

A PRELIMINARY STUDY ON THE SERVICE PATH OF SOCIAL WORK SERVICE STATIONS ASSISTING CHILDREN PROTECTION IN CHINA

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Abstract

Currently, the Chinese government emphasizes the establishment of social service stations and protects children. The street (township) social work service station is a comprehensive supply platform for public services, including services for minors. This study provides an overview of a three-tiered social work service system and the primary services offered by social work service stations. This study investigates the potential for local Social Work Service Stations to aid in the protection of children in terms of policy rationalization and professional advantages. It examines the role of Social Work Service Stations in the integration of resources, identification of demand, service delivery, and service support for the protection of children. In addition, it proposed a service path for social work service stations to assist in the protection of minors at the local level from four perspectives. The integration of resources, including social work service stations and workstations for the protection of minors. Enhancing the professional level of full-time and part-time children's social workers by promoting talent. Linking mechanism, streamlined participation channels in social work. Assistance with the professionalization of child protection services. It is anticipated that more local social work services will be presented in the near future.

Keywords

Social work service station, minors protection workstation, children protection, social work, children director

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Background

The Ministry of Civil Affairs held a promotion meeting in Changsha City, Hunan Province, on October 17, 2020, to strengthen the development of social work personnel in townships (streets). Minister Li Jiheng pointed out that at the end of the '14th Five-Year Plan (2021-2025)', townships (streets) will have social work service stations, and villages (communities) will have social workers to provide social work services. To provide financial support for the hiring of social work personnel in townships, it is necessary to utilize multiple funding sources, including the financial budget, special funds for social assistance, lottery public welfare funds, and charitable funds (streets). Since then, provinces in China have implemented policies that encourage the construction of social work service stations.

The newly revised law of the People's Republic of China on the Protection of Minors went into effect on June 1, 2021. It is expressly stated that township governments and subdistrict offices must establish minor protection workstations or designate specialized personnel to handle minors-related matters expeditiously. The 'Sichuan Province's Fourteenth Five-Year Plan for Civil Affairs proposed that by the end of 2025, the city and county levels would achieve 100 percent coverage of juvenile relief and protection agencies, while the coverage rate of township minors protection workstations would reach 50 percent.

Child protection has also reached the professional development stage of child social work. In 2010, China's child protection system ushered in the "first year of child welfare" and entered the professionalization phase. Specifically, China's child protection system began the process of specialization between 2010 and 2014; since 2014, the system has entered professional construction and development (Du, 2019). Under the background of government-run private assistance, private government assistance, the full play of the subjective role of non-governmental organizations, and legalization, a new model of official-civilian cooperation has evolved in China's system for the relief and protection of children in distress (Chen & Dong, 2017).

In recent years, with the support of the Communist Party of China and the government, social work has been rapidly developed and written into relevant laws and regulations. Social work was cited eight times in the "China Women's Development Program (2021-2030)" and "China Children's Development Program (2021-2030)". As a crucial beginning point for the essential task of civic affairs during the '14th Five-Year Plan' and the 'final meter' of serving the people. Across the nation, social work service stations are currently in full operation. Children's services are also a significant component of social work station services. As a comprehensive service platform at the grassroots level, social work professionals provide township (street) social work service stations to provide social work services for difficult people and

special groups in order to achieve basic livelihood security and enhance the level of grassroots social governance (Bao, 2021).

Introduction of social work service station

The 14th Five-Year Plan for the Development of Civil Affairs (Commission, 2021) points out that it is necessary to improve the social work system, establish a three-level social work service system of the village (community) -street (township) -district (county) (as Figure 1 describe), and accelerate the construction of township (street) social work stations in accordance with the standards of " having venues, equipment, personnel, service functions, work processes, and rules and regulations. " To promote township (street) social work stations to play a role in helping the poor, serving the elderly, caring and protecting children in distress, building social support networks, improving community participation, and cultivating social work institutions and volunteer service organizations, and become an important force in grassroots governance and services. For instance, the Sichuan Provincial Social Work Service System Construction Pilot Work Plan outlines the primary services provided by social work service stations (Affairs, 2021).

