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Summary of Rehabilitation Policies for Children with Disabilities in Mainland China

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Abstract: Background: Rehabilitation policies play a crucial supportive role in the rehabilitation of children with disabilities. Mainland China is home to a significant population of children with disabilities. Comprehensive research into the status of rehabilitation policies for children with disabilities in this region facilitates an in-depth understanding and provides convenience for comprehending and studying the policies concerning the rehabilitation of children with disabilities in mainland China. This effort offers research support for reforming and enhancing the support policies for children with disabilities. Research Method: This study employs a literature analysis approach to examine the rehabilitation policies for children with disabilities in mainland China from 1949 to 2020. It attempts to provide a comprehensive overview of the timing, objectives, contents, types, and effectiveness of policy implementation. Results: According to literature statistics, a total of 23 policies closely related to the rehabilitation of children with disabilities were released in mainland China from 1949 to 2020. There are 4 laws and regulations (including 2 revisions), 7 planning outlines, 5 implementation systems or opinions, 5 implementation plans, and 2 norms or standards.

Keywords: Mainland China; Children with Disabilities; Rehabilitation Policies.

1. Introduction

1.1. Problem Statement

Children with disabilities need to cope with a range of physical, emotional, and social challenges. They may require multiple medical interventions, which can impact their physical and mental well-being [1]. For parents and families, raising children with disabilities can bring additional financial pressures, especially in terms of medical and rehabilitation expenses [2]. Additionally, family members may need to invest a significant amount of time in caring for these children, potentially leading to conflicts between work, family life, and social activities [3]. Rehabilitation not only helps them overcome physical challenges but also enhances their social skills, further promoting academic success and career development [4]. For families, failing to provide timely and effective rehabilitation support can greatly limit their future life and personal development, increasing the societal operational costs and becoming a heavy burden for the families involved [5].

According to the data from the second National Sample Survey on Persons with Disabilities in mainland China in 2006, the total number of disabled people was 82.96 million, accounting for 6.34% of the total population. Among them, there were 1.678 million children with disabilities aged 0 to 6 years old, and the number of those aged 6 to 14 years old was 2.46 million [6]. Based on statistical data, it is evident that there is a substantial population of children with disabilities in mainland China. Families of these children with disabilities face a series of challenges, among which obtaining timely and effective rehabilitation undoubtedly stands as one of the crucial challenges in the process of raising children.

Support from rehabilitation policies plays a crucial role in promoting the rehabilitation of children with disabilities and alleviating family pressures [7]. Policies can provide the necessary rehabilitation services for these children and offer economic assistance to families, thus alleviating their financial burdens. Policy implementation not only benefits the improvement of these children's quality of life but also contributes to the development and progress of society as a whole (World Health Organization, 2011).

Faced with the substantial population of children with disabilities, the Chinese government has issued policies closely related to the rehabilitation of children with disabilities in mainland China since 1949. Haomiao Zhang summarized the policy development of rehabilitation assistance for children with disabilities in mainland China into four stages: the exploratory stage (1949-1983), the selective progressive stage (1984-2007), the preferential project development stage (2008-2016), and the universal institutionalized development stage (2017 to present) [8].

Therefore, in the face of such a substantial demand for rehabilitation policy support for children with disabilities, what are the rehabilitation-related policies that the Chinese government has issued in different stages in mainland China? What are the objectives and contents of rehabilitation policies? What types of rehabilitation policies exist? How effective is the implementation of these policies? These questions are worthy of research. Thus, this study employs a literature analysis approach to examine the rehabilitation policies for disabled children in mainland China from 1949 to 2020. It attempts to provide a comprehensive overview of the timing, objectives, contents, types, and effectiveness of policy implementation. The research results can facilitate a comprehensive understanding and study of rehabilitation policies for children with disabilities in mainland China and provide research support for reforming and improving

support policies for children with disabilities.

1.2. Core Concepts

Public policies are those developed by governmental bodies and officials. Policies consist of courses or patterns of action taken over time by governmental officials rather than their separate, discrete decisions [9]. Therefore, before examining and discussing the rehabilitation policies for children with disabilities in mainland China, it is necessary to define the core concepts involved in policies based on those promulgated by the Chinese government and their background.

Persons with Disabilities and Children with disabilities

In China, persons with disabilities refer to those who have lost or have abnormalities in certain organizations, functions, or physiological structures, preventing them from engaging in specific activities in a normal manner, either wholly or partially. Persons with disabilities encompass those with visual impairments, hearing impairments, speech impairments, physical disabilities, intellectual disabilities, mental disabilities, multiple disabilities, and other disabilities (Law of the People's Republic of China on the Protection of Disabled Persons, State Council, 2008). The definition of children with disabilities, as established in the Second National Sample Survey on Persons with Disabilities, categorizes disabled children as those under 14 years of age with abnormal physiological, anatomical, psychological, or mental conditions, partially or wholly losing the ability to take care of themselves, learn, and adapt to society in daily life. These children fall into six categories: visual impairments, hearing impairments, intellectual disabilities, speech impairments, mental disabilities, and autism [10].

However, the "Colorful Dreams Action Plan" for rehabilitation assistance for children with disabilities, promulgated in December 2011, covers five types of children with disabilities: visual impairments, hearing impairments, physical disabilities, intellectual disabilities, and autism (China Disabled Persons' Federation, 2011). The "Regulations on Disability Prevention and Rehabilitation for Persons with Disabilities," enacted in 2017, proposes the gradual provision of free services such as surgeries, assistive device allocation, and rehabilitation training for children with disabilities, including those with visual impairments, hearing impairments, speech impairments, physical disabilities, intellectual disabilities, and autism aged 0-6 years (State Council, 2017).

