such as surveys and to explore policy measures.

Results

- The results from a survey of childcare center teachers indicated that:
 - The number of turnover times from when each teacher obtained their qualifications as a child care center or kindergarten teacher to their current employment was 2.5 times on average. Most of them were first employed at child care centers, and they mainly moved to child care centers.
 - It took an average of 10.2 months to get a job after obtaining teacher qualifications, and as turnover increased, the preparation period for turnover became shorter.
 - Teachers mainly obtained employment information through Support Centers for Childcare when leaving their jobs. Further, when leaving their work, distance from home, salary, type of institution, education, and childcare philosophy of the director or vice-director were considered.
 - The average working period was between 20 and 30 months, and as the turnover increased, the working period became shorter.
 - The main reasons for the turnover were work pressure and many other factors, including conflict with the director, distance from home due to moving, and marriage.
 - Teachers worked an average of 9.2 hours per day at their current workplace, or 45.8 hours per week, and more than half were working overtime.
 - Most teachers used annual or monthly leave, and teachers usually planned and used their leave sequentially or freely when necessary.

- Satisfaction with the institution they were working for was above average in terms of working hours, protection of rights and interests as a teacher, and workload, ranging between 3 and 4 points.
- However, about half of the teachers had plans to leave their school.
- Additionally, the determining factor for childcare teachers' turnover was that the probability of turnover increased by 1.41 times as teacher experience increased. Furthermore, as weekly working hours increased, the likelihood of turnover increased by 0.31 times.

• **The results from a survey of kindergarten teachers indicated that:**

- The turnover occurred on an average of 1.6 times, and the first institution they were employed at was a kindergarten, and they changed jobs not only to kindergartens but also to child care centers.
- Getting a job after obtaining teacher qualifications took an average of 8.5 months. Moreover, as turnover increased, the preparation period for turnover became shorter.
- Changes were mainly made through recommendations from educational institutions, and workload and salary were mostly considered when changing jobs.
- The average working period was 22.3 months, and the relationship between the number of turnovers and working hours was not clear.
- The main reasons for turnover were issues with distance from home due to moving and marriage, work burden, and salary dissatisfaction.
- During the current work period, teachers worked an average of 9.7 hours per day and 48.6 hours per week, and about half were working overtime.
- Only about 30%–40% of teachers used annual leave, mainly used in bulk during vacations.
- Satisfaction with the institution where they are currently working averaged 3 points for working hours, protection of rights and interests as teachers, and workload. More than 70% of teachers planned to change jobs or resign.

Policy Suggestions and Future Agenda

• **Policy measures are as follows:**

- Improve the teacher-to-child ratio for child-centered and play-centered childcare and education to boost the working environment of childcare and kindergarten teachers. Guarantee working hours and vacations for work-life balance and fair wages for labor and expand support staff so that teachers can focus on childcare and education.
- Furthermore, a counselling center should be established to lay the foundation for protecting the rights and interests of teachers at childcare centers and kindergartens. This is to protect the rights and interests of teachers, and a rights relief system should be established.
- Additionally, to improve the organizational culture of childcare centers and kindergartens, it is necessary to strengthen the leadership training of directors. Establishing and revitalizing the childcare center and kindergarten teacher history management system and establishing an employment information support system to enhance the professionalism management system for child care center and kindergarten teachers is also essential.

General Research Project

Future-Ready Kindergartens and Childcare Centers Development Plan Research (II): Ways to Leverage SW and AI in Early Childhood Education

Changhyun Park / Eunseol Kim / Mekyung Kwon / Bokyoung Kye / Youngsik Jeong / Kyungjin Cho / Ji-yeon Yun / Eonkyung Kim /
Hyein Jeong / Seen-young Park / Pool Ip Dong / Yeojoo Yoon / Yujin Yang

Backgrounds and Purpose of study

- In the post-human era, where pedagogy is possible for all, laying the foundation for digital education competencies in young children who are the future generation is significant.
- This study aims to research ways to utilize social work (SW) and artificial intelligence (AI) in early childhood education to strengthen future generations' competencies and propose policy implications.
 - The research team sought ways to apply SW and AI in education, including trends in young children's SW and AI policies and ethical approaches and integrating them with the curriculum.
 - In particular, we emphasized reflections on responses to ethical risks related to SW and AI and guidelines or frameworks and explored ways to link them to curriculum operation.

Research Methods

- We newly explored philosophical perspectives and educational directions through action research where young children, SW, and AI collaborate.
- We also broadly gathered expert opinions on relevant policy directions to suggest currently necessary policies in the digital field for young children.

Results

- Policy directions for utilizing SW and AI in early childhood are as follows:
 - First, enhancing the direction of ethical approaches to young children's SW and AI.
 - It is essential that everyone takes responsibility and cooperates to protect young children and support parents and teachers' SW and AI competencies for protecting young children. Further, it is necessary to establish an SW and AI educational framework suitable for the early childhood stage and nurture young children's competencies to respond to digital risks ethically.

- Second, guidelines for implementing a post-humanistic SW or AI curriculum include: 1) constructing physical play environments, 2) considering dynamic relationships between young children-teachers-SW-AI-environment, 3) teachers' abundant experiences with and preparation for SW and AI, 4) supporting multisensory, 5) diverse communication and creative play, 6) active support from government departments for SW or AI curriculum, and 7) ethical practices of SW and AI in everyday life.

Policy Suggestions and Future Agenda

- Policies have been proposed to derive five key policy directions and detailed tasks for K-ECEC's digital response. These are centered around protecting young children from digital risks, reducing digital divides, developing young children's digital literacy competencies, and strengthening qualitative interaction between young children and families. Further, they involve supporting teacher expertise to improve quality educational activities. Additionally, policy tasks have been discussed at the legal system level, including supporting digital infrastructure development.
- Furthermore, the research team proposed protecting young children, supporting parents and teachers' SW and AI competencies to protect young children. They also suggested establishing SW and AI educational frameworks suitable for the early childhood stage through everyone's responsibility and cooperation. This is to improve the accessibility of digital experience focused on young children's play. Accordingly, directions and operation principles for the curriculum, curriculum models, and six practical and support measures have been proposed.

Parenting

Support Policies

- A Study on Analyzing the Demand for Emergency Care Services for Infants and Primary School Children and Measures of Institutionalization
- Improvement of Time Policy for Equal Childcare Rights (II): Ensuring Paternal Childcare Rights
- A Plan for the Systemization of Child Care Support Policy in Infants

Major Research Project

A Study on Analyzing the Demand for Emergency Care Services for Infants and Primary School Children and Measures of Institutionalization

Hae-mi Yoo / Mugyeong Moon / Moonjeong Kim / Kyoung Hee Chang / Song Yi Kim

Backgrounds and Purpose of study

- The gap in care that occurs because there is no place to leave children in emergencies is pointed out as a representative difficulty in raising children.
- However, because emergency care cannot be predicted, its scale is unknown, and it is required temporarily, some aspects have been overlooked in policy. Emergency care demand is distinct from routine and regularly occurring niche care, so separate institutionalization is needed.

