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A Study on the Current Status, Issues, and Systemic Solutions Regarding the Implementation of the "Law of Preschool Education "

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Abstract: The "Law of the People's Republic of China on Preschool Education" officially implemented on June 1, 2025, since then, it has achieved initial results, such as expanding inclusive resources, normalizing kindergarten actions, and consolidating safety supervision. However, it still faces a few structural challenges, including unequal allocation of educational resources, difficulties in supervising, insufficient financial funds, a weakness of teaching staff and a lack of support for special groups. This paper, based on an analysis of newly enacted local policies and studies of local practising cases, systematically reviews the current status of the law's implementation, analyzes deep-rooted issues, and put forwards six solutions: dynamic resources distribution, smart supervising systems, multiple funding guarantees, teacher capacity promotion, precise special education support, and collaborative governance mechanisms. These solutions just provide a reference for the effective implementation of the law.

Keywords: The Law of Preschool Education; Inclusive Infant's School; Intergration of Childcare and Early Childhood Education; Supervision Implementation; Teacher Capacity Promotion.

1. Introduction

Preschool education marks the beginning of lifelong learning, that is crucial to social equity and high-quality population. The "Law of the People's Republic of China on Preschool Education" (the following referred to as "the Law of Preschool Education "), which brought into effect in 2025, clearly defined its public welfare and inclusive nature through national legislation for the first time. It fixed the development principle which government take the leading role combined with social participation. [1]

However, during the beginning phase of the law's implementation, significant differences have appeared in terms of supporting policies, distribution of resources, and supervision enforcement across regions. Some structural contradictions were even intensified in some areas. The current urgent research priority is how to resolve the issues of implementing the law and achieve the goal of" high-quality early-childhood education for all".

This paper presents an analysis through three dimensions: current situation, challenges, and countermeasures by combining newly introduced educational policies from various regions, cases studied on preschool education, and comparative data from practical applications. It is the aim that further promote the implementation of "the Law of Preschool Education" and explore the shortcomings in its practical application.

2. Current Status of the Implementation of" the Law of Preschool Education"

At present,the implementation of the" Law of Preschool Education" in China is characterized by "central legislative guidance, local rapid response, and various practical exploration." This is specifically reflected in Article 4 of the Law of Preschool Education: "Preschool education shall be administered under a system which the State Council provides guidance, provinces undertake overall responsibilities, and cities and counties guarantee implementation." This provision denotes that the establishment and promotion of China's preschool education system encompass the central government setting the developing direction through legislation, while local authorities are responsible for the implementation; For example, provinces such as Shandong and Shaanxi have swiftly issued detailed regulations on childcare services. As of July 2025, Shandong had promulgated two provincial-level regulations: "Measures for the Establishment Standard for the Establishment and Regulation of Nursery Classes in Shandong Province Kindergartens" (Lu Jiaogui [2025] No. 2) and "Notice on the Regulation of Fees for Nursery Classes in Inclusive Private Kindergartens"(Lu Fa Gai Jia Ge [2025] No. 148).While Shaanxi issued the "Implementing Measures for Infant-Care-Services in Shaanxi Province (Trial)" (Shaanxi Education Regulation [2025] No. 5) and the "Guidelines for the Infant-Care -Facilities for Children Under 3 Years of Age" (Shaanxi Construction Standard [2025] No. 11), focusing on children's safety and the public welfare of education;The 2025 priorities work of the Ministry of Education emphasized "encouraging localities to innovate models for providing inclusive preschool education services based on local conditions", thereby providing a policy flexibility for different local exploration. This requires provinces and municipalities to develop their local preschool education systems based on their own characteristics and provide appropriate policy's conditions for the children's healthy growth.

As a result, a conclusion on regulations and policies from various regions that the current direction is primarily concentrated in the following:

2.1. Fundamentally Intensifying the Standardization of Preschool Education

Ensuring the right of education for young children of all

regions, early childhood education must be gradually transformed from the state of disorder to unified standardization. Therefore, local governments have introduced corresponding policies, primarily focusing on the following aspects:

(1) Policies Detailed on the Unification of Nursery and Preschool

Regions such as Qingdao and Shaanxi have clearly required enrollment quotas, qualified staff, and safety standards for nursery classes serving 2- to-3-years-old in kindergartens (e.g., class sizes ≤20 kids). Shaanxi has proposed establishing a childcare network that covers both urban and rural areas by 2027.The government guides the price for nursery class fees in affordable private kindergartens.