In summary, it is evident that the definition of children with disabilities has undergone a developmental process. Therefore, considering the above definitions, in this study, children with disabilities refer to individuals under 14 years of age with abnormal physiological, anatomical, psychological, or mental conditions, partially or wholly losing the ability to take care of themselves, learn, and adapt to society in daily life. This includes visual impairments, hearing impairments, intellectual disabilities, speech impairments, mental disabilities, and autism.

Disability Rehabilitation and Rehabilitation Assistance for Disabled Children

Disability rehabilitation refers to the comprehensive use of medical, educational, vocational, social, psychological, and assistive device measures after the onset of disabilities, aimed at helping disabled individuals restore or compensate for functions, reduce functional impairments, and enhance their abilities for self-care and social participation (State Council, 2017). In the "System of Rehabilitation Assistance for Children with Disabilities " promulgated in July 2018, the content of rehabilitation assistance is described as "basic service projects and content for the rehabilitation assistance of children with disabilities, including surgery, assistive device allocation, and rehabilitation training primarily aimed at reducing functional disabilities, improving functional conditions, enhancing self-care and social participation capabilities."

Regarding the concept of "rehabilitation assistance for children with disabilities" mentioned in the above document, there has been no explicit definition in the policies that have been promulgated. However, in research, Yuanyuan Gao, Zongfan Wang, and others define rehabilitation assistance for children with disabilities as: under certain economic and social conditions, provided by government-led initiatives with broad social participation, aiming to offer free rehabilitation training, surgery, assistive device adaptation, education, and psychological counseling to children with disabilities in need, with the main goal of restoring and improving functional conditions, reducing functional disabilities, and enhancing abilities in self-care, learning, and social interaction [11-12]. The above definition accurately and comprehensively defines the concept of rehabilitation assistance for children with disabilities, aligning with the expressions about rehabilitation assistance for children with disabilities in policies.

Rehabilitation Policies

Through literature retrieval and analysis of rehabilitation policies in Mainland China, it is found that the term "rehabilitation policy" or "rehabilitation service policy" has been widely used in many documents, even serving as keywords in research. However, no one has provided an explanation for the definition of "rehabilitation policy" in research.

Yan Wei divides emergency rehabilitation policy into broad and narrow categories based on the definition of rehabilitation. The broad rehabilitation policy includes various aspects of the Law on Protection of Persons with Disabilities, including rehabilitation, education, labor employment, cultural life, social security, barrier-free environments, and legal responsibilities. The narrow emergency rehabilitation policy primarily pertains to medical rehabilitation, providing support to disabled individuals in terms of funding, rehabilitation equipment, and rehabilitation services [13]. Xiuqi Tang, Fubing Qiu, and others propose in their research that the main theories of rehabilitation policy include the person-centered health service theory, the social determinants theory of health services, and the International Classification of Functioning (ICF), Disability, and Health theory related to function, disability, and health classification [14].

Therefore, based on the research purpose and subject, the definition of "rehabilitation policy" in this study refers to policies closely related to the rehabilitation of disabled individuals that are issued by China's national functional departments or national associations in Mainland China. This includes laws and regulations, planning outlines, implementation systems or opinions, implementation plans, norms, or standards.

Laws and regulations refer to the current effective laws, administrative regulations, judicial interpretations, local regulations, local rules, departmental regulations, and other normative documents of the People's Republic of China, as well as periodic amendments and supplements to these laws

and regulations. Planning outlines refer to comprehensive plans regarding the work for disabled individuals issued by national functional departments. Content includes background, overall objectives, main tasks, and indicators, and guarantee measures. Implementation opinions or systems refer to guiding documents issued by national functional departments or national associations for specific work requirements related to disabled individuals. This includes guiding principles, overall objectives, basic principles, and main measures.

2. Methods

2.1. Literature Search

This study utilized a systematic retrieval process through various channels, including databases (CNKI, Wanfang Chinese Scientific Journals Full-Text Database, VPCS Database, etc.), government or association websites (People's Republic of China Government Website, China Disabled Persons' Federation, etc.), and search engines (Baidu). Keywords such as " children with disabilities or disabled children" (残疾儿童), "persons with disabilities or disabled persons " (残疾人), "rehabilitation of children with disabilities" (残疾儿童康复), "disability rehabilitation" (残疾人康复), and "rehabilitation policies" (康复政策) were employed to systematically retrieve policies related to the rehabilitation of children with disabilities in mainland China from 1949 to 2020.

2.2. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Upon completing the literature retrieval, a review of the initially retrieved policy texts was conducted. The specific inclusion and exclusion criteria were as follows: (1) Policy documents must originate from national-level governmental departments or officially issued by nationwide associations; (2) Policy content must pertain to matters related to the rehabilitation of children with disabilities; (3) Identical policy texts forwarded by different departments are only counted once, with precedence given to those published by the highest administrative authority; (4) The applicable administrative region for the policy documents is the mainland area of China.

2.3. Literature Coding

The collected policy texts were categorized and coded in the following manner: (1) Basic policy information, including title, year of issuance, issuing authority, policy type, quantity, etc.; (2) Policy content details, encompassing policy objectives, core elements, implementation timelines, associated administrative departments, and more.