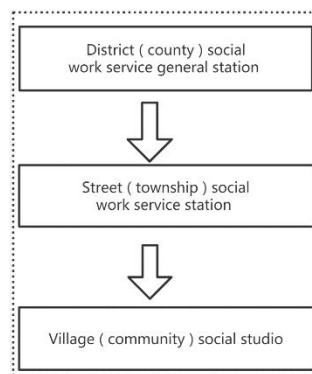


Figure 1: The three-level social work service system

The main service items of the district (county) social work service station: is to provide comprehensive services to the county (city, district) social work service institutions and social work service stations. It is responsible for incubating and cultivating social organizations, cultivating social work talents, building a social work exchange platform, carrying out the centralized display of service projects, implementing standardized construction and business guidance of social work service sites, and promoting the standardized operation of sites through professional supervision of social work and training of government purchase services. Promote

the stations to give full play to the important role of helping rural revitalization and community governance.

Main services provided by the township (street) social work service station include the establishment of a community service project operation linkage mechanism, the effective integration of project resources, and the linking and introduction of all aspects of talent, policy, service, and other resources. Through the government purchase of services, packaging, and integration of the implementation of community service projects, promote the strengthening of grass-roots governance capacity building and the training of social work professionals.

Through the identification of community needs, the design of a project, the implementation of supply and demand docking, the execution of the main project, and the active service of the family, the elderly, the young, the disabled, women and children, vulnerable groups, and other individuals with service needs. The service's professional methods include difficulty relief, humanistic care, psychological counseling, behavior correction, relationship adjustment, conflict mediation, resource coordination, social function restoration, and the promotion of individual and environmental adaptation. Maximize the integration of diverse resources within the jurisdiction and direct the jurisdiction units, community organizations, and volunteers in their service to the residents.

From this perspective, social work service stations are service positions at the street (township) level. This service position has a service place that meets the direct service of social work, has professionals who provide professional social work services, can provide services for vulnerable groups, has a series of professional service processes to ensure professional services, and has various rules and regulations to support services.

The Possibility of Social Work Service Stations to Assist Children's Protection Services

Policy rationalization

At the institutional framework level of child protection, China has completed relevant international and domestic laws and regulations to guide and standardize child protection work and protect the rights and interests of children in the new era (Li & Yuan, 2014). China has signed, ratified, and acceded to major international child protection conventions, including the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Domestically, child protection-related current documents have been issued one after another in recent years. Officially implemented on 1 June 2021, the Law of the People's Republic of China on the Protection of Minors identifies six major protection contents: judicial protection, government protection, family protection, network protection, community protection, and social protection. It is worth mentioning that social workers are included in the law for the first time. It also points out that social workers are involved in government protection and judicial protection for children. In this law, it is suggested that township people's governments and street offices establish workstations for the protection of minors or appoint specialized professionals to expeditiously address situations involving minors." According to Xi (2021) stated, the growth of social work for the protection of children has reached a significant turning point. The Law of the People's Republic of China on the Protection of Minors and the Law of the People's Republic of China on the Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency outline the status and function of social organizations and social work services in the fields of government protection, school protection, and judicial protection.

The 2020 revision of the Law of the People's Republic of China on the Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency includes social workers in its articles for the first time, with five references to social work. Regarding family education, which is officially implemented in January 2022, the Law of the People's Republic of China on the Promotion of Family Education mandates that local people's governments and relevant departments above the county level establish professional teams for family education guidance services, strengthen the training of professionals, and encourage social workers and volunteers to participate in family education guidance services ".

The Ministry of Education's Regulations on the Protection of Minors in Schools, which went into effect on September 1, 2021, mentioned social work participation twice at the level of school protection.

As an essential force in social governance, social work has been acknowledged in crucial Party and State documents, which have created the policy groundwork for social work to participate in the legal safeguarding of children.

Professional advantages

Social work with children is a part of the social workstation services. The social work service stations have the following professional strengths in their involvement in the protection of minors.

Aspects of service perspective, Fei (2021) proposed that social workers can participate in the protection of minors and play a professional role because social workers can respect the growth needs of minors, stimulate and integrate various social resources, and build a social support system to promote the healthy growth of

minors from the perspective of " people in the situation " and the interaction between individuals and their social environment, so as to achieve the purpose of protecting the rights and interests of minors and promoting the healthy growth of minors.

