

Research on the Current Situation and Strategy of Friendly Community Construction from the Perspective of Children

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Abstract

The concept of "child friendly" was introduced at the community level in China in 2019, and building a child friendly community helps to safeguard children's spatial rights, daily life, and social development. In the post pandemic era, with a focus on children's participation in community affairs, a friendly community focused on from a children's perspective is more in line with children's growth needs, ensuring that children shape their personalities in childhood. This article is based on the research of community children or their guardians in the construction of friendly communities from the perspective of children. It delves into the planning of children's participation and experience in community construction, explores the shortcomings of child friendly communities, and innovatively proposes improvement suggestions.

Keywords

Child Friendly Community; Children Perspective; Community Work.

1. Introduction

The 14th Five Year Plan for National Economic and Social Development of the People's Republic of China first proposed the goal and content of "child friendly" in the plan in 2021, including conducting urban demonstrations and improving children's public facilities. In the overall layout of urban governance in China, the construction of child friendly communities has been a key priority[1]. In 2019, the concept of "child friendly" was gradually introduced at the community level in China. Building a child friendly community helps to safeguard children's spatial rights, daily life, and social development. Building a social environment suitable for children's perception through communities is beneficial for children's childhood development and personality shaping. In the post pandemic era, communities are developing towards safety, functionality, and diversity, which provides environmental support for achieving child friendliness. It can be seen that in the process of social development, child friendliness has increasingly become the key to community construction and governance.

The initiative of child friendly cities was proposed at the Second United Nations General Assembly in 1996. In 2018, UNICEF released the "Handbook of Child Friendly Cities and Communities", which gradually improved the concept of child friendly cities from the city level to the community level. Children's friendly communities are commonly referred to as communities that can meet the physical and mental development needs of children and protect their rights[2]. It respects the independent personality of children, empowers them with rights, and provides them with an environment that can meet their growth needs from aspects such as community environment, community policies, and social culture[3]. In this environment, children have the ability to achieve sustained happiness that is suitable for them.

Child participation refers to the direct involvement of children in their daily lives and exposure to the real natural and social life. The "Outline for the Development of Children in China (2011-2020)" first considers "children's participation" as a fundamental principle in children's work, encouraging and supporting children's participation in family, cultural, and social life. From this,

it can be seen that children's participation is not only a fundamental principle in children's work, but also a manifestation of children's rights and will[4]. At present, the introduction and promotion of the concept of child friendly communities have had a certain impact. Community residents have expressed a certain understanding of child friendly communities, which provides a foundation for the community to implement and promote relevant policies and guidelines. It also indicates that children gradually awaken to their own rights and adults respect children's rights. Most residents believe that community activities can help them make friends, cultivate interest abilities, and get to know society. In children's childhood, participating in social activities can shape a more positive personality, enhance their sense of social responsibility, continuously cultivate their sense of ownership, and improve their good qualities as citizens, enhance their personal awareness and comprehensive qualities, enhance self-confidence and self-esteem, and exercise their social interaction skills, Enrich your spiritual life while maintaining a healthy physique.

Friendly communities not only need to meet the spiritual needs of children, but also need to provide convenient platforms for them. Children hope to organize specialty training and winter and summer care services within the community. Providing corresponding supporting services in the community not only saves time, but also increases the probability of children finding playmates in the community, which helps to exercise their social interaction skills. This article analyzes the achievements of children's development in child friendliness by studying their interaction in community groups and their life experiences in the community. In this paper, the improvement strategies were proposed to enrich the functions of community services for children and create a more livable environment for children based on exploring the current problems in child friendly communities.

2. Problems in Child Friendly Communities

Community activity space, safety construction, and infrastructure that adapts to the growth factors of children are necessary as community public activity venues, but currently they are not perfect. Reasonable use of space to enhance the usable value and safety of the venue, and on this basis, increasing age tolerance can become an effective way to build a child-friendly atmosphere.

Children's participation in community governance should shift from top-down to bottom-up. By innovating ways for children to participate in community governance, conducting community activities, guiding children to engage in spontaneous activities, and thereby increasing community vitality, the construction of urban child-friendly communities still faces a series of difficulties.

2.1. Low utilization of activity space

At present, some old building communities have relatively compact greenery and internal squares, mainly consisting of parking sheds and fitness equipment suitable for adults. It is difficult for children to complete activities in the community. Compared to old buildings, new building communities place more emphasis on facility construction and green coverage, but from a children's perspective, they lack diversity and fun to play. Regardless of the old and new communities, the degree of utilization of micro spaces is not high, which also means that the spatial resources of the community have the conditions for deep development.