3. Research Results

Although the People's Republic of China was officially established in October 1949, and rehabilitation training was involved in the education of children with visual and hearing disabilities during the period from 1949 to 1983, the development of rehabilitation work for children with disabilities in mainland China started relatively late. It wasn't until the establishment of the China Disabled Persons' Welfare Foundation in 1984 and the convening of the National Urban Social Welfare Institutions Reform and Rectification Workshop that the optimization policy of "emphasizing rehabilitation and care equally" was explicitly proposed for the first time. The foundation actively mobilized child welfare institutions across the country to carry out tailored rehabilitation medical treatment and functional training for children with disabilities, laying the foundation for subsequent rehabilitation assistance for children with disabilities [15]. In July 1986, the China Organizing Committee for the United Nations' "Decade of Persons with Disabilities" (1983-1992) was established, and in April 1987, a national sampling survey of persons with disabilities was conducted [16]. In March 1988, the first National Congress of Disabled Persons of China was convened, announcing the establishment of the China Disabled Persons' Federation. The congress report emphasized the urgent need for attention to disability rehabilitation and the necessity of vigorously promoting rehabilitation work, marking a new development stage in China's disability field [17].

3.1. Rehabilitation Policy Release Situation

According to literature statistics, a total of 23 policies closely related to the rehabilitation of children with disabilities were released in mainland China from 1949 to 2020. Among them, there are 4 laws and regulations (including 2 revisions), 7 planning outlines, 5 implementation systems or opinions, 5 implementation plans, and 2 norms or standards (Table 1). In terms of policy release time, the years 2011 and 2016 saw the highest number of policy releases, with 3 policies issued each year. This was followed by the years 2006, 2008, and 2018, with 2 policies released each year. Other years saw the release of 1 policy each. In terms of the primary responsible units for policy release (Table 1), the State Council is the main institution responsible for releasing national-level policies, followed by the China Disabled Persons' Federation. Further analysis of the policy drafting units reveals that the Disabled Persons' Federation is the main responsible body for drafting policies related to the rehabilitation of children with disabilities. Additionally, in terms of policy types (Figure 1), planning outlines are considered the core guiding documents for conducting rehabilitation work for children with disabilities. From 1988 to 2020, the State Council issued a total of 7 Five-year Planning.

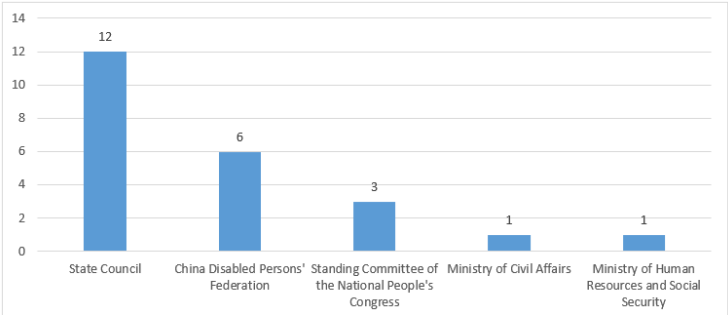


Fig 1. Issuer of Children with Disabilities Rehabilitation Policy

When analyzing the interrelationships among these policies, we found that "laws and regulations" serve as the core basis for the formulation of other policies, while policies such as "implementation systems or opinions," "implementation plans," and "norms or standards" constitute the task objectives or specific measures contained within the "planning outlines." Based on this logical relationship, we have provided a comprehensive overview of the support provided by these policies for the rehabilitation of children with disabilities, using time as the guiding thread.

Table 1. Policies Related to Rehabilitation of Children with Disabilities in Mainland China (1949-2020)

Issued Date	Issued Organization	Document Name and Implementation Time
1988.7.11	State Council	Outline of the Five-year Planning on the Work for China's Persons with Disabilities (1988-1992)
1990.12.28	Standing Committee of the National People's Congress	Law of the People's Republic of China on the Protection of Persons with Disabilities
1991.12.12	State Council	Outline of the "Eighth Five-year Planning" on the Work for China's Persons with Disabilities(1991—1995)
1996.4.26	State Council	Outline of the "Ninth Five-year Planning" on the Work for China's Persons with Disabilities(1996—2000)
2001.4.10	State Council	Outline of the "Tenth Five-year Planning" on the Work for China's Persons with Disabilities(2001—2005)
2002.8.24	State Council	Opinions on Further Strengthening the Work of Rehabilitation for Persons with Disabilities
2004.5	State Council	Implementation Plan for the "Tomorrow Plan" for Surgical Rehabilitation of Orphans with Disabilities(2004-2006)
2005.1.19	China Disabled Persons' Federation, Ministry of Health of the People's Republic of China	Opinions on Further Integrating Community Rehabilitation for Persons with Disabilities into Urban and Rural Primary Healthcare Services
2006.6.4	State Council	Outline of the "Eleventh Five-year Planning" on the Work for China's Persons with Disabilities(2006-2010)
2006.10.22	China Disabled Persons' Federation	Construction Standards of Rehabilitation Centers for Persons with Disabilities
2008.3.28	State Council	Opinions on Promoting the Development of the Disabled Persons' Undertakings
2008.4.24	Standing Committee of the National People's Congress	Law of the People's Republic of China on the Protection of Persons with Disabilities(2008 Revised)
2009	China Disabled Persons' Federation	Implementation Plan and Supporting Implementation Measures for Emergency Rehabilitation Projects for Impoverished Disabled Children(2009-2011)
2010.3.10	State Council	Guiding Opinions on Accelerating the Construction of the Social Security System and Service System for Persons with Disabilities
2011.4.25	China Disabled Persons' Federation	Construction Standards for Rehabilitation Institutions in the Disabled Persons' Federation System (Trial Implementation)
2011.5.16	State Council	Outline of the "Twelfth Five-year Planning" on the Work for China's Persons with Disabilities(2011-2015)
2011.12.2	China Disabled Persons' Federation	Implementation Plan for the "Rainbow Action Plan" for Rehabilitation Assistance for Children with Disabilities
2016.6.2	China Disabled Persons' Federation	Implementation Plan for Precision Rehabilitation Services for Persons with Disabilities
2016.6.6	Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security	Notice on Including Certain Additional Medical Rehabilitation Projects in the Scope of Basic Medical Insurance Coverage
2016.8.3	State Council	Outline of the "13th Five-year Planning" for Accelerating the Well-off Process of Persons with Disabilities(2016-2020)
2017.2.7	State Council	Regulations on Disability Prevention and Rehabilitation for Persons with Disabilities
2018.7.10	State Council	Opinions on Establishing a System for Rehabilitation Assistance for Children with Disabilities
2018.10.26	Standing Committee of the National People's Congress	Law of the People's Republic of China on the Protection of Persons with Disabilities(2018 Revised)