Aspects of service approach, the service methods have emphasized the use of professional methods of social work to solve the problem of people in trouble. The construction of social work service stations has extended the last meter of services so that more children can reach out to social work services. At the same time, the addition of a professional social workforce makes grassroots children's work more professional.

At the practical level, there are also some practical cases of joint construction of minors' protection workstations and social work service stations. In 2021, the Youxian District of Mianyang City, Sichuan Province, began piloting the " double station and double system " of "the social work station and uninsured station, social work service system, and child protection service system. " It is an attempt to integrate the professional advantages of social work into the child protection system with the help of social work service stations (Xia et al., 2022). There are also similar practices, in Henan Province in the ' two station ' operation, Puyang city to explore the municipal civil affairs department, township people 's government, and social work institutions ' tripartite collaboration ' operation mechanism, alone not to protect the station and the establishment of ' 1156 ' juvenile protection work system, that is, the integration of education, housing and construction, human resources, health, public security and other 11 departments of resources, the formation of children supervisors, children director, department personnel, social work agencies, volunteer service organizations and social lovers 5 service team. Mainly carry out social assistance protection, publicity, and training, social forces to participate in the purchase of services, supervision and operation, training guidance, data storage six services (Newspaper, 2021).

Role of social work service stations in Children Protection Services at the grass-roots level

Children Protection resource integration platform

First, it is a platform for the integration of human resources, reflecting the fact that social work stations can effectively integrate human resources such as social workers, children's directors, and volunteers in child protection services. Second, it is a platform for the integration of positions, which reflects the fact that the building of social work service stations can provide service locations for minor protection

services, thereby facilitating the support of minor protection services. Again, it is a platform for the integration of funds, indicating that social work stations can effectively integrate government service purchase funds, corporate donations, social forces, and other funding resources in order to provide children in the district with a greater variety of and a higher quality of services.

Children Protection service requirements discovery platform

Compared with the previous social work services, the town (street) social work service station has an obvious advantage and goes deep into the life of the service object. Through the stationed first-line service, it can actively discover the needs of the service object, as the outpost of social governance, and actively integrate into the governance layout (Zhao, 2021). Social work service stations carry out grassroots children 's services, which should not only focus on helping children in need in the region but also focus on understanding the development of children as a whole in the region (Zhang, 2021). Professional social workers from social work service stations can link up with child supervisors, child directors, and child protection volunteers to discover the needs of minors in their districts through interviews, home visits, observations, and data review.

Children Protection Service Platform

Based on needs analysis, social work stations can provide specialized and diversified social work services. For example, preventive, developmental, supplementary, and supportive services for children in general and protective services for children with special needs. For families, family education guidance is provided to improve the level and quality of guardianship. In schools, we provide education on school protection, such as life education and safety education. Jointly with judicial departments to carry out judicial protection of minors involved in crimes, and joint network security departments to carry out network protection such as network literacy improvement. Jointly carry out government protection for children with special difficulties and left-behind children with the community and government. Jointly with social enterprises and caring people to carry out material assistance, financial support, psychological counseling, and other social protection.

Children Protection Services Support Platform

Social work service stations, as a service support platform for the protection of children, also serve as a service support platform to assist grassroots children's workers in providing children's services. Through empowerment and training for

grassroots children's workers such as children's directors, social workers of the social work studio, and children's service volunteers, which help them to increase their knowledge of social work, working skills, and techniques of children's services, and to provide more specialized and accurate services for children.

Social work stations assist in the exploration of the road of Children protection services

Integrating resources, social work service stations, and workstations for the protection of minors built together

Figure 2 below illustrates the two-station joint construction workflow. Firstly, integrating the organizational framework comes. Generally speaking, the director of the town (street) social work service stations is also the director of the minors protection workstation, the deputy director is the town (street) children's supervisor, and the professional social workers and children's director staff participate in the minor protection station. In this way, it will effectively improve the management effectiveness of the protection of minors.