Research Methods

- This study surveyed 1,565 households with infants and elementary school children under 8 years old to identify care needs in urgent situations.
- Interviews were conducted with 23 households of 6 types to understand the difficulties in using emergency care services.
- Interviews were conducted with 21 service operators of six types to understand the difficulties in providing emergency care support to service organizations.
- In addition, we identified the current status of emergency care support systems and projects in Japan and local governments and analyzed the details of support.

Results

- Based on the analysis, the conceptualization and support principles of emergency care, including service support measures for each emergency reason and target, were proposed.
- Reasons for emergency care can be categorized as 1) a sick child, 2) an urgent work situation in a dual-income household using an institution, and 3) the absence of the primary caregiver in an in-home care household.

Policy Suggestions and Future Agenda

- First, establish a legal basis for the “Emergency Care Support Project for Sick Children.”
- Second, for households using institutions such as those in urgent work situations, strengthening emergency care support for households using daycare centers and kindergartens is necessary. Further, strengthening emergency care support for local children’s centers and care centers, strengthening Idolbom service linkage, and providing emergency care centers is required.
- Emergency care for in-home care households proposed priority support targets and restrictions on the period of use of temporary child care. Moreover, it emphasizes the improvement of accessibility to information on temporary Idolbom service and the differentiation of the functions of temporary child care.

Major Research Project

Improvement of Time Policy for Equal Childcare Rights (II): Ensuring Paternal Childcare Rights

Eun Jung Park / Jaehye Lee / Eunyong Park / Yeon Jin Kim

Backgrounds and Purpose of study

- **This study aimed to formulate strategies for improving childcare time policies ensuring paternal childcare rights.**
 - Men are regarded as equal caregivers alongside women in this study. Thus, it asserts that childcare time policies should be grounded in new fatherhood characterized by caring masculinity, departing from the traditional masculinity of the past.

Research Methods

- **The study analyzes parental leave, paternity leave, flexible work policies in South Korea, and policy discourses on parents' time policies in Sweden and Germany.**
 - The study uses data from a first-year survey to examine factors influencing parenting and the utilization of time support policies for fathers.
 - Focus group interviews (FGIs) were conducted with seven groups of fathers to gain an in-depth understanding of the dynamics and challenges of paternal caregiving patterns and the utilization of time policies.
 - Furthermore, FGIs were carried out with five groups of companies to comprehend the institutional status and challenges of companies based on factors such as company size and location.
 - Additionally, big social data was collected and analyzed to address issues related to paternal caregiving in Korea and changes in social discourse over the past decade (May 2013–April 2023).

Results

- **In the FGI targeting fathers, a range of themes emerged as follows:**
 - The coexistence of paternal caregiving and traditional fatherhood, fathers' active experiences and needs in childcare, challenges faced in paternal caregiving, diversity in spousal partnerships surrounding childcare, conflicts experienced between couples regarding childcare, and contrasting societal perceptions of paternal caregiving
 - The interview content regarding men's experiences with time policies and their desires for support were also analyzed. These encompass fathers' experiences with parental leave, their desires for support, perceptions of flexible work arrangements, and the reasons for the low utilization rates of family caregiving leave.
- **During the FGIs conducted with companies, various challenges in implementing time policies emerged.**
 - These challenges encompassed issues such as a shortage of substitute workers due to institutional constraints, gaps in key personnel, financial burdens, fairness concerns among employees, and commuting challenges for local small and medium-sized enterprises.
 - Obstacles hindering the implementation of corporate time policies included negative perceptions of paternal caregiving among company executives and senior managers, low awareness of existing policies, and low policy satisfaction regarding government support.
- **The social big data analysis revealed gender differences in the discourse surrounding childcare.**
 - Social big data centered on men exhibited more pronounced changes compared to data focused on women.
 - In this analysis, it is evident that men are engaging in discourse related to gender as they undergo the transition from traditional masculinity to paternal caregiving.

- The findings indicate that men gradually accept caregiving traits associated with masculinity over time.
- Additionally, the analysis has shown an increasing interest in various paternal childcare issues.

Policy Suggestions and Future Agenda

• **From the research results, we derived fundamental directions and goals for childcare time policies to ensure fathers' caregiving rights as follows:**

- 1) Ensuring the right to childcare as a fundamental social right for all parents and children
- 2) Guaranteeing parents' time sovereignty concerning their work and childcare
- 3) Developing time policies that reflect the acceptance and integration of caregiving roles within masculine identity.

• **In building upon these foundational directions, the policy goals for childcare time policies are outlined as follows:**

- 1) Ensuring the inclusiveness of childcare time policies
- 2) Strengthening the enforcement of childcare time policies within companies
- 3) Creating a supporting environment for paternal caregiving
- Three policy tasks have been identified for each policy goal, and detailed implementation measures have been proposed to achieve each policy task.

Major Research Project

A Plan for the Systemization of Child Care Support Policy in Infants

Jeongwon Lee / Hae-mi Yoo / Hye Joo Cho / Yunhwan Kim / Yoonjeong Shin / Inae Han

Backgrounds and Purpose of study

- As the support for households which bring up an infant has been increasing recently, there is a growing concern about the consistency of such support with applicable support systems. Furthermore, there is a greater interest in changing the demands for infant-rearing support policy for those households.
 - Therefore, systemization is necessary to quickly identify various supports for infant-rearing families and provide the subjects with adequate and practical support to meet their needs.
- The present study attempts to suggest the improvement of the childcare system or a method to systemize such a system. It analyzes the governmental support for infant-rearing families in each vital category. It identifies areas that show inconsistency between the objectives of individual systems or areas where supports are overlapped or missing.
 - The purpose is to ensure that people on the demand side can be guaranteed various options depending on their needs and receive adequate support.

Research Methods

- As the crucial methodology, this study has performed a literature review, a fact-finding survey of infant-caring parents and FGI, and an expert survey, and it has held a policy seminar.
 - The fact-finding survey of infant-caring parents was conducted on 1,000 parents who raised an infant between 0 and 2 years old.
 - The expert survey was conducted on 40 preceding researchers in childcare policy for infants and toddlers to collect their opinions about the direction and method of systemizing childcare support policy.

Results

The results of the this study are as follows:

- First, this study has confirmed through the investigation of the national plans at the central government level (e.g., the Basic Plan for Low Fertility and Aging Society) that the country's childcare support policies for infants and toddlers and its policy directions have been changed. Exceptionally, it depends on the change in the government regime or other milestone events.
 - The earlier childcare support policies focused on improving the policies to support the mothers' economic activities. Thus, the majority of policies took the form of childcare cost support.
 - However, the policies have been expanded to "cash support" and "time support" to assist the families' own childrearing as the appropriateness of "childrearing in the family" was emphasized.
 - After 2019, a guarantee of income and cash support for infant-rearing families was reinforced. In 2023, the policy was directed toward comprehensive support for applicable families by introducing "parent benefit."
- Second, in Korea, the childcare support policies and support programs specialized for "infants," excluding toddlers, are usually focused on the support available to the families if they choose the option of "childrearing in the family." Simultaneously, the purposes of individual support, especially in the category of "service" and "time," tend to be inconsistent.
 - Confusion about the policies' goals appears due to the fundamental tone of "expanding" support in all areas.
- Third, the infant-care support policies of other countries, particularly Japan, France, and Sweden, show different directions depending on the country's political, social and cultural conditions and needs.