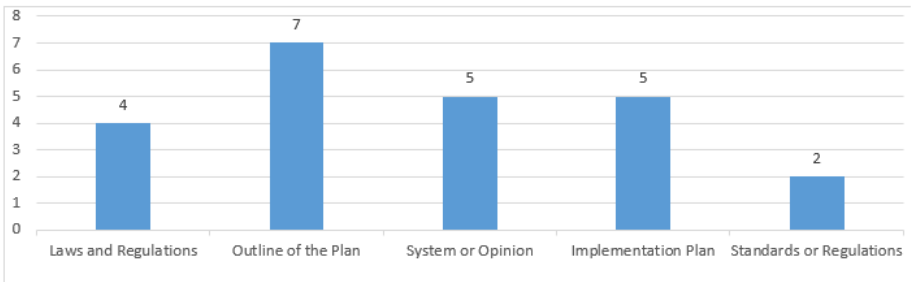


Fig 2. Publication Status of Children with Disabilities Rehabilitation Policy Types（1949-2020）

3.2. Support for Rehabilitation of Children with Disabilities through Laws

The primary legal provisions directly guaranteeing rehabilitation rights for children with disabilities are the "Law of the People's Republic of China on the Protection of Persons with Disabilities" and the "Regulations on Disability Prevention and Rehabilitation for Persons with Disabilities." The "Law of the People's Republic of China on the Protection of Persons with Disabilities" is the first specialized legislation for persons with disabilities in mainland China. It serves as the fundamental law for safeguarding disabled person's rights and is the first legal document to explicitly define rehabilitation rights for disabled individuals. The law stipulates the responsibilities of the government, society, and disabled persons' organizations, providing clear guidance on principles, policies, development approaches, and major measures across various sectors of disabled persons' affairs. It was promulgated on December 28, 1990, and came into effect on May 15, 1991. Since its initial release, the law has undergone two revisions, issued on April 24, 2008, and October 26, 2018, respectively. In its second chapter, under the theme of "Rehabilitation," the law includes five articles that outline guarantees for the rights of disabled individuals in terms of legal responsibilities, guiding principles, organizational implementation, talent development, and assistive devices. This law not only provides legal support for the rehabilitation rights of children with disabilities from the perspective of the entire persons with disabilities but also explicitly states the legal requirement for "prioritizing the provision of emergency treatment and rehabilitation for children with disabilities."

The "Regulations on Disability Prevention and Rehabilitation for Persons with Disabilities" came into effect on July 1, 2017. These regulations define the objectives, core concepts, work content and requirements, responsible entities, as well as protection measures and legal responsibilities related to disability prevention and rehabilitation. They represent the first comprehensive and authoritative regulations concerning disability prevention and rehabilitation work in mainland China [18]. In comparison to the "Law of the People's Republic of China on the Protection of Persons with Disabilities," these regulations provide more explicit and specific support for rehabilitation of children with disabilities. The regulations outline overall requirements for disabled persons' rehabilitation work, specify the responsibilities of central and local governments, propose safeguard measures such as organizational management, funding, establishment of rehabilitation departments or institutions, talent cultivation, and assistive device research and development. The regulations define the process and content of rehabilitation services, providing legal support for rehabilitation services for the entire disabled population. Moreover, the regulations clearly stipulate that "priority should be given to the rehabilitation of children with disabilities, combining rehabilitation with education" and establish a system for the rehabilitation assistance of children with disabilities, gradually providing free services such as surgery, provision of assistive devices, and rehabilitation training for visually, audibly, linguistically, physically, and intellectually disabled children and children with autism.

3.3. Support for Rehabilitation of Children with disabilities through "Five-year Planning"

In 1988, the State Council issued and implemented the first development plan for the disabled persons' cause in China, titled "Outline of the Five-year Planning on the Work for China's Persons with Disabilities (1988-1992)." This marked the beginning of comprehensive planning for various aspects of disabled persons' social security, rehabilitation, employment, education, and facility construction, using a Five-year Planning cycle, which continues to the present day [19]. Starting from the Eighth Five-year Planning, mainland China's development plans for disabled persons' cause have been synchronized with the country's national economic and social development plans, becoming integral components of these plans [20]. The contents of each "Five-year Planning" include a summary of the tasks and achievements of the previous plan, as well as the general objectives, guiding principles, task indicators, and key measures of the new plan.

Due to the broad nature of rehabilitation development planning in the "Five-year Planning" which encompasses the entire disabled persons, the expressions of objectives, measures, and implementation effects related to rehabilitation work are quite general. Therefore, researchers have focused on summarizing the objectives and measures specifically related to the rehabilitation of children with disabilities in the "Five-year Planning." Following this principle of information extraction, researchers have extracted goals and measures related to disabled children's rehabilitation work from the texts of seven "Five-year Planning" (Table 2).