These policies effectively solve the problems such as unregulated nursery class, excessive class sizes, and no-qualified teachers.

(2) Standardization of Fees and Funding Management

In the past, preschool education fees have been problems that is quite disparities in charges and a lack of clear justification for fee collection. Therefore, several local authorities represented by Rizhao of Shandong, introduced regulations which public kindergartens are required to charge by government-set tuition fees (e.g., 430 yuan/month for provincial model kindergartens), while private kindergartens for-profit may set their own prices but must disclose their costs.

2.2. Strengthened Safety and Quality Oversight

The Safety and educational quality of preschool institutes have long been key areas of public concern. Safety incidents frequently occurring in kindergartens including food safety issues, school bus accidents, and sexual abuse cases, which have caused severe physical and psychological trauma to young children. To resolve these issues is a priority in legislation and governmental intendance. While the "Law of Preschool Education" specifies criminal and civil liabilities for relevant responsible parties, local governments have also introduced more detailed measures to deal with these problems.

1. Reinforcing Safety Accountability

Therefore, local authorities must establish specific and feasible safety standards, followed by corresponding regulatory measures. After an incident occurs, accountability must be assigned to specific responsible individuals, ensuring they bear the corresponding liability. An example of such local policy is in Tianjin's Binhai New Area, where the local education authorities require kindergartens to conduct comprehensive inspections of fire safety and food safety and to implement the" Guidelines for the Assessment of Care and Education Quality" by Ministry of Education.

2. Strict Implementation of "De-elementary-schooling"

Article 59 of the "Preschool Education Law" stipulates: "Kindergartens and elementary schools shall coordinate and cooperate with one another to jointly assist children in preparing for and adapting to school entry."

Kindergartens shall not adopt elementary school-style teaching methods or teach elementary school-level curricula, and shall prevent the elementary schoolification of childcare and educational activities. Elementary schools shall adhere to zero-start teaching in accordance with curriculum standards.

No institution, including off-campus training institutions, shall provide half-day or full-day training to preschool children, nor shall they teach preschool children elementary school-level courses."

It is evident that the current educational policies and philosophies for kindergartens are very clear: they must implement the educational principle of "taking preschool children's daily lives as the foundation, using play as the primary activity, and developing quality education." Consequently, they adopt a negative stance toward early academic acceleration. In this regard, cities such as Shenzhen have implemented measures like gamified curricula and two-way kindergarten-to-elementary school transitions (where elementary school teachers visit kindergartens for exchanges) to reduce early academic acceleration and achieve the true educational goals and mission of kindergartens.

3.Guaranteeing Access to Inclusive and Equitable Educational Resources

As the starting point of the education system, the equity of preschool education is directly linked to the foundation of social equity. The Preschool Education Law aims to protect the right to education of vulnerable groups and focuses on reducing disparities in educational resources between urban and rural areas and across regions and imposes strict regulations on the operations of kindergartens. [2]

Disparities in educational resources in China are closely linked to regional economic development, yet the imbalance in educational resources is more pronounced and significant than economic disparities. Article 62 of the Preschool Education Law stipulates: "The State Council and provincial-level people's governments shall make overall arrangements for preschool education funding, with a focus on supporting the development of preschool education in rural areas, former revolutionary base areas, ethnic minority regions, border areas, and underdeveloped regions."This reflects the state's efforts to address the imbalance in educational resources. In practice, various regions are actively exploring the gradual implementation of free preschool education. The developed regions represented by Guangzhou are making experiments free enrollment for children with local household registration, while underdeveloped regions still rely on tiered subsidy policies. The aim is to promote the equitable allocation of preschool educational resources.

3. Prominent Issues in the Implementation of the Law

Although the enactment and implementation of the "Law of Preschool Education " marks the preliminary establishment of a policy framework for the preschool education,the law's effectiveness still hindered by some deep-seated contradictions. Current deficiencies in the field of preschool education still remain, mainly reflecting in the following aspects:

3.1. Structural Imbalance in Resources

While preschool education makes effort for inclusiveness and equity, but the uneven economic development still severely restraint the equitable allocation of educational resources. On the one hand, this structural imbalance is reflected in the urban-rural divide: currently, there is a fairly large disparity in educational resources between urban and rural areas.while the urban public kindergartens perform on a lottery-based admission system , the rural kindergartens are facing "empty-school" situations due to population outflow, and their conditions—whether in terms of facilities or

teacher's quality remain relatively inferior. On the other hand, due to insufficient oversight from various regulatory bodies and the fact that their primary objective is profit-making, the quality of private kindergartens is difficult to guarantee effectively.

