

Govt. to expand free childcare services for children^[1]

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EXCERPTS:

The South Korean government has announced plans to expand free childcare services for three- and four-year-old children beginning next year.

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From 2013, three- and four-year-olds will be eligible for the government's education and childcare support program regardless of family income.

The South Korean government announced its plans on Wednesday with an aim to strengthen state support for families with children. The plans include providing education and childcare support for all children aged three to four starting next year under the government's Nuri program.

The government introduced the Nuri program earlier this year, which provides financial support for families with five year-olds and gives childcare support for all children from birth to age two.

Under the program expansion, children between three and four will be given 220-thousand won every month to supplement their kindergarten and childcare fees in 2013. The subsidies will increase to 240-thousand won in 2014, 270-thousand won in 2015 and 300-thousand won starting in 2016.

Also, the number of households receiving child-raising allowances for newborns to two-year-olds will be expanded to the lower 70 percent income bracket. This will raise the number of beneficiaries of the allowance from 96-thousand this year to 640-thousand in 2013. The size of the allowance will range from 100-thousand to 200-thousand won monthly, depending on the child's age and family income.

The government's recent move is a follow-up measure in line with President Lee Myung-bak's New Year's address, in which he stressed childcare support is a form of investing in the future.

-reprinted from KBS World Radio News

Region: Asia^[2]

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