To fulfill the objectives of the "Five-year Planning" starting from the Tenth Five-year Planning, supporting policies such as "implementation systems or opinions," "implementation plans," and "norms or standards" have been introduced to ensure the achievement of these objectives. During the Tenth Five-year Planning period, three policies were issued, namely the "Opinions on Further Strengthening the Work of Rehabilitation for Persons with Disabilities," the "Implementation Plan for the "Tomorrow Plan" for Surgical Rehabilitation of Orphans with Disabilities," and the "Opinions on Further Integrating Community Rehabilitation for Persons with Disabilities into Urban and Rural Primary Healthcare Services."

The "Opinions on Further Strengthening the Work of Rehabilitation for Persons with Disabilities," issued and implemented in 2002, is the first set of implementation opinions specifically focused on rehabilitation work for disabled individuals. These "Opinions" set the overall goal of achieving the principle of "every disabled person having access to rehabilitation services by 2015" and propose measures such as "improving the rehabilitation work system, actively promoting community rehabilitation, and incorporating disabled persons' rehabilitation funds into fiscal budgets" to achieve this goal. The "Opinions on Further Integrating Community Rehabilitation for Persons with Disabilities into Urban and Rural Primary Healthcare Services," issued in 2005, were aimed at implementing the measures of "improving the rehabilitation work system and actively promoting community rehabilitation." This policy provides guidance on the implementation measures and work content for incorporating community rehabilitation for persons with disabilities into basic health services in urban

and rural areas. Although these two policies provide policy support for disabled children's rehabilitation from a macro perspective, they do not specifically outline goals and measures for the rehabilitation of children with disabilities; instead, they include them within the broader context of disabled persons' rehabilitation work.

In 2005, the State Council issued the "Implementation Plan for the "Tomorrow Plan" for Surgical Rehabilitation of Orphans with Disabilities (2004-2006)," which aimed to address the increasing number of physically disabled orphans adopted by welfare institutions between 1999 and 2003, requiring surgical correction and rehabilitation. Consequently, this policy specifically targets disabled orphans aged 0 to 18 in various urban and rural social welfare institutions. The plan allocated RMB 600 million for the period 2004-2006, ensuring effective surgical correction and rehabilitation for 28,000 and striving for 30,000 disabled orphans.

Table 2. Situation of Rehabilitation Work for Children with Disabilities in China's "Five-year Planning" for the Disability Cause (1988-2020)

Item	Primary Tasks or Measures for the Rehabilitation of Children with Disabilities
Five-year Planning (1988-1992)	(1) Over a period of five years, perform corrective surgeries for 300,000 cases of sequelae from infantile paralysis. (2) Provide auditory-linguistic training for 30,000 children with hearing disability.
Eighth Five-year Planning (1991—1995)	(1) Building upon the completion of the 830,000 cases of rehabilitation tasks outlined in the "Five-year Work Outline," an additional 60,000 corrective surgeries for sequelae of infantile paralysis and auditory-linguistic training for 20,000 children with hearing disability will be carried out. (2) Establishing 30 rehabilitation centers for children with hearing disability, 400 speech training departments, and a number of grassroots speech training points. (3) Providing life self-care training and intellectual development for children with intellectual disabilities.
Ninth Five-year Planning (1996—2000)	(1) Provide auditory-linguistic training for 60,000 children with hearing disability. (2) Provide rehabilitation training for 60,000 children with intellectual disabilities.
Tenth Five-year Planning (2001—2005)	Provide auditory-linguistic training for 80,000 children with hearing disability.
Eleventh Five-year Planning (2006-2010)	(1) Provide auditory-linguistic training for 80,000 children with hearing disability. (2) Systematic training for 100,000 children with intellectual disabilities. (3) Implement rehabilitation assistance for impoverished children with hearing disability. (4) Aid impoverished children with physical disabilities in receiving corrective surgeries and rehabilitation training. (5) Provide rehabilitation assistance for impoverished children with intellectual disabilities.
Twelfth Five-year Planning (2011-2015)	Implement free emergency rehabilitation programs for children with disabilities aged 0-6 years old, establish a system for emergency rehabilitation assistance for disabled children, and gradually expand the scope of rehabilitation assistance in eligible areas.
Thirteenth Five-year Planning (2016-2020)	(1) Establish a system of rehabilitation assistance for children with disabilities, gradually achieving free services including surgery, assistive device fitting, and rehabilitation training for visually impaired, hearing impaired, speech impaired, intellectually impaired, physically impaired children, and children with autism aged 0-6 years old; (2) Priority should be given to carrying out rehabilitation work for children with disabilities, integrating rehabilitation with education.

During the Eleventh Five-year Planning period, five supportive policies related to the rehabilitation of children with disabilities were issued. Both the "Construction Standards of Rehabilitation Centers for Persons with Disabilities" and the "Construction Standards for Rehabilitation Institutions in the Disabled Persons' Federation System (Trial Implementation)" were formulated based on the goal of the Eleventh Five-year Planning to "actively promote the establishment of specialized institutions for disabled persons' rehabilitation services." These policies were aimed at regulating the construction of rehabilitation institutions under the auspices of provincial and municipal disabled persons' federations, with the aim of standardizing the development of rehabilitation facilities. Rehabilitation institutions under the auspices of disabled persons' federations refer to non-profit organizations affiliated with disabled persons' federations at all levels. These institutions, with independent legal status approved by relevant government departments, provide rehabilitation services for disabled persons and other individuals with functional impairments. The "Construction Standards for Rehabilitation Institutions in the Disabled Persons' Federation System (Trial Implementation)" was formulated as a supplementary and complementary document based on the "Construction Standards of Rehabilitation Centers for Persons with Disabilities ". The implementation of these two policies, from the perspective of rehabilitation institution construction, provided support such as facilities, equipment, and technical personnel for the rehabilitation of children with disabilities.

