



Improvement Measures for the Child Care Support Project to Address Low Birth Rate

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Project Overview

- **The Child Care Support Project operates under the Child Care Support Act, where childcare workers visit households with children aged 12 and under experiencing care gaps to provide services, aiming to alleviate the burden of child-rearing and address the low birth rate.**
 - As of 2026, the budget is 597.8 billion KRW, and 260 organizations plan to provide services to 126,000 households.
- **Government support rates are applied differentially depending on the service type and household income level.**
 - As of 2026, the service usage fee is 12,790 KRW per hour, and the portion excluding the government subsidy (ranging between 10%–85%) emerges as an out-of-pocket expense.
- **Designated service providers and central/regional support centers mainly operate this project.**
 - Service providers offer childcare services, while regional support centers and the central support center manage the service provision infrastructure, such as childcare worker supply and demand, training, and project support.

[Table 1] Overview of the Child Care Support Project

Category	Content
Project Purpose	Childcare workers visit households with children aged 12 and under to care for children on a 1:1 basis, resolving blind spots in institutional childcare
Legal Basis	Child Care Support Act
Project Period	2007–Present
Project Content	Hourly care (aged 12 and under), full-day infant care (aged 36 months and under) - (Hourly) Differentiated support before and after school enrollment, 960 hours per year ※ Expanded up to 1,080 hours per year for single-parent, grandparent-headed, disabled, and youth-parent households, etc. (since 2026) - (Full-day) Up to 200 hours per month (2,400 hours per year) provided for children aged 36 months and under
Operational System	- (Ministry of Gender Equality and Family) Overall project oversight and policy establishment - (Central Support Center) Project operation support and management of training/information systems - (Regional Support Centers) Regional project management and support for supply/demand of childcare workers - (Service Providers) Recruitment/placement of childcare workers and service provision



Government Support	Differential support according to the income type of the user household (Type A to E) (2026 service fee) 12,790 KRW per hour ※ Government support of 10%–85% for those with standard median income of 250% or less
Project Scale	(As of 2026) 260 project-executing agencies, 126,000 service-user households
Budget	(As of 2026) 597.779 billion KRW

Source: Ministry of Gender Equality and Family

Stable Childcare Services Tailored to Demand

▪ Although service applications are rising, the service match rate has decreased, waiting periods have increased, and regional disparities exist.

- Over the past 5 years (2021–2025), service applications increased by 2.3 times, but service supply failed to meet this pace, causing the match rate to drop from 91.9% to 86.9% and the average waiting days to increase from 19.0 to 39.4.
- As of 2025, waiting days were 60.9 days in Gyeongbuk and 23.4 days in Chungnam, highlighting disparities in service accessibility.

[Table 2] Status of Service Matching and Waiting for Childcare Services Over the Past 5 Years

(Unit: Households, %, Days)

Category	Matching Status			Waiting Status	
	Applied Households	Matched Households	Match Rate	Waiting Households ¹⁾	Average Waiting Days
2021	78,118	71,789	91.9	6,809	19.0
2022	86,465	78,212	90.5	14,745	27.8
2023	122,729	86,100	70.2	13,031	33.0
2024	139,508	118,126	84.7	9,519	32.8
2025	183,794	159,804	86.9	11,645	39.4

Note: 1) (Number of waiting households) Number of households waiting to use regular services as of the end of the relevant year

Source: Ministry of Gender Equality and Family

Service Delivery System Responding to Demand

- Recently, the use of hourly services and short-term services has been expanding compared to full-day infant care.
- Support for short-term services has increased since March 2024, when the system transitioned from manual to automatic assignment through the Child Care System.
- Conversely, in the case of full-day infant care, demand forecasting has been inaccurate, with actual performance reaching only 793 households compared to the 2025 plan of 2,500 households.
- To address future changes in service usage, it is necessary to formulate an appropriate budget and establish operational systems and support measures for stable childcare services.

[Table 3] Support Status by Childcare Service Type (2021–2025)

(Unit: Households)

Category	Total	Regular Service				Short-term Service	Institutional Linkage
		Hourly		Infectious Disease	Full-day Infant		
		Basic Type	Comprehensive Type				
2021	71,789	52,989	2,181	2,284	2,617	10,462	1,256
2022	78,212	55,543	1,425	4,170	2,760	12,939	1,375
2023	86,100	58,908	1,616	5,991	1,890	16,289	1,406
2024	118,126	61,960	1,654	6,407	1,155	45,606	1,344
2025	159,804	66,694	1,701	6,986	793	82,240	1,390

Note: 1. Regular Service: Service for children aged 3 months to 12 years, applied for at least 2 hours per session (1-month unit)
 - (Hourly Basic Type) Provides temporary childcare such as play activities and school drop-off/pick-up assistance until parents arrive
 - (Hourly Comprehensive Type) Adds child-related housework to the care provision scope of the Basic Type
 - (Infectious Disease) Provides hospital accompaniment and other services when home care is inevitable due to statutory infectious diseases
 - (Full-day Infant) Service for infants aged 3–36 months, applied for at least 3 hours per session
 2. Short-term Service: Temporarily provides care activities when sudden care is needed outside of regular services
 3. Institutional Linkage: Utilizes childcare workers as assistant staff to provide safe care when institutions need to care for children in groups

Source: Ministry of Gender Equality and Family

Stronger Operational Base for Childcare Workers

▪ Establishing a stable workforce is necessary due to the shortage of active childcare workers compared to the growing demand for childcare services.