Major Research Project

A Plan for the Systemization of Child Care Support Policy in Infants

Jeongwon Lee / Hae-mi Yoo / Hye Joo Cho / Yunhwan Kim / Yoonjeong Shin / Inae Han

- In Japan, support has been expanded and developed, focusing on childcare policies to support women's economic activity and solve the issue of low fertility.
- In France, due to the strong family culture, various options are offered for childcare in the family instead from the perspective of family support policy. Significantly, France seems to have developed the support by meticulously reflecting on individual families' different needs and demands for childcare support in the cash support category. These include the needs depending on the number of children, income level, or single- family household.
- In Sweden's case, their policy has been developed from multidirectional family policy perspectives. It considers all related aspects, including population policy, social justice, and talent development, regarding the efficiency of national development and gender equality. Characteristically, the policy is significantly related to the development course of "gender equality" more closely.
- **Fourth, the survey on infant-rearing parents has revealed the following results:**
 - The primary caregivers of infants are "childcare or daycare centers (45.4%)" and "mothers (43.3%)."
 - A total of 53.5% of the households where both parents work use a daycare center.
 - The average time spent using a daycare center is 7 h and 24 min. Further, 44.1% use extended hours, showing the high demand for a long-time daycare center service.
 - In the case of households in which mothers have long but regular working hours, extended hours of childcare service would be more convenient.
- **Fifth, the infant-rearing families send their children approximately 7 months earlier than they wish.**
 - This study has found that such a phenomenon is due to their concern that they might not be able to use the daycare center as expected.
- **Sixth, the study revealed that the main difficulties in infant-rearing are physical and mental burdens and childcare costs.**
 - Among the families in which both families are working, "holding down a job and rearing a child" is also pointed out as a main difficulty. Further, the rate of career disadvantage experienced by mothers due to childcare is remarkably higher at 44.5% than that of fathers at 9.5%.
 - Most sources where infant-rearing parents get information about childcare support policies are local online communities for mothers, blogs and other similar SNS platforms.
 - Regarding childcare support information, most interviewees expressed that searching for each information separately by different government support programs is the most challenging part. Moreover, many have mentioned the necessity of "an integrated platform for childcare policy information," which provides integrated information and a one-stop childcare service.
- **Seventh, the awareness of infant-rearing support policies is as high as 90% in "cash support," but the awareness of childcare services and time support is high only in some programs. In contrast, the awareness and experience of using the time support system adopted recently appears extremely low, showing a large discrepancy in different policies and support programs.**
 - Significantly, the differences in demand to improve the "time support" system have been significant by sex.
 - The study also finds that mothers use time support programs to help families care for their children.
- **Eighth, the expert survey results show that the majority favor expanding various childcare support policies as a desirable direction.**

- Many have pointed out that the support expansion should be enhanced and focused on time support rather than cash support.
- Some experts have suggested “age-specific difference” in childcare support, which strengthens the “time support” for families with “younger children” and the “service support” as the children grow old.
- **Ninth, this study has asked about the potential impacts of policy changes, such as introducing parent benefits and extended parental leave.**
 - Experts expect that the parent benefit would reduce the burden of childcare costs, the demands for the service of daycare centers would be the same, and the extended parental leave would increase the use of such leave by both men and women. In contrast, the use period would increase more among women.
 - Experts expect that the pay raise in parental leave benefits will increase both the use rate of parental leave and the use period for both genders.

• **Tenth, the experts have answered that to systemize infant-rearing support policies, relevant departments should differentiate the policy direction and strategies depending on the age. Especially between 0 and 1 years old, the most limited category or the category that shows poor implementation of the support policies is the “time support” category. In contrast, “cash support” overlaps different programs and thus requires an adjustment by merging and abolishing similar programs.**

Policy Suggestions and Future Agenda

- **Based on these results, this study has suggested four policy directions to promote the systemization of infant-rearing**

support policy.

- “re-structuralization toward a consistent policy support system”
- “securing full and diverse support depending on the needs for childcare support.”
- “differentiation of key childcare support strategies by age”
- “improvement of the parents’ accessibility to the policy support.”
- **This study has also suggested the methods to systemize the support policy based on three criteria to achieve these goals: “policy objectives,” “characteristics of the support targets,” and the “support type.”**
 - As for the method by “policy objectives,” the study recommends that the supports be divided into “service,” “cash,” and “time,” depending on the objectives.
 - As for the methods by “characteristics of the support targets,” the study suggests the support targets be divided into “general support” for infants of all applicable ages and “selective support” for specific targets. In particular, this should be based on prescribed standards to sub-categorize the support content depending on individual targets.
 - As for the methods by support type, the study suggests systemizing the type of support by criteria by establishing specific criteria for each support type depending on the characteristics of policy categories, such as service, cash, and time support.

Development

of Children

- 2023 Longitudinal Study of Growth and Development of Korean Children: Panel Study on Korean Children (PSKC)
- Korean Early Childhood Education and Care Panel Study 2023
- A Study on How to Resolve the Gap in Development and Learning of Young Children after COVID-19(II)

General Research Project

2023 Longitudinal Study of Growth and Development of Korean Children: Panel Study on Korean Children (PSKC)

Mira Cho / Hyomi Choi / Dong Hoon Kim / Hyejin Kim / Min-gwon Kang

Backgrounds and Purpose of the Study

- 「The Longitudinal Study of Growth and Development of Korean Children: Panel Study on Korean Children (PSKC)」 is a national-level study designed to gather and furnish cross-sectional data on a single age cohort. This includes longitudinal data from 2008, when children are born, to 2027, when they reach adulthood.
- The study gathers data from children and their primary caregivers, including parents and teachers, regarding children's growth and development, home environment, and experiences in daycare centers, kindergartens, and elementary, middle, and high schools. This data serves as a foundation for the development of childcare policies.

Research Methods

- Conducted a literature review to examine the content and methodologies of surveys focused on adolescents .
- Cleaned and edited the 15th-year data, followed by fundamental analysis.
- Employed panel analysis methods using longitudinal data for in-depth analysis.
- Organized an academic conference (14th conference in 2023) to leverage and promote the collected data.
- Implemented various programs, such as career guidance seminars, to retain panel members.
- Held expert consultation meetings to structure the content of the 16th survey.
- Facilitated meetings with users of the child panel to discuss data management and enhance user convenience.
- Arranged meetings with survey agency managers and surveyors to explore measures for enhancing the survey methodology.