These two issues cause a fairly large challenges to the equity and inclusiveness of preschool education. Children in developed regions can not equally access to high-quality education, while those in underdeveloped regions can not access to better educational resources. The problem of uneven distribution of educational resources can not be resolved merely by policy implementation.The fundamental reason lies in uneven economic development,that those excellent individuals consistently migrate to regions with more robust economic growth and educational institutions provide greater job security.

3.2. Difficulties in Regulatory Enforcement

The effectiveness of the supervision system on preschool education is key to ensuring educational quality and promoting educational equity. However, problems such as inflexible supervision mechanisms, unclear responsibilities among supervision bodies, and incompatible standards have plunged current preschool education oversight into a deep-seated crisis. [3]

In practice, these regulatory challenges have led to specific problems, that undermining the educational ideas and safety responsibilities outlined in the Preschool Education Law. For instance,efforts to"de-elementary-school-ify"the curriculum face covert resistance; subject-based training in preschool institutions has been repackaged as "AI study rooms"; and some kindergartens even exploit the vague concepts of "comprehensive development" and "logical reasoning" to covertly teach phonics and arithmetic.Furthermore, safety responsibilities are being excessively shifted, with kindergartens bearing full and indiscriminate liability in related safety incidents. This has led to institutions, fearing "unlimited liability" reducing outdoor activities and stifling the development of children's exploratory abilities.

3.3. Fragile Funding Mechanisms

Against the backdrop of the rapid development of early childhood education in China today, fiscal investment is not only crucial for the equitable allocation of resources and the improvement of quality in early childhood education, but also serves as a vital cornerstone for achieving balanced educational development and promoting social justice. However, it faces multiple challenges, including insufficient total funding, unclear allocation structures, and inefficient utilization. [4]

(1)Slow Progress in Implementing Free Education

In recent years, the central government has placed greater emphasis on preschool education. Although the "Law of Preschool Education" asks for increased financial support in preschool education, the authorities invested in this sector,that still remains significantly insufficient compared to that for compulsory education within the basic education system.It is a notable disparity between the two. [5]

The shortage of funding for free preschool education is specifically notable in economically undeveloped regions.Some educational authorities in Tangshan, Hebei, have even stated outright that"the government cannot afford" to provide free preschool education.This situation will undermine the inclusiveness and fairness of preschool education.

(2)Delayed Subsidies for Private Kindergartens and Arbitrage

In addition to insufficient funding, public financial investment in preschool education also faces many structural problems, especially a fairly large funding differences between public and private kindergartens.Public kindergartens typically receive more financial subsidies and government support, which educational resources and quality of teaching are often superior to those of private kindergartens. However, private kindergartens frequently face difficulties due to funding shortages, with continual challenges such as a short of qualified teachers and deficient facilities. Consequently, it's commonplace that private kindergartens delay to receive subsidy disbursements. In some cases, kindergartens for-profit even conceal themselves as public-benefit institutions through related-party transactions, yet continue to charge exorbitant tuition—a practice that runs counter to the principles of the "Law of Preschool Education ".

3.4. Shortages of the Teaching Workforce

Preschool teachers play a crucial role in early childhood education. The shaping of children's personalities, intellectual development, and the cultivation of values all depend on the education they receive during their early years. Thus, the importance of teachers is self-evident. However, current issues such as uneven distribution of teaching resources, inconsistent professional standards, and unclear career paths have become bottlenecks hindering the high-quality development of early childhood education.

The uneven distribution of teaching resources is partly due to a shortage of early childhood educators. The primary reason why early childhood education remains an unpopular major at universities is the lack of income security in this field.According to relevant statistics, the salaries of non-tenured teachers in kindergartens are only one-third of those of tenured teachers; for example, in central and western regions, they are approximately 2,500 yuan per month. The difficulty of obtaining tenured status, combined with the large number of private kindergartens, means that the majority of early childhood education graduates end up working as non-tenured staff for extended periods. This leads to a concentration of a small number of high-quality early childhood educators in public kindergartens in developed regions, while teaching quality in underdeveloped areas and private kindergartens can not be guaranteed widely.

The shortage of teachers has also caused a considerable gap in professional competence within the early childhood education field. For example, in terms of early childhood teacher's qualifications, the proportion of certified teachers in rural areas is less than 70%. A large number of teachers with rural household registrations are required sufficient professional expertise in early childhood education,and special education teachers are a rare resource in both urban and rural areas.As a result, the prospects for high-quality progress in early childhood education are not quite optimistic.