In 2008, the "Opinions on Promoting the Development of the Disabled Persons' Undertakings" were issued and implemented, proposing the priority of "prioritizing emergency treatment and rehabilitation for children with disabilities and providing subsidies for the rehabilitation of impoverished children with disabilities." Consequently, in 2009, the "Implementation Plan and Supporting Measures for Emergency Rehabilitation Projects for Impoverished Children with Disabilities" (Disability Federation Office [2009] No. 20) was formulated and implemented, providing specific details about the objectives, recipients, content, criteria, and implementation procedures of rehabilitation assistance for children with disabilities. This "Plan" targeted impoverished children with disabilities under the age of six, from 2009 to 2011, with dedicated financial allocations from the central government to support the implementation of the "Emergency Rehabilitation Project for Impoverished Disabled Children of the China Disabled Persons' Federation" (Table 3).

Table 3. Assistance Status of Emergency Rehabilitation Projects for Impoverished Children with Disabilities

Beneficiaries	Objectives, Content, and Criteria
Deaf Children (Cochlear Implants)	Objective: To provide cochlear implants for 1,500 impoverished deaf children, subsidize cochlear implant surgery and post-operative rehabilitation training expenses, with a total budget of RMB189 million. Content and Criteria: (1) Provide a free basic cochlear implant device per person, costing RMB100,000 per device; (2) Cover surgery and adjustment costs of RMB12,000 per person; (3) Provide a rehabilitation training subsidy of RMB14,000 per person (for 10 months after the surgery).
Deaf Children (Hearing Aids)	Objective: To provide hearing aids for 9,000 impoverished deaf children and subsidize rehabilitation training expenses, with a total budget of RMB223.2 million. Content and Criteria: (1) Provide two sets of digital hearing aids per person for free; (2) Provide an annual rehabilitation training subsidy of RMB10,000 per person (Beneficiaries from the year 2009 can receive assistance continuously for 3 years, beneficiaries from the year 2010 can receive assistance continuously for 2 years, and beneficiaries from the year 2011 can receive assistance for 1 year.)
Children with Physical Disability	Objective: To provide rehabilitation training for 9,000 instances for impoverished children with physical disabilities, subsidizing 3,000 instances annually, with a total budget of RMB 90 million. Content and Criteria: Rehabilitation training subsidy of RMB10,000 per person per year.
Children with Intellectual Disability	Objective: To provide rehabilitation training for 15,000 instances for impoverished children with intellectual disabilities, subsidizing 5,000 instances annually, with a total budget of RMB150 million. Content and Criteria: Rehabilitation training subsidy of RMB10,000 per person per year.
Children with Autism	Objective: To provide rehabilitation training for 3,600 instances for impoverished children with autism, subsidizing 1,200 instances annually, with a total budget of RMB 36 million. Content and Criteria: Rehabilitation training subsidy of RMB10,000 per person per year.
Children with Disabilities (Assistive devices)	Objective: To provide various types of assistive devices for 20,700 impoverished children with disabilities, including 2,700 recipients of visual aids, 3,000 recipients of orthopedic devices, and 15,000 recipients of wheelchairs, seating chairs, standing frames, and pediatric walkers, with a total budget of RMB 22.8 million.

In 2010, the "Guiding Opinions on Accelerating the Construction of the Social Security System and Service System for Persons with Disabilities" were issued and implemented. Building upon the support for "providing free emergency rehabilitation for children with disabilities aged 0 to 6," these opinions required the "development and improvement of professional rehabilitation institution construction standards and rehabilitation technology standards for deaf children's language training, cerebral palsy, intellectual disabilities, autism children's rehabilitation training, and assistive device adaptation." They aimed to advance the standardized construction of rehabilitation institutions and enhance the targeted and effective nature of rehabilitation services. Therefore, in 2011, the "Rainbow Action Plan for Rehabilitation Assistance for Children with Disabilities" was promulgated as a continuation and improvement of the "Implementation Plan and Supporting Measures for Emergency Rehabilitation Projects for Impoverished Children with Disabilities" introduced in 2009.

Table 4. Implementation Status of Rehabilitation Assistance for Children with Disabilities - "Colorful Dream Action Plan"

Beneficiaries	Objectives, Content, and Criteria
Deaf Children (Cochlear Implants)	Objective: To provide cochlear implant devices for 16,865 deaf children from middle and low-income families, subsidizing cochlear implant surgery, post-operative adjustments, and post-operative rehabilitation training expenses, with a total budget of RMB1.619 billion. Content and Criteria: (1) Provide one set of basic cochlear implant device per person for free; (2) Cover surgery and adjustment costs of RMB12,000 per person; (3) Provide a rehabilitation training subsidy of RMB14,000 per person (for 10 months after the surgery).
Deaf Children (Hearing Aids)	Objective: To provide hearing aids for 18,000 impoverished deaf children, subsidizing rehabilitation training expenses, with a total budget of RMB324 million. Content and Criteria: (1) Provide two sets of full digital hearing aids per person for free (costing RMB 4,800); (2) Cover trial service costs of RMB1,200 per person; (3) Provide a rehabilitation training subsidy of RMB12,000 per person per year.
Children with Physical Disability (Corrective Surgery)	Objective: To provide corrective surgeries, rehabilitation training, and subsidies for orthopedic device fitting for 15,000 impoverished children with physical disabilities, with a total budget of RMB 258 million. Content and Criteria: (1) Average subsidy of RMB10,000 per person for surgery; (2) Rehabilitation training subsidy of RMB 6,000 per person after surgery; (3) Orthopedic device fitting fee subsidy of RMB1,200 per person.
Children with Physical Disability (Cerebral Palsy Rehabilitation)	Objective: To provide rehabilitation training and subsidies for orthopedic device fitting for 30,000 impoverished children with cerebral palsy, with a total budget of RMB 396 million. Content and Criteria: (1) Rehabilitation training subsidy of RMB12, 000 per person per year; (2) Orthopedic device fitting subsidy of RMB1, 200 per person.
Children with Autism	Objective: To provide rehabilitation training subsidies for 36,000 impoverished children with autism, with a total budget of RMB 432 million. Content and Criteria: Rehabilitation training subsidy of RMB12, 000 per person per year.
Children with Disabilities (Assistive devices)	Objective: To provide subsidies for fitting prosthetics and orthopedic devices for 21,200 impoverished children with disabilities, and assistive device fitting for 126,000 impoverished children with disabilities, with a total budget of RMB 295 million. Content and Criteria: (1) Subsidy of RMB 5,000 per person for prosthetics and orthopedic devices; (2) Subsidy of RMB 1,500 per person for other assistive devices.