- The number of trained childcare workers did not meet budgetary targets, except in 2024, and the number of active childcare workers consistently fell short of budgetary goals every year.
- In 2025, the ratio of net increase in active childcare workers relative to trained personnel was 16.4%, down from 21.7% the previous year, indicating a declining trend in the rate of training leading to an increase in active personnel.

[Table 4] Status of Trained and Active Childcare Workers

(Unit: Persons, %)

Year	Trained Personnel			Active Childcare Workers				
	Budgetary Target (A)	Actual Trained Personnel (B)	Achievement Rate (B/A)	Budgetary Target (C)	Actual Personnel (D)	Achievement Rate (D/C)	YoY Change (E)	Increase Ratio relative to Trained Personnel (E/B)
2020	4,500	2,403	53.4	34,500	24,469	70.9	△208	△8.7
2021	10,300	3,937	38.2	35,000	25,917	74.0	1,448	36.8
2022	5,000	3,544	70.9	33,000	26,675	80.8	758	21.4
2023	4,500	3,946	87.7	29,090	28,071	96.5	1,396	35.4
2024	6,000	8,901	148.4	34,908	29,635	84.9	1,564	21.7
2025	-	12,736	-	36,000 ¹⁾	31,718	88.1	2,083	16.4

Note: 1) Since no target number was established in the 2025 budget, it was replaced with the compensation insurance budget allocation standard

Source: Ministry of Gender Equality and Family

Revision of Related Law

▪ Support for stable childcare workforce management needs enhancement.

- The 2022 Survey on the Status of Childcare Services (Ministry of Gender Equality and Family, etc.) shows ongoing demands for better working conditions, with “Wage Increase (38.6%)” and “Strengthening Training for Service User Households (16.1%)” accounting for high proportions of improvement requests by childcare workers.
- In 2026, the care allowance for childcare workers is 11,120 KRW per hour, maintaining 107.8% of the minimum wage.
- It is necessary to establish a stable workforce management foundation by improving working conditions so that personnel who complete training lead to actual service activity and long-term service, alongside reflecting survey results in project operations and institutional improvements.

▪ Reorganization of the delivery system of the Child Care Support Project following the revision of the Child Care Support Act.

- Following the revision of the Act (Enforced on April 23, 2026), the project operational system has been reorganized, including changing the hiring entity of childcare workers from regional support centers to service providers.

[Table 5] Comparison of Delivery Systems Before and After the Revision

Category	Before	After
Central (Ministry of Gender Equality and Family)	The Ministry of Gender Equality and Family designates and operates the Central Child Care Support Center	Same as left
Regional (Metropolitan City (Si/Do))	Mayors/Governors designate and operate Regional Child Care Support Centers, and <u>regional centers hire childcare workers and place them in service providers</u> . Other tasks include adjusting childcare worker supply and demand.	Mayors/Governors designate and operate Regional Child Care Support Centers, performing tasks such as adjusting childcare worker supply and demand.
Basic (Si/Gun/Gu)	Mayors/Governors/Heads of Districts designate service providers, and <u>service providers receive childcare worker placements</u> from regional centers to provide care services	Mayors/Governors/Heads of Districts designate and operate childcare service providers, and <u>designated childcare service providers place childcare workers</u> to provide care services

Source: Ministry of Gender Equality and Family

▪ The role of regional centers must be re-established following delivery system reorganization.

- Regional support centers should reorganize personnel and budget operational systems in accordance with the delivery system reorganization, ensuring stable functions such as regional childcare worker supply and demand management, service provider support, and service quality management.

▪ Operational foundations must be established for the smooth settlement of the national qualification system for childcare workers and the registration system for private service providers.

- Accordingly, a system has been established for granting national qualifications to childcare workers who complete professional care training courses and registering/ managing private service providers that meet certain criteria.

[Table 6] National Qualification System for Childcare Workers and Registration System for Private Service Providers

<Before Revision>			
Name	Category	Management	
Personnel	Childcare Worker	Public	- Aptitude & Personality Test, 120h Initial Training, 16h Refresher Training - Criminal Record Check, Health Examination, Prohibition of Activity for Harmful Communicable Diseases
	Childcare Assistant	Private	- Identity Verification Certificate
Institution	Public	Designated Service Provider	
	Private	Private Provider	

<After Revision>			
Name	Category	Management	
Personnel	Childcare Worker (National Qualification)	Public	- Aptitude & Personality Test, 120h Initial Training ¹⁾ , 16h Refresher Training - Criminal Record Check, Health Examination, Prohibition of Activity for Harmful Communicable Diseases
		Private	- Criminal Record Check, Health Examination, Prohibition of Activity for Harmful Communicable Diseases
	Childcare Assistant (No National Qualification)	Private Registered (O)	- Criminal Record Check, Prohibition of Activity for Harmful Communicable Diseases - Identity Verification Certificate
		Private Registered (X)	- Identity Verification Certificate
Institution	Designated Service Provider		
	Registered Service Provider		
	Private Agency (Unregistered Agency)		

Note: 1) Standard Training Course (120 hours), Shortened Training Course (40 hours), On-the-Job Training Course (16 hours)

Source: Ministry of Gender Equality and Family

- The national qualification system for childcare workers and the registration system for private service providers were already implemented in April 2026. However, as of July 2026, the management and registration systems are currently under construction, with plans to finish by year-end.
- It is necessary to build relevant systems on schedule without delay.
- Currently, a temporary online application is in use due to the lack of an operational system. Guidance is necessary to minimize confusion during the early institutional implementation stages.