Results

- The 16th survey round was conducted in 2023, focusing on panel children entering the third year of middle school. Participants comprised a panel of children and primary caregivers (guardians) such as fathers, mothers, and children's classroom teachers. The survey explored various domains: child, parent, family, school, community, and policy.
 - Data were collected from a final sample of 1,284 families (comprising 1,244 children). This represents 61.8% of the 2,078 households in the 1st year panel, 85.1% of the 1,508 households targeted for the 2023 survey, and 98.5% of the 1,304 people who completed surveys in 2022.
- Basic analysis was conducted using the 15th-year data from the 2022 survey, while in-depth analysis utilized accumulated longitudinal data.
 - The primary analysis encompassed child, parent, and household characteristics, school and private education traits, and community and policy features. The in-depth analysis centered on two themes: "Typological analysis and group characteristics using child and mothers' life satisfaction trajectories" and "Longitudinal analysis and characteristics of private education utilization patterns."
- The 14th Korea Child Panel Conference revolved around the "Growth and Development of Children through the Korean Child Panel since 2008."
 - Research papers using data from the 1st through 14th years were solicited and published, alongside hosting a graduate student research competition. Additional sessions comprised a workshop on longitudinal research methodology (analysis of longitudinal data using latent growth models) and an infographic exhibition detailing children's past, present, and future in the Korean Child Panel.

• **Programs were implemented to enhance child panel participation satisfaction and retention.**

- A career guidance seminar was organized for panel children transitioning to high school in collaboration with Korea Gallup and the Korean Educational Broadcasting Service (EBS). Certificates of appreciation and gifts were presented to households that continuously participated in the survey until the 15th survey in 2022.

Policy Suggestions and Future Agenda

• **We make the following policy recommendations based on analyzing the 15th-year data in 2022.**

- The results of the media addiction survey and parent-child communication show a significant difference between children's and parents' responses. This divergence suggests potential conflicts and misunderstandings due to varying perspectives between parents and children. Strengthening social support systems is essential to foster increased awareness and mutual understanding.
- Differential characteristics were observed between urban and Eup and Myeon areas (towns and townships). Urban children reported higher academic workload levels and related stress than their Eup and Myeon counterparts.

Conversely, children in Eup and Myeon areas indicated lower access to education, healthcare, welfare, and leisure spaces. There is a pressing need to establish limits on the academic burden of urban children and implement measures to enhance access to amenities in Eup and Myeon areas.

- Children from low-income households spend more time with media and games and receive less educational support from their parents daily. Moreover, low economic status negatively affects children's self-regulation and parent-child communication. Exploring social support avenues for children and adolescents from low-income families is imperative.
- Gender disparities in children tend to magnify as they grow and develop. While some disparities arise from biological differences, others stem from social stereotypes, such as physical self-image. Educational and social interventions are necessary to mitigate these gaps.

General Research Project

Korean Early Childhood Education and Care Panel Study 2023

Yun-jin Bae / Eun Jung Park / Jayeun Kim / Kyungjin Cho / Hyemin Lee / Min-gwon Kang

Backgrounds and Purpose of study

- The Korean Early Childhood Education and Care Panel Study commenced in 2021 to collect data on early life growth and development. In particular, it encompasses caregiving in homes, intrinsic and extrinsic parental factors, educational and caregiving experiences in institutions, and environmental influences from the prenatal stage through infancy, toddlerhood, and early childhood.
- The objectives of this study are outlined as follows:
 - 1) Collecting data on the developmental characteristics of one-year-old infants, parental and household features, community attributes, caregiving and parenting support service qualities, and policy attributes.
 - 2) Analyzing the growth and development of infants alongside household characteristics to provide fundamental data for drawing implications.
 - 3) Establishing a framework of research data accessible to scholars, field experts, and researchers through the construction of longitudinal data, enabling its utilization in research and practical applications.

Research Methods

- Various research methods were completed, including a literature review, investigation, expert advisory meetings and conferences to proceed with this study.
- In the survey focusing on one-year-old infants, households were visited to conduct interviews with primary caregivers, postal (online) surveys were administered to parents, and childcare center teachers attended by the infants were surveyed online.
- Furthermore, a random sample of 400 households from the

entire panel was selected for additional investigations into specific variables.

- In the annual report 2023, we analyzed the data collected in 2022 (1st wave) and provided the characteristics of children, parents, households, and community. In total, 2,775 panel children have participated in the 1st year of the survey in 2022.

Results

- The significant results of this study are as follows.

(Child and parental health)

- 1) Most households conducted newborn-related examinations, and the vaccination rates were generally high, confirming a thorough and well-implemented preventive approach to child health in birth homes.
- 2) Concerning parental smartphone overuse, 10.4% of fathers fell into the potential risk group, with 2.5% categorized as high-risk. Among mothers, 12.6% were in the potential risk group, while 3.7% were considered high-risk.

(Birth practices or caregiving)

- 1) Among the mothers, 40.5% had planned cesarean deliveries, 39.3% underwent natural births, and 20.1% experienced unplanned emergency cesarean deliveries during childbirth. The utilization rate of postpartum care centers was 86.2%.
- 2) Maternal caregiving predominated in nearly all households, but fathers took care of over 40% of cases during the evening hours.
- 3) Mothers planning exclusive breastfeeding before childbirth accounted for 24.9%. Within 24 hours after birth, the breastfeeding rate was 31%, declining to under 10% from the seventh month after birth.

(Parental work characteristics)

- The employment rate was 96.1% for fathers and 52.0% for mothers. Compared to the 2008 Korean Children's Panel Study (31.4%), there has been an increase in the maternal employment rate.

• (Policy characteristics) Fathers favored increased allowances or financial support in childcare policies, while mothers preferred strengthening systems enabling parents to care for their children.

- 1) Among cash support policies, all-day childcare vouchers (Idolbom) received the highest satisfaction, and the most highly rated policy was childcare allowances.
- 2) Among material or voucher support policies, first-meeting vouchers had the highest satisfaction and were rated the most important.
- 3) Usage rates for time support policies were relatively low, around 18% for fathers and 46% for mothers, compared to other types of support policies. Satisfaction with telecommuting was highest, and the most critical policy was parental leave.

Policy Suggestions and Future Agenda

• Policy Suggestions

- Improving positive perception and support for pregnancy and childbirth
- Easing physical strain and educational costs associated with childcare for subsequent births
- Expanding the availability of rooming-in facilities at postnatal care centers to foster the healthy development of newborns
- Reinforcing policies for parental time support
- Supporting parents' psychological well-being, including interventions to prevent smartphone overdependence

• Future Implementation Strategies for K-ECEC Panel Study

- Ensuring stability and continuity in survey content
- Incorporating significant content tailored to different age groups: infants, toddlers, and children entering elementary school
- Conducting in-depth surveys and interviews and preserving the uniqueness of the panel by including additional samples from multicultural and low-income households
- Incorporating plans to introduce a new cohort of 3-year-old children
- Exploring diverse analyses by integrating administrative data

General Research Project

A Study on How to Resolve the Gap in Development and Learning of Young Children after COVID-19(II)

Eun-Young Choi / Eunyoung Kim / Taewoo Kim / Jeong-hwan Yun / Young-ae Lee / Hui-hyun Park / Yoon Kyung Choi

Backgrounds and Purpose of study

- **This study considered young children who experienced the pandemic during their early life in 2022. In particular, when the lasting influence of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic had been realized.**
 - This study examines this impact on their current status and progress of change in their physical and mental health's growth, development and learning and child-rearing households' caring, nurturing and education .(1st year)
 - The 2nd year (2023) study aimed to analyze cumulative influence factors on young children and suggest support measures by following up and investigating longitudinally over two years.