The "Rainbow Action Plan" for assistance continues and improves upon the "Implementation Plan and Supporting Measures for Emergency Rehabilitation Projects for Impoverished Children with Disabilities" introduced in 2009. The "Rainbow Action Plan" expands the number of beneficiaries for various types of disabilities, and the assistance standard for rehabilitation training has been increased to RMB 2,000 per person (Table 4). Notably, rehabilitation assistance for children with intellectual disabilities is not included in the "Rainbow Action Plan"; instead, it continues the existing assistance policy, maintaining consistent standards with the "Rainbow Action Plan."

In 2016, the "Action Plan for Precision Rehabilitation Services for Persons with Disabilities" outlined objectives, including reaching a proportion of over 80% for children with disabilities and certified disabled persons receiving basic rehabilitation services by 2020. It stipulated that rehabilitation needs assessment be conducted for disabled children and certified disabled persons based on the "Catalog of Basic Rehabilitation Services for Disabled Persons." Accordingly, personalized rehabilitation service plans are developed based on preliminary assessment results, and services are implemented while records are established. In the same year, under the policy support of the "Notice on Adding Some Medical Rehabilitation Projects to the Scope of Basic Medical Insurance Payment," child-related projects such as comprehensive rehabilitation assessment, childhood behavioral hearing testing, Autism Diagnostic Interview-Revised (ADI-R) assessment, and language training for children with hearing impairment were incorporated into the "Catalog of Basic Rehabilitation Services for Disabled Persons."

During the "13th Five-year Planning" period, the long-planned system for rehabilitation assistance for children with disabilities officially took shape. In 2018, the "Opinions on Establishing a Rehabilitation Assistance System for Children with Disabilities" were released, with full implementation beginning on October 1, 2018. The overarching goal of this assistance system is to construct a comprehensive rehabilitation assistance system for children with disabilities that aligns with the goal of building a moderately prosperous society by 2020, ensuring proper assistance for children with disabilities. By 2025, the system aims for further refinement, substantial enhancement of the capacity to provide rehabilitation services for children with disabilities, significant improvement in service quality and guarantee levels, and widespread access to basic rehabilitation services. This system's implementation signifies the conclusion of the developmental stage characterized by preferential projects and the transition into a phase of universally applicable, institutionalized development for rehabilitation assistance policies for children with disabilities in mainland China. Consequently, disabled children in mainland China can now obtain rehabilitation training support by applying, without limitations based on the number of recipients or family economic conditions.

Although this assistance system clearly defines its beneficiaries as "children with disabilities aged 0-6 with disabilities such as visual, hearing, speech, limbs, intellect, and autism," it does not explicitly specify subsidy standards for assistance expenses. Nevertheless, it requires that local governments at or above the county level determine the basic service items and content for disabled children's rehabilitation assistance based on local realities. Additionally, they are to classify and determine funding standards for basic rehabilitation service items based on local financial conditions, the number of beneficiaries, disability categories, and establish a mechanism for dynamic adjustments. As a result, most provinces and cities formulate their own implementation measures by referencing the requirements of the "Implementation Plan and Supporting Measures for Emergency Rehabilitation Projects for Impoverished Children with Disabilities," the "Rainbow Action Plan for Rehabilitation Assistance for Children with Disabilities," and the "Action Plan for Precision Rehabilitation Services for Disabled Persons."

Currently, various provinces and cities in mainland China have elevated the standard for rehabilitation training assistance to RMB 20,000 per person one year, establishing it as the basic standard. Provinces and cities can adjust the standard according to their economic conditions. For example, Chengdu has raised the rehabilitation training assistance standard to RMB 30,000 per person one year. Furthermore, some provinces and cities have expanded the age range for assistance; for instance, Chongqing has extended the assistance age from 0-6 years to 14 years. Simultaneously, under the guidance of the assistance system, provinces and cities are continually enhancing policies and safeguard measures to better support the rehabilitation of children with disabilities.

4. Discussion

4.1. Development Characteristics of Policies for Rehabilitation of Children with Disabilities

In summary, the development of policies for the rehabilitation of children with disabilities in mainland China can be marked by the first "Five-year Planning" released in 1988. Since then, the rehabilitation policies for children with disabilities have undergone a transformation from being wholly encompassed within the larger policy of "disability rehabilitation" to gradually forming a pattern of specialized rehabilitation policies supported in conjunction with overarching rehabilitation policies. Throughout this developmental process, the value and significance of rehabilitation for children with disabilities have garnered increasing recognition and support within policies. The policies for children with disabilities are rooted in the overarching policy of "disability rehabilitation." They initially developed stage-specific rehabilitation policies targeted at specific disabilities in children, such as hearing and visual impairments. Subsequently, through the project approach, there has been continuous exploration and expansion of the included types and quantities of disabilities. Ultimately, a systemic and normalized rehabilitation assistance system for children with disabilities has been established, providing stable and comprehensive support for their rehabilitation. The changes and developments in these policies showcase the Chinese government's persistent and rapid efforts to construct and improve rehabilitation policies for children with disabilities, and notable achievements have been made. Almost every policy enactment has undergone processes of initial deliberation, project trials, comprehensive implementation, and revisions. For instance, the "Law on

Protection of Persons with Disabilities," published in 1990, has undergone two revisions, subsequently promulgating the "Regulations on Education for Persons with Disabilities" (enacted in 1994, with revisions in 2011 and 2017), the "Regulations on Employment of Persons with Disabilities" (2007), and the "Regulations on the Prevention and Rehabilitation of Disabilities" (2017). Likewise, following the exploration and implementation of the eight-year emergency rehabilitation project for impoverished children with disabilities from 2009 to 2017, the "Rehabilitation Assistance System for Children with Disabilities" was released, providing more comprehensive and elevated standards of policy support for disabled children's rehabilitation. For a country with a population exceeding 1.4 billion, over 250 million children aged 0-14, and where rural population constitutes over 36% [21], the sustained, rapid adjustment, enhancement, and implementation of national-level policies are not straightforward.

4.2. Implementation Effects of Policies for Rehabilitation of Children with Disabilities

The evaluation of policy implementation effects is a comprehensive and intricate issue. Thus, this study discusses the efficacy of policies for disabled children's rehabilitation solely from the perspective of numbers. Researchers conducted statistical analysis of data from the "China Statistical Yearbook on the Work for Persons with Disabilities," edited and published by the China Disabled Persons' Federation, spanning from 2000 to 2022 (Table 5). It revealed a conspicuous overall increase in the number of children with disabilities receiving rehabilitation assistance. Among them, the most significant increase occurred from the "11th Five-year Planning" to the "12th Five-year Planning," reaching a surge of 2.5 times. This rapid increase in numbers is a direct outcome of the implementation of the "Emergency Rehabilitation Project for Impoverished Children with Disabilities" and the "Rainbow Action Plan for Rehabilitation Assistance for Children with Disabilities," promulgated and implemented from 2009 to 2011. However, it is important to note that as assistance projects such as those for visual impairments and assistive device adaptation were not age-differentiated in statistics, these data do not fully reflect the actual quantity of rehabilitation services received by children with disabilities. Furthermore, by comparing the quantities of "planned tasks" and "completed tasks" for each Five-year Planning, we find that all five-year plans have consistently exceeded their planned tasks since the "9th Five-year Planning." Hence, the implementation effects of these policies for disabled children's rehabilitation are remarkably significant.

Table 5. Basic Rehabilitation Services for Children with Disabilities under the "Five-year Planning"（1996-2020）

	9th Five-year Planning (1996-2000)	10th Five-year Planning (2001-2005)	11th Five-year Planning (2006-2010)	12th Five-year Planning (2011-2015)	13th Five-year Planning (2016-2020)
Number of Individuals (in tens of thousands)	18.7	21.3	34	86.3	86.6
Note: The content of basic rehabilitation services includes auditory rehabilitation training, cochlear implants, hearing aids for hearing disabilities, rehabilitation training and corrective surgeries for children with physical disabilities, rehabilitation training for children with intellectual disabilities, and rehabilitation training for children with autism.					

4.3. Development Trends of Rehabilitation Policies

Although the development of rehabilitation policies for disabled children in mainland China over the past 30 years has enhanced the level of policy support for disabled children's rehabilitation, there are still many shortcomings due to factors such as the large number of children with disabilities, complex geographical distribution, uneven economic development, urbanization trends, and declining birth rates. Therefore, in order to address these issues, new development trends will emerge in the rehabilitation policies for children with disabilities in mainland China.

Based on the research results obtained from the "Survey on the Current Status of Social Support for Disabled Children's Rehabilitation" and the "Study on the Accessibility Dilemma of Rehabilitation Assistance Services for Disabled Children and the 'Home-based Rehabilitation Support' Strategy" conducted in Chongqing, it was found that the rehabilitation services provided by existing policies, including the content, form, age range, and rehabilitation subsidies, do not fully meet the rehabilitation needs of disabled children. Furthermore, the service model centered around rehabilitation institutions has failed to meet the needs of some children with disabilities. For example, due to financial difficulties, some families are unable to afford the rent, utilities, transportation, and other expenses required to access designated institutions for rehabilitation. Others may lack sufficient personnel to accompany children with disabilities to these institutions for rehabilitation training, or they reside in remote areas, increasing the time and commuting costs to and from rehabilitation facilities. This situation is not unique to Chongqing but is a common issue in many provinces and cities, especially in western China. Therefore, based on these observations, it can be predicted that "expanding the coverage of rehabilitation policies and refining safeguard measures" will become an important development trend in children's rehabilitation policies.

Disabled children's rehabilitation is a systematic and complex process that not only requires a combination of different rehabilitation methods but also integration with early screening, diagnosis, education, and care. Currently, in the policies targeting children with disabilities in mainland China, there is a lack of coordination and information sharing between different policies. For instance, different departments, such as the Education Commission and the Disabled Persons' Federation, formulate special education support policies and rehabilitation support measures, respectively, for the same disabled child. However, insufficient coordination and communication between these departments lead to service conflicts and resource duplication. Due to the absence of a clear information-sharing mechanism, local maternal and child health hospitals or community health service centers do not share data on disabled children or high-

risk children with the Disabled Persons' Federation. This makes it difficult to timely and accurately identify children with rehabilitation needs, thereby affecting rehabilitation outcomes. Therefore, establishing a more cooperative and shared mechanism and jointly formulating rehabilitation policies for children with disabilities has become a crucial development trend.

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