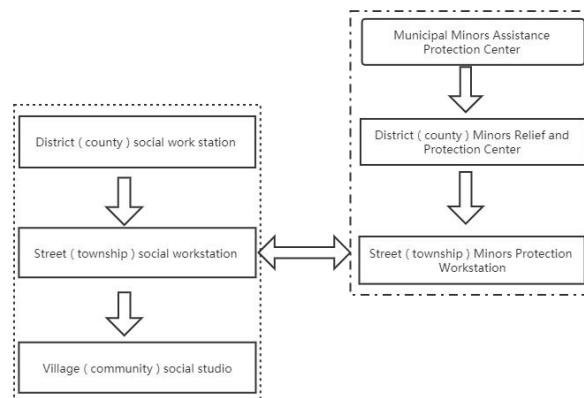


Figure 2: Two-station joint construction

Second, it is the venue, the minor protection workstation and the social workstation are built together. The multi-functional position can be integrated with the Party and group service center, community children's home, community residents' activity center and elderly activity center in the district. By jointly using the case room, group room and library, the situation of using the positions together, carrying out the services together and linking the resources together, and building and sharing, thus improving the utilization rate of the service positions.

Integration regarding funding once again. In Sichuan, for example, supporting the funding of social work service stations typically between 100,000 and 200,000 RMB. However, the volume of money for services provided by the department of civil affairs alone is unsustainable. If the "double stations" are built simultaneously, the government will be able to provide more funding for the services, allowing the two workstations to provide more in-depth, specialized, and professional services for children. It will also assist in attracting the support of departments related to the protection of minors, such as the Youth League, the Committee on the Care of Children and Youth, and the Women's Federation, which can solve the problem of insufficient funds for some social work stations, thereby ensuring sufficient funds for services. Moreover, it facilitates the participation of caring social entrepreneurs and philanthropic organizations.

Empowering Talents to Improve the Professional Level of Full-time and Part-time Children Social Workers

Chen and Dong (2017) suggested that in the social protection and assistance of children in distress, special attention should be paid to the development of professional and multi-level social work talent systems for children, particularly at the grassroots level. Provide stable employment opportunities for children's social workers through government procurement, provide institutionalized assessment and guarantee mechanisms for children's social workers' professional access qualifications, professional title evaluation standards, salary and welfare settings, and career development orientation, and cultivate children's social workers who uphold the value ethics of social work, have professional ethics and professional knowledge and skills.

In addition, because grassroots child workers (referring to working in villages or communities) are mainly held by children 's directors, they face many challenges in carrying out children 's work. Huang et al. (2022) proposed the following issues with the current director of children's programs. The children's director has multiple positions and is not professional enough; the certificate rate of children's director is low, and the specialization of social workers is insufficient; the child director's professional identity is not high, and there is strong mobility; the children's director's workability is insufficient, the service level is low, the children's director's resource integration ability is insufficient.

In addition, the " 2021 China Children's Development Report " (China Children 's Center, 2021) indicates that social work services for children can be acquired through government purchases. In collaboration with children's directors, professional social work institutions provide services such as family education, lectures on the rule of law, training, intervention, and evaluation for children and families. And by providing a model of "children's directors + professional social

workers." Enhance the quality of service provided by children's workers at the grassroots level and make social forces the primary force providing children's welfare and protection services.

On a practical level, social work service stations can provide empowerment support to child directors, child social workers and child volunteers employing centralized training, social worker supervision and personalized support. These content of empowerment measures can include training for child directors to perform their duties, laws and regulations related to the protection of minors, child social work methods and techniques, and implementation of child volunteer services and so on.

Linking mechanism, smoothing social work participation channels

Presently, a three-tier network consisting of the county, town (street), and village (residence) child protection has been established formally (Zhao & Guang, 2021). At the district (county) level, a coordination group for the protection of minors has been established. At the town (street) level, there are child supervisors who perform their duties. At the village (residential) level, there are child directors to carry out grassroots child protection work. At the level of construction of social work service stations, the common practice in most places is that the government manages and runs the society, that is, the government purchases third agency and social organizations are assigned, professional social workers. It is a question worth thinking about how to link the minor protection workstation with the social work service station for the protection of Children.

At the level of efficient participation channels in social work. First, the role of social work participation is clearly defined at the vertical top-level design level, and children's services are provided through government purchases. "Opinions of the Leading Group on the Protection of Minors under the State Council on Strengthening the Protection of Minors" was the first policy document issued by the Leading Group on the Protection of Minors under the State Council after its establishment in 2021. It is proposed that care services for minors be included in the guidance catalog of government