

Education ministry unveils integrated system for education and infant care ^[1]

New system aims to combat low birthrate crisis by creating trustworthy environment for parents

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Source: The Korea Times

Format: Article

Publication Date: 28 Jun 2024

AVAILABILITY

Access online ^[2]

Excerpts

In response to the country's low birthrate crisis, the Ministry of Education unveiled an integrated system of education and childcare, Thursday, aiming to create a trustworthy environment for parents to leave their children in daycare facilities.

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Along with this change, the ministry plans to streamline the cost structure by readjusting standard expenses for infant education and care. Additionally, efforts will be made to unify the disparate information systems currently used for education and childcare into a single, cohesive platform.

The ministry plans to ensure 12 hours of daily education and child care services for all infants who need it. To achieve this, the ministry will support morning and evening care for four hours, in addition to the basic eight-hour operating day, and provide dedicated personnel for the extended hours.

The current after-school curriculum will be expanded to include play-based language, math, arts and sports programs tailored for infants and toddlers.

To accommodate the needs of dual-income and self-employed parents, the ministry will increase the number of classes during public kindergarten vacations and pilot care services at institutions on Saturdays and holidays starting in 2025.

The teacher-to-infant ratio will also be significantly improved for more personalized care and education. For infants under a year old, the caregiver-to-child ratio will be reduced from one-to-three to one-to-two. For children aged three to five years, the ratio will be improved from an average of one-to-12 to one-to-eight.

The ministry also announced plans to provide educational support tailored to the developmental stages of infants.

Currently, the child care programs for children under two and the curriculum for those aged three to five are separate. However, aligning with the global trend of offering systematic and appropriate early education, a unified curriculum for children from birth to age five will be developed by 2027 in collaboration with the National Education Commission.

The U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child underscores the importance of equal educational opportunities from the start of life.

Furthermore, to alleviate the financial burden on parents, the ministry will gradually implement free education and childcare for children aged three to five, starting with five-year-olds in 2025, with full implementation by 2027.

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