2.2. Low participation of children

At present, there are more adult led activities for children in the community, supplemented by child volunteers. Children have relatively little direct access to community decision-making, and in this case, their feelings and life experiences are mostly feedback from parents, which cannot be separated from adult independent expression. In the process of community

governance, there should be distinct children's characteristics, timely updates of children's information are needed, and there should be dedicated personnel responsible for children's affairs. Deeply promoting the integration of children into decision-making within the community not only provides the operators of activities, but also provides more opportunities for children to engage in community decision-making for decision-makers and practitioners.

2.3. Low age tolerance of facilities

Currently, there are relatively many cases where communities design outdoor spaces for children without distinguishing age groups. Some outdoor facilities mainly include fitness equipment and children's playgrounds, with most of the play being accompanied by parents, while some preschool children are mainly accompanied by family members and rarely participate in outdoor games shared by multiple people. From the perspective of preschool children, age tolerance requires providing a safe gaming environment for exposure and adaptation to group activities; From the perspective of school-age children, it is necessary to avoid entering adult ball games arenas. For school-age children who enjoy ball games, it is hoped that children's unique activity venues can be established to avoid safety hazards.

3. Strategy

Children are not encouraged to participate in school, family, or public affairs for a long time, making it difficult to form independent voices and experiencing collective aphasia[5]. Based on the analysis of children's experience, the following suggestions are made to address the shortcomings of the community in terms of children's participation and the shortcomings of the community itself

3.1. Single activity space: dividing the venue to create diverse game spaces

We need to clarify the significance of children's participation from the perspective of values, as well as the ontological and social values brought about by children actively shaping the environment[6]. Design game spaces for children of different ages by delineating the large venue without changing the original venue. Set up buffer protection measures such as sponge pads and protective fences in the activity area for children who are too young; For some ball sports venues, it is necessary to consider keeping them away or building them in the opposite direction of the children's activity area to prevent potential hazards such as injuries. In response to the lack of natural ecology and game space in the old building community, micro landscapes such as "Children's Oasis" and "Cartoon Interactive Sculpture" can be created to enhance children's sense of interaction and participation within the community through education and entertainment, and to make being close to nature one of the playable environments for children. Communities can also enhance children's sense of participation and enthusiasm in public space design by regularly organizing activities with the theme of public space design.

3.2. Poor age inclusivity: a mechanism of promoting small and large activities

Due to the limited knowledge reserves, cognitive and behavioral abilities of children, their interests and attention are influenced by various factors, making gamification the preferred way to construct children's participation scenarios. Based on the changes in the development of children's behavioral abilities, there is a gradual shift from setting up simple games (such as catching balls and building sand castles) to games that can exercise logical and imitation abilities (such as building blocks, jumping houses, etc.). To strengthen adults' attention to children, we can carry out community wide promotion of child friendly community topics, establish and improve a mechanism for promoting self-realization and social responsibility for

older children, and make it easier for younger children to integrate into society and perceive experiences from older children.

3.3. Lack of convenient facilities for children: transformation of child-friendly spaces

By connecting "points" into "lines", more rest chairs and wash basins are set up in pedestrian walkways and outdoor activity areas for children, and facilities are decentralized. Mobilize families within the community to donate and share books, build community mobile bookstores, set up reading booths, fun vegetable plots, and other facilities that children enjoy in the community, divert children's activities, and alleviate the burden of outdoor activities.

3.4. Lack of children's participation: establishing a children's volunteer service team

Children's participation in volunteer services is an important process for children to directly participate in community governance, not limited by age, and can establish correct citizenship tendencies. Some scholars believe that children are "active actors" in civic socialization and cultivate a sense of social responsibility in volunteer services[7]. When organizing volunteer services in the community, activities that are age inclusive and safe for children can be designed, such as community charity sales, condolence for elderly families in the community, community interpreters, environmental protection, etc. The essence of volunteer service is different from community activities. As an active participant in social governance, volunteer activities need to possess certain knowledge and skills. When building a children's volunteer team, attention should be paid to the essence of volunteer service, and the group should drive individuals to achieve a fixed development of the children's volunteer team model. Transforming from passive participation in community activities organized by adults to spontaneously organized volunteer services, achieving bottom-up change.

4. Conclusion

Children's participation in community governance is not as a form of activity, but as a continuous concept, gradually evolving from working for children to working with children and children carrying out work independently. Social workers play their role as 'advocates' and 'supporters', encouraging children to participate in community affairs, while linking resources to obtain support at the community level, providing an open and inclusive platform for children to exercise their rights.

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