Research Methods

- **This study analyzed domestic and foreign-related studies and conducted in-depth interviews with the parents of children participating in the development test.**
 - In-depth interviews were conducted with clinical experts to understand the problems caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.
 - Moreover, the Korean version of the Wechsler Early Intelligence Test (K-WPPSI-IV) and the Vineland Adaptation Behavior Test (K-Vineland-II) were conducted similarly to the first year to track changes in children's development due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
 - The child's parents and teachers were surveyed on family and institutional (school) variables.
 - Additionally, a longitudinal analysis of this study and the results of the first year was conducted, and the characteristics of the group were compared by analyzing the age cohort of the Korean Children's Panel.

Results

The main results of this study were summarized as follows:

- **First, it is reported that obesity and prevalence rates have increased regarding physical and health development. This is due to increased media exposure time and a sedentary lifestyle. Further, the rise is attributed to an irregular lifestyle and sleep based on analyzed domestic and international studies on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.**
 - Additionally, there are concerns that environmental changes caused by the COVID-19 pandemic negatively affect young children's language and cognitive development.
 - While reading with children using the media has increased during the COVID-19 pandemic, parents also reported that they value the practice of literacy and recognize the value of reading.
 - On one hand, the unexpected global COVID-19 pandemic was a stressful situation that everyone, including children, had to endure regarding social and emotional development. In particular, it has dramatically impacted low-income families struggling economically. It emphasizes the need for early intervention focused on specific groups because this environment has worked as a greater stress factor for children.
- **Second, the result of in-depth interviews with participating parents and clinical experts in this study confirms that social changes caused by the COVID-19 pandemic were linked to changes in the domestic nurturing environment.**
 - As a result, the social changes via the pandemic affected children's overall development and learning.
 - On the one hand, the use of masks raised concerns about delays in language development in infancy in terms of language development. However, it is worth noting that the problem of delayed language development is decreasing, and gaps in vocabulary expression, depending on the parenting environment, are being found.
 - On the other hand, it is found that difficulties such as anxiety, lethargy, difficulty in communication, and preference for playing alone due to the COVID-19 pandemic were commonly experienced regardless of the domestic economic situation regarding social-emotional development.

· **Third, as a result of comparing the perceptions of parents and teachers on the overall development of children in the 3-year-old class and the first grader of elementary school:**

- Children in the 3-year-old class tended to have high parental awareness in general, and the gap in perception between parents and teachers in emotional development was larger than in other areas.
- On the other hand, elementary school first graders did not generally have a significant difference in perception between parents and teachers. Nevertheless, teachers' perceptions of physical development were higher than those of parents.
- In addition, the cognitive development score of children in the 3-year-old class was the same as in the first year. The score of the combination of adaptation behavior was also at the average level, but the area of life skills tended to be a little higher.
- Meanwhile, the cognitive development of first graders in elementary school was also at the average level, and the score of the adaptation behavior combination was also higher than the average level.

· **Fourth, comparing participants' cognitive development and adaptation behavior in the first year and second years showed that cognitive development did not show a significant difference between the first year and the second year overall.**

- However, the statistic score decreased significantly in the second year compared to the first year regarding the first graders of elementary school in the language comprehension index.
- Adaptation behavior was also found to differ in scores between the first and second years significantly.
- Adaptation behavior combination scores were significantly higher in the second year than in the first year in particular areas of life and social skills.

· **Fifth, it was confirmed that there are concerning mechanisms to affect child development due to the COVID-19 pandemic by analyzing the Korean Children's Panel data as a comparison group of this study group.**

- In addition to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic,

structural unemployment and income decline due to economic contraction and economic structural changes may intensify the slump in children's physical development and cognitive development (academic and learning). This is feared to deal a bigger blow to the vulnerable groups with unstable employment.

Policy Suggestions and Future Agenda

· **Based on the results of this study, henceforth tasks were presented by dividing them into support for children's developmental areas, parental support as a family environmental factor, tracking and supporting the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic for the vulnerable social groups, and establishing a medium- and long-term monitoring system for the generation who suffered from the COVID-19 pandemic in their early lives.**

- First, areal support for children's development suggested language development should be followed longitudinally, expanded peer relationship (social development) opportunities, priority support for children's emotional development, and physical activity (exercise) opportunities.
- Second, parental support suggested the need to provide education and information for forming children's basic lifestyle, customized support for each child's development period, enhance parents' media literacy, and ease the psychological burnout of the primary caregiver.
- Third, support for vulnerable social groups is presented to strengthen support for the development and basic learning of vulnerable children, expand the budget for supporting the vulnerable, and ease the overall quality of life gap.
- Finally, it is suggested that a monitoring system for the COVID-19 generation be developed. In particular, those linked to young children's health checkups. Further, it should include monitoring associated with support for young children's development with the Metropolitan and Provincial Offices of Education, childcare support center, and regional Dreamstart Center. Moreover, it should monitor promotional follow-up research considering gap factors in development and learning.

Inclusive

Childrearing Support

- Analysis of the Social-Emotional Development Support Services for Children and Improvement Strategies
- A Study on Supporting Parental Competence in Vulnerable Families (II): for Adolescent Parents
- Comprehensive Strategies for Early Screening and Intervention for Young Children at Risk of Disabilities in ECEC institutes (II): Development of the screening tool for parents and the Guide for Parenting

Major Research Project

Analysis of the Social-Emotional Development Support Services for Children and Improvement Strategies

Ji Hyun Kim / Sook In Cho / Youngmin Kim

Backgrounds and Purpose of study

- **The research aims to assess the current state of services dedicated to supporting children’s social-emotional development and formulate improvement strategies to enhance these services.**
 - The concern arises from the diminished chances of building essential socio-emotional skills, as children are deprived of opportunities for social engagement during the COVID-19 era.
 - Furthermore, there is growing apprehension that the prevailing emphasis on excessive cognitive education may undermine awareness and interest in the socio-emotional development of young children.

Research Methods

- **This study examines parental awareness and concerns about social-emotional learning (SEL). It focuses on how parents contribute to children’s social-emotional development through conversations and experiences in childcare and educational institutions.**

Results

- **A total of 1,412 respondents participated in a parental survey, comprising 708 parents of infants and 704 parents of elementary school-aged children.**
 - Among them, 604 parents reported having experience with social-emotional development support services, while 808 had no such experience.
 - A total of 90% of parents demonstrated awareness of SEL, actively engaging in conversations and providing experiences to support their children’s social-emotional growth. Among the respondents, 65.5% of parents expressed concerns about their children’s social-emotional development. Interestingly, only 26.4% reported receiving concerning feedback from daycare centers or educational institutions.

- **Subsequently, in-depth interviews were conducted with parents who had utilized these services to explore concerns about their children’s socio-emotional development and experiences in applying for and using services and identify improvement areas.**
- **Additionally, the analysis of social-emotional development support services available for infants, preschoolers, and elementary school students in the local community revealed a deficiency in services tailored for elementary school students in the lower grades. This highlights the need for improvements to address this gap.**

Policy Suggestions and Future Agenda

- **Based on the research findings, this study proposes four major policy directions:**
 - A universal enhancement of social-emotional development support for all children, from infants to elementary school-aged, ensuring continuity in their developmental journey.
 - Strategies to strengthen the substantive content and levels of social-emotional development support services provided by local community agencies.
 - The development of targeted programs for promoting social-emotional development
 - Initiatives to enhance parental awareness and promote practices in social-emotional development through targeted awareness campaigns.

General Research Project

A Study on Supporting Parental Competence in Vulnerable Families (II): for Adolescent Parents

Sook In Cho / Yun-Jin Bae / Jungah Lee / Keng-Hie Song / Hee Sue Kim

Backgrounds and Purpose of study

• **This study is the second installment in a five-year research series focusing on supporting parenting competence in vulnerable families.**

- The target population for this research includes adolescent couples and single adolescent parents, encompassing individuals below the age of 24 who are raising young children.
- This study aims to enhance the parenting competence of adolescent parents, addressing both internal and external dimensions and exploring avenues for improving parenting support.
- The ultimate goal is to develop and disseminate a parenting guidebook specifically tailored for adolescent parents raising children.

Research Methods

• **The research methodology encompasses a literature review, surveys, in-depth interviews, expert consultations, expert advisory meetings, policy implementation workshops, development and promotion of a parenting guidebook, and policy seminars.**

- A total of 285 adolescent parents (160 adolescent couples and 125 adolescent single parents raising children) participated in the survey to explore their experiences during pregnancy and the child-rearing period and their policy demands.
- In-depth interviews were conducted with 15 adolescent parents with children (seven adolescent couples and eight adolescent single parents).

Results

• **Adolescent parents faced economic burdens during pregnancy and reported a lack of support (10.2% to 18.6%). Postpartum depression was prevalent (84.4%),**

with 25.3% seeking counseling.

- Economic strain was highest during pregnancy and child-rearing, but parents assessed their parenting positively.
- Interactive competence was considered crucial for effective parenting.

• **70.9% of adolescent parents graduated high school; 30.9% were working.**

- Monthly household income (excluding government support of overall adolescent parents) was around 1.52 million won, higher than for single parents (approximately 610,000 won) but lower than for couples (approximately 2.24 million won).
- Monthly government support of overall adolescent parents was approximately 800,000 won, higher for single parents (approximately 1.06 million won) than for couples (approximately 600,000 won).

• **The top priority support for adolescent parents was childcare assistance (38.9%), followed by pregnancy and childbirth support (21.4%), family housing support (19.3%), and parental employment support (16.1%).**

- According to the combined results of the top two preferences, childcare assistance (74.7%) and family housing support (53.0%) emerged as the most critical, followed by parental employment support (28.4%) and pregnancy and childbirth support (25.6%).
- Despite variations, it was evident that the foremost support desired by adolescent parents narrowed down to childcare assistance and family housing support.

• **The parenting guidebook developed in this study for adolescent parents focuses on acquiring skills to manage their emotions and practicing healthy 'interaction' methods to maintain positive relationships with their children, spouses, parents and families of origin.**

- While maintaining the format (e.g., overall title, design) of the parenting guidebook created for foster parents in the first year, the content has been tailored to reflect the

characteristics of adolescent parents.

- The parenting guidebook for adolescent parents is structured into three main sections. First, it provides ways for adolescent parents to understand and take care of themselves (“Self-Care”). Second, it offers guidance on how adolescent parents can interact appropriately with their children and provide the necessary care (“Child Care”). Third, it provides methods for forming positive relationships with partners, spouses, parents and families of origin (“Relationship Care”).

Policy Suggestions and Future Agenda

- **Based on the research findings, the suggested foundational direction for policies regarding adolescent parents includes the need for flexible and inclusive approaches that consider**

the diversity of adolescent parenting.

- **In enhancing the parenting competence of adolescent parents, it is crucial to establish a direction that provides support for adolescents (promoting independence) and support for parents (strengthening support during pregnancy and the early postpartum period), including establishing a sustainable delivery system for integrated case management.**

General Research Project

Comprehensive Strategies for Early Screening and Intervention for Young Children at Risk of Disabilities in ECEC institutes (II): Development of the screening tool for parents and the Guide for Parenting

Eunseol Kim / Ahreum Kim / Ji Hyun Kim / Hee Sue Kim / Hyo Jeong Jeon / Minjeong Kim / Eungkyung Ko /
Ilsun Choi / Hyung Mee Kim / Young Ah Kim / Yejin Kim / Yongjin Kim / Jung Won Choi

Backgrounds and Purpose of the study

- This research is the second year study for a 4-year cooperative project to support the Korean government's Master Plan for Children with Developmental Disabilities and President Yoon Suk-yeol's key policy tasks (Numbers 47, 67, and 84).
- This study aimed to develop and distribute early screening tools and easy-to-understand support guides for parents with young kids at risk for developmental disabilities.

Research Methods

- In the present study, a literature review, conferences with experts, a survey for parents with young children with potential risk of disabilities, and case studies were conducted to develop an index for early screening tools and support guides for parents.
 - Through the research survey, we gathered data related to the state of care and education for 0–5-year-old children with a risk of disabilities and parents' demands to improve the support system for their children.

Results

- We developed the Korean Screening Index of Early Development for parents (KSIED-P).
 - The inventory was developed to prevent and minimize development problems through early screening and intervention.
 - It was developed especially for parents to help screen children at risk at home, of which questions are based on daily routines and parent-child interaction. The tool comprises 375 items and seven types of age.

- We also made a parenting guide for parents with infants and toddlers at risk of developmental disabilities or retardation.

- The book includes content on understanding child development, how to play with children at risk of disabilities, and information resources regarding support families, especially with young children at risk.

Policy Suggestions and Future Agenda

- From the whole result of the current study, we suggested the ideas for national policy related to young children at risk of developmental disabilities as follows:
 - First, for early screening and intervention measures for infants and toddlers at risk of disability (before 18 months), it is necessary to enhance the national "infant health check-up" to strengthen sensory integration education for infants under 18 months of age. Moreover, building and promoting a developmental observation checklist app is needed.
 - Second, for family support policy measures, the following ways to enhance information accessibility should be considered: establishing a portal site for children at risk, providing information booklets for child development, customizing parenting education for children at risk of disabilities, introducing supporting system of strengthening family capacity through home visits.
 - Third, to improve the service system, it is needed to increase voucher cost and usage areas. Further, expanding the employment of teachers with special education license at local childcare support centers is essential. Finally, it is necessary to introduce a one-stop service system.

Childrearing

Cost

General Research Project

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

Hyomi Choi / Jeongwon Lee / Mira Cho / Seok Jin Woo / Taewoo Kim

Backgrounds and Purpose of study

- “KICCE Spending Survey” is a statistical survey conducted to collect information regarding the economic situation. It also evaluates spending practices among households with young children, including gauging their current usage of childcare services.
- Phase I of the study, conducted over the 5 years from 2018 to 2022, has been concluded.
- Phase II - ‘KICCE Spending Survey II’ is set to be conducted over 5 consecutive years from 2023 to 2027.
- Research efforts for 2023 will be focused mainly on conducting the 1st wave of the KICCE Spending Survey II (KICCE Spending Survey_2023).

Research Methods

- The KICCE Spending Survey_2023 study consists mainly of the primary survey and additional surveys administered to booster samples, the latter comprising childless households and households with pregnant women.
- Thus, to improve data quality usability and draw policy implications from there, we conducted an in-depth analysis of Phase I, “KICCE Spending Survey (2018–2022),” and the characteristics of its data.

Results

As the results in entirety are very expansive, for reader convenience, we summarized our findings into the following broad sections:

- 1) Overview of the KICCE Spending Survey_2023
- The critical difference between the “KICCE Spending Survey_2023” and the Phase I study is the addition of

booster samples.

- The primary survey is conducted with a steady commitment to continuity regarding the Phase I study. Nevertheless, booster samples have been introduced for additional surveys for control groups of the main survey (households with young children) and supplement sample subjects lacking in the primary survey.
- As control groups regarding households with young children, the booster samples introduced in 2023 include childless households (817 households) and households with pregnant women (504 households).
- The total sample of the 2023 central survey included 1,773 households. Out of the 1,518 households designated for tracking, 1,258 (82.8%) were successfully contacted.
- A total of 2,422 infants responded to the Children’s Survey in 2023.

2) Key Statistics and Comparison of Data

Characteristics of the KICCE Spending Survey (2018–2022)

- Average monthly childcare costs (real terms) per household 2022 stood at 1,273,000 KRW, in continuation of yearly fluctuations.
- During 2018–2022, childcare costs (real terms) per child stayed within the 650,000–660,000 KRW range except for 2020.
- As of 2022, 49.2% of young children used childcare centers, followed by 27.1% in kindergartens and 1.1% in facilities offering half-day or more extended programs. A total of 22.6% of the children did not use facilities offering half-day or more extended programs.
- Employing data on monthly government assistance, we conducted a longitudinal analysis over a long period. By doing so, we examine the strengths and weaknesses of the monthly assistance data and identify ways to improve data quality further.
- By the time they reach age 2, more than 90% of young children use some facility.

- Regardless of the child's age, transitions from home care allowance to childcare assistance and childcare assistance to the Nuri curriculum assistance occurred around February–May each year, in time with the commencement of recruitment among facilities.
- The year 2020, when the number of children born in 2019 was 1, and that of those born in 2020 was 0, falls within the period of the COVID-19 pandemic. Take-up rates for home care allowance were somewhat heightened during this period.
- **While the number of young children has followed a steady downward trend, the sample size of young children studied by the KICCE Spending Survey has grown from 2,277 in 2018 to 2,401 in 2021 before falling somewhat to 2,395 in 2022.**
 - Compared to the Population Trend Survey, the KICCE Spending Survey has a higher incidence of households with multiple children.
 - As of 2021, the average household monthly income as collected by the KICCE Spending Survey stood at 4,942,000 KRW, which is 675,000 KRW lower than comparable figures in the Korean Labor & Income Panel Study and 729,000 KRW lower than that found in the Household Income and Expenditure Survey.
 - Average monthly living expenditures, as collected by the KICCE Spending Survey, were higher than those in the Korean Labor and Income Panel Study.
 - As of the 2021 survey results, average monthly childcare costs per young child as collected by the KICCE Spending Survey were slightly higher than in the National Family and Fertility Survey, while per-household childcare costs were 310,000 KRW higher than in the National Childcare Survey.
 - In 2018 and 2019, take-up rates for childcare centers and kindergartens, as collected by the KICCE Spending Survey, were higher than found in administrative data. In 2021 and 2022, while take-up rates for childcare centers were broadly similar between the two data sources, take-up rates

for kindergartens remained higher in the KICCE Spending Survey.

3) Child Allowance's Role in Alleviating Childrearing Cost Burden

- **Despite the steady growth of in-cash-type support programs directed at households with young children, little research has been done regarding the efficacy of such programs. Thus, we conducted an in-depth analysis to ascertain the actual role of child allowances in the childrearing process and to see whether allowances helped alleviate the cost burden associated with childrearing.**
 - Using four waves of data from the 2nd (2019) to 5th (2022) wave of the KICCE Spending Survey, the primary dependent variables of interest were per-child and per-household childcare costs.
 - The model employed: panel random effects model
- **Impact of child allowance on per-child childcare costs**
 - For waves, 4–5 (2021–2022), a unit increase in child allowance recipients led to a 70,000 KRW increase in childcare costs per child.
 - Analysis was conducted after grouping children into the following age groups: infants, young children, Grades 1 and 2 in elementary school, and Grades 3 or higher in elementary school. Child allowance had a very significant effect on per-child childcare costs.
 - While child allowance positively affected per-child childcare costs in both dual and single-earner households, the effect was more pronounced among the latter group.
- **Impact of child allowance on per-household childcare costs**
 - Per-household findings were mainly similar to those of the per-child analysis.
 - Unlike per-child childcare costs, per-household childcare costs grew much faster depending on the number of children. This indicates that households with multiple children face more serious burdens from childcare costs.

4) How Access to Childcare Services Impacted the Labor Supply of Mothers during the COVID-19 pandemic

- **We conducted an empirical analysis to see how disparate levels of access to the services provided by local childcare centers impacted mothers' labor supply during 2020 amid the COVID-19 pandemic.**
 - Data employed: KICCE Spending Survey data covering years 2019 and 2020.
 - The model employed: DID (difference-in-differences) estimation
- **In the year 2020, amid the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, the labor market outcomes among women raising children saw a significant decline.**
- **OLS estimates suggest that the pandemic's spread led to decreases in economic activity, job retention, and hours worked, with the effect being statistically significant only for job retention.**
 - The two-period panel data model has less variability compared to cross-sectional data. Thus, while the directionality of the pandemic's effect was broadly similar, no statistically significant associations were found.
- **A fixed effects model that controlled for the share of private childcare centers yielded qualitatively similar results to OLS estimates.**
 - The effects were markedly more pronounced compared to the OLS estimates.
 - While the pandemic's spread had no statistically significant impact on economic activity and work hours, it significantly negatively impacted the likelihood of job retention.
 - The share of private childcare centers alleviated the negative impacts of the spread of the pandemic.

Policy Suggestions and Future Agenda

Based on the findings presented above, we derived the following policy-related improvements:

- **Proposals for improving the data quality of the "KICCE Spending Survey."**
 - Introducing new weights for young children or improving weighting methods
 - Restructuring the data for public access
 - Improvements in survey methodology, utilizing various modes (data collection methods)
 - Follow-up measures for sample allotment: adjusting samples of dual-earner households and low-income households
- **Policy recommendations based on findings from in-depth analyses**
 - Raising the child allowance eligibility age ceiling in the case of households
 - Strengthening in-cash support programs for low-income households with young children
 - Allowing the use of additional paternal leave during national crises
 - Improving the actual effectiveness of childcare time-related support policies, such as flexible work arrangements

Child Rights

and Protection

- Prevention and Post-Management Strategies for Infant Abuse: Focusing on Infant Abandonment
- The Protection and Research on the Actual Condition of the Children's Online Privacy

Major Research Project

Prevention and Post-Management Strategies for Infant Abuse: Focusing on Infant Abandonment

Jayeun Kim / Eun Jung Park / Yoon Kyoung Choi / Seonja Cha / Sookyoung Yoon

Backgrounds and Purpose of study

- The status report and statistics on the protection of children in South Korea indicate that, between 2017 and 2019, excluding baby boxes, over 100 children have been identified as neglected. In June 2023, the Board of Audit and Inspection revealed that out of 2,236 unregistered children, 27.3% (618) were identified as neglected, 10.5% (282) faced parental contact cessation and visit refusal, 3.9% (89) were placed for adoption before birth registration, and 3.2% (72) denied their birth facts.
 - These findings highlight the gravity of the situation, especially regarding infants, as younger age groups are more susceptible to abuse-related deaths, emphasizing the increased severity of negligence in infants.
- In response to these issues, this study aims to comprehensively examine the neglect situation in infants, including cases and related policy and legislative issues, and discuss preventive measures and improvements in post-management.
 - Notably, the impending abolition of infant homicide in 2023 and the implementation of birth notification and protection maternity leave in 2024 pose challenges. Specifically, it poses challenges in identifying and supporting crisis pregnancies. Thus, it demands corresponding measures and policy directions.

Research Methods

- This research, through literature review and secondary data analysis, explores the age-related differences in child abuse from medical and sociological perspectives and defines the categories and concepts of infant abuse.

- Additionally, through legal analysis, in-depth interviews, expert surveys, policy seminars, and expert consultations, the study aims to derive improvement measures for preventing infant neglect and enhancing post-management.

Results

- The results are as follows:
 - As a part of secondary data analysis, we reviewed 296 press releases related to infant abandonment published from 2010 to early 2023. There were 154 cases of abandonment immediately after birth; 60 cases and 27 cases occurred less than 1 month and between 1 and 3 months after birth, respectively.
 - Through literature and system reviews from foreign countries, laws and systems to prevent infant abandonment should be established based on evidence. With the introduction of Korea's birth notification and anonymous birth systems in 2024, July expects to resolve many of the blind spots in birth reporting, improve maternal health, and guarantee infants' right to life.
 - Through an expert opinion survey regarding infant abandonment and protection systems, the age range of infants should be considered less than 24 months. Thus, there must be a difference between the ages of general infants and infant abandonment (64.1%).
 - In the same survey, economic difficulties, avoidance of responsibility, and social stigma emerged as causes of infant abandonment. Therefore, strengthening pregnancy-birth support for vulnerable households (47.8%), support for child care (25.0%), and strengthening residential stability (10.9%) were required.

Policy Suggestions and Future Agenda

- **First, within the child protection system, the response system for infant neglect prioritizes adoption, and even after alternative protective measures, in-home care is prioritized.**
 - South Korea lacks a dedicated response system reflecting the specificity of infant neglect, and efforts for service support to prevent infant neglect are insufficient. Therefore, there is a need to streamline and detail the support procedures for neglected children, establish a separate committee for decision-making, and expedite the adoption process.
- **Second, to prevent infant neglect, a system allowing the state to verify whether essential protection, upbringing, and treatment for infants, including awareness of consciousness, are adequately provided should be established within the “Child Welfare Act.”**
 - Additionally, there is a need for amendments to the “Single-Parent Family Support Act” to ensure the practical implementation of support systems for single-parent families. It is also essential to consider the importance of psychological stability for caregivers and preventing social isolation due to sole parenting.
- **Third, the effectiveness of the system based on ensuring the anonymity of birth mothers lacks objective validation.**
 - Objective evidence is required before deciding on matters such as introducing, abolishing, or improving the anonymous maternity protection system. Further, a system for collecting relevant data needs to be established.
- **Finally, in neglected infants, there is a need to strengthen the institutional foundation for post-management.**
 - Criteria for classifying neglected infants within the child abuse classification system should be established to achieve this. Through comprehensive data collection for these cases, efficient utilization of resources at both central and local levels can enhance the effectiveness of child-centered policy support.
 - Especially for infants, strengthening support for in-home care is necessary, and considering the potential for disabilities in neglected infants, dedicated facilities and personnel training are also required.

Major Research Project

The Protection and Research on the Actual Condition of the Children's Online Privacy

Ahreum Kim / Nam Hee Do / Hyemin Lee / Sungeun Yang

Backgrounds and Purpose of study

- In today's digital age, children are growing increasingly accustomed to the online environment and displaying adaptability to its dynamics. However, their awareness of the significance of privacy, personal information, and the potential risks associated with emerging technologies and services tends to lag behind that of adults.
 - Consequently, a pressing demand arises for tailored safeguards to protect children online. Globally, there is a discernible trend towards bolstering regulations pertaining to websites and online service providers catering to children, emphasizing requiring parental consent.
- Moreover, recent deliberations have arisen concerning "sharenting", wherein parents share their children's photographs or personal information on social media platforms.
 - Awareness of safeguarding adult personal information is on the ascent in South Korea. However, there remains a deficit in recognizing and comprehending the utilization and preservation of children's personal information.

Research Methods

- This study explores international legislative trends and conducts surveys among parents and children to inform policies for children's online privacy protection. Focus group interviews (FGIs) targeting children under 14 and their parents to examine children's personal information usage and perceptions of privacy protection.
- Through FGIs with children under 14 and their parents, it assesses handling personal information and privacy perceptions.

- In partnering with organizations like Save the Children and Good Neighbors, the research addresses the effects of personal information use and "sharenting," seeking to develop targeted improvement strategies based on findings.

Results

- The study reveals a significant gap in children's understanding of online privacy breaches and their lack of emphasis on consent when parents share their information online. It exposes a contradiction where parents call for legal action against external privacy breaches but overlook the implications of sharing their children's information themselves. This situation underscores parents' need to heighten their awareness and take greater responsibility for their children's online privacy.

Policy Suggestions and Future Agenda

- The findings underscore the need to heighten awareness and proficiency in addressing privacy breaches involving parents and children, elevate social consciousness and practices that honor children's privacy, and propose legal amendments and enactments that protect children's privacy.

2023 KICCE PROJECT REPORT ABSTRACTS

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