

Effectiveness of Childcare Policies for Children Aged 2 to 6: 320,000 Affordable Preschool Education Places and 440,000 Beneficiaries of Childcare Allowances

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The Executive Yuan held its 3683th Cabinet meeting on January 2, 2020, for the presentation on the effectiveness and outlook of the zero- to six-year-old childcare policy given by the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Health and Welfare. Based on the two major principles of “expansion of affordable preschool education” and “alleviation of parental burdens,” the Executive Yuan’s countermeasures against low birth rates include the “expansion of public kindergartens,” “establishment of a quasi-public mechanism,” and “expansion of the issuance of childcare allowances,” all aimed to achieve comprehensive care for children aged zero to six. The effectiveness of such policy has been vindicated through better access for young families over the years.

For the two- to six-year-old children, the results in the past three years are outlined as follows:

1. Continuous expansion of the supply of affordable preschool education and increase of the kindergarten admission rate.

- (1) Public kindergarten implementation results: From 2017 through 2019, 951 public kindergartens and non-profit kindergartens were established. Thus, more than 25,000 enrollment slots have been added, and a total of 208,000 slots can now be provided.

- (2) Implementation results of quasi-public mechanism: There are 1,063 quasi-public kindergartens in 2019, providing more than 110,000 slots.

- (3) Expansion of the overall supply of affordable preschool education opportunities (both public and quasi-public): Around 320,000 affordable preschool education slots are being provided in 2019.

(4) Increase of the childcare rate and the kindergarten admission rate: The average kindergarten admission rate in 2019 is 67%, an increase of 7% compared to 60% in 2016.

2. Substantive alleviation of parents' financial burden through reduction of schooling costs and issuance of childcare allowances.

(1) Parents of children from two to six years of age pay a fixed monthly fee, and any difference will be covered by the government. For public kindergarten, the monthly payment is NT\$2,500; for non-profit kindergarten, NT\$3,500, and NT\$4,500 for quasi-public kindergarten. In non-profit and quasi-public kindergartens, parents may enjoy a NT\$1,000 discount on the payment for each of their third child and younger siblings. Low-income and middle-low-income households are free of charge for pre-school education.

(2) Parents of children who have not yet received public or quasi-public childcare/preschool education services will receive a monthly subsidy of NT\$2,500 and an additional NT\$1,000 for each of their third child and younger siblings. According to the statistics on childcare allowances as of November 2019, there are approximately 447,000 beneficiaries, children aged two to five.

3. Continuous expansion of affordable preschool education services in the future with lower schooling costs and more subsidies

(1) The kindergarten admission rate for children aged between two to under six has already reached 72%. Surpassing the national average in the OECD countries has been taken as the goal, making public and quasi-public preschool education expenses more affordable.

(2) Achieving 70% of affordable preschool education services is another important goal in the future. Expanding public preschool education has always been the main policy of the Ministry of Education. In addition to adding 3,000 classes in eight years, each school should

have its own affiliated kindergarten. The Ministry of Education will lend its full support as long as local governments strive to accelerate the process.

(3) The Ministry of Education will also continue to promote the quasi-public mechanism steadily, formulate a reasonable plan on the after-school childcare service expenses that parents care about, and cooperate with city and county governments in townships and districts where the tuition fees are high and disposable income reaches a certain ratio, to reasonably adjust the upper limit of the fees, motivating high-quality private kindergartens to cooperate with the government and expanding affordable preschool education services as a result.

(4) The childcare allowances will be increased year by year in the future, and the age will be raised, up till under the age of six.

In order to ensure the quality of children's preschool education services, the Ministry of Education promotes relevant supporting measures, including increasing the training of preschool teachers, seeking spaces for public preschool education sites, empowering non-profit organizations, improving the operation of quasi-public preschool education services, as well as providing administrative support and reducing preschool educators' administrative work, to jointly develop quality educational environments using resources from all sides. Premier Tseng-Chang Su of the Executive Yuan stated at today's Cabinet meeting that President Tsai has announced the childcare policies for the zero-to-six-year-olds, including continuous reduction of schooling fees for children, doubling of childcare allowances, and raising of the age threshold. Premier Su also instructed the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Health and Welfare to develop appropriate measures accordingly. He also asked the Directorate-General of Budget, Accounting and Statistics to lend full support for the budget required for implementing these policies in the following four years, so that young children could receive comprehensive education and care. Therefore, the Ministry of Education will properly discuss and actively implement relevant policies, to put into practice the spirit of these policies and jointly support parents in childcare in cooperation with relevant government ministries and departments.