4. Systemic Solutions

To achieve the legislative principles of the " Law of Preschool Education" and ensure that China's preschool education truly actualizes inclusive access, equity, and high-quality progress, systematic solutions are needed to carry out the aforementioned problems. In some areas, relevant education authorities have already recognized these problems

and tried to find solutions.These solutions can serve as references,and they should be widely implemented to resolve the current widespread issues in preschool education after pilot testing and validation.

4.1. Dynamic Resource Allocation Mechanism

All kinds of resources for early childhood education in China need to be further circulated and modified. In terms of fiscal investment, the total investment should be increased, and the ratio of local to central government funding should be coordinated to ensure an overall increase in early childhood education resources, thereby striving to truly achieve universal access to early childhood education.

In areas with uneven distribution of local educational resources, local authorities can consolidate local kindergartens to optimize resource allocation and achieve greater fairness and equity.

For instance, regarding disparities between urban and rural kindergartens and between public and private kindergartens across regions, kindergartens in urban and rural areas with significant economic disparities or those with uneven government funding can be linked together. The “County Early Childhood Education Consortium” implemented in Qiandongnan Prefecture, Guizhou Province, involves public kindergartens taking over the management of underperforming private kindergartens, ensuring that children unable to enroll in public kindergartens can still access the same educational resources in private kindergartens.

4.2. Smart Regulatory System

To make supervision more effective and rigorous, it is first necessary to clarify the responsible entities for supervision, particularly defining the specific division of responsibilities between central and local governments,as well as between provincial and municipal/county-level governments in early childhood education supervision [6], so that accountability and improvements can be better addressed when specific safety incidents occur. Second, a dynamic supervision system should be established, utilizing modern information technology to achieve full-process supervision.For example, implementing AI supervision systems in kindergartens can use cameras to automatically identify non-compliant teaching practices, immediately trigger alerts upon detection, and simultaneously ensure the safety of children in all aspects within the campus; Third, unified regulatory standards should be established to clearly define the scope and limits of non-compliant behavior. For instance, Shanghai has come up with a “List of Prohibited Behaviors,” explicitly banning 50 “elementary-school-style” practices such as “pinyin writing drills.” These measures can effectively prevent premature instruction in kindergartens, promote a quality-oriented and stress-free preschool education, and ensure that children enjoy a true childhood.

4.3. Upgrading the Teaching Staff

To solve the problems of uneven allocation and insufficient numbers of teachers, the key lies in focusing greater emphasis on early childhood educators, encouraging more individuals to join the preschool education field, and promoting the teaching workforce through series measures such as increasing salary and training qualification etc.

(1) Reform of Staffing Quotas and Compensation

To attract a wide range of talent to the early childhood education sector and encourage more individuals to join the teaching force,it is essential to improve the stability and compensation of this profession. In particular, the income levels of non-staffed teachers must be raised to ensure that the income gap between staffed and non-staffed personnel does not become excessive. Localities can stabilize kindergarten teacher salaries by applying the formula: non-staffed teacher salary = staffed teacher salary × local coefficient, and should strive to narrow the income gap between the two groups as much as possible based on their own economic conditions. For example, Hangzhou’s local coefficient is 0.9, which provides a certain advantage for local non-staffed kindergarten teachers.

(2)“Micro-Certification” Training System

In addition to serving as an entry barrier, qualifications such as the preschool teacher certification should also provide incentives to improve teachers’ quality and capabilities. For instance, the pilot program in Shaanxi that offers allowances in exchange for passing modular assessments in special education and childcare encourages preschool teachers to actively learn and reinforce their skills, participate in assessments to obtain certificates, and thereby improve their compensation.

5. Conclusion

The implementation of the “Law of Preschool Education” still remains in a transitional period. While the law’s enactment has established the public welfare and inclusive access nature of preschool education, disparities exist across regions in terms of supporting policies and resource distribution. The current situation is characterized by “central legislative guidance and diverse local exploration,” with implementation priorities focused on standardizing childcare services, fee management, safety and quality standards, and educational equity.

The prominent problems include the imbalance of resources between urban and rural areas, difficulties in supervising enforcement, insufficient funding, and a shortage of teaching staffs. The key to resolving these issues lies in building a dynamic resources allocation mechanism and a smart regulatory system, while advancing teacher’s compensation. By promoting balanced development through models such as "county-level early childhood education consortia," the goal of "quality early childhood education for all" can be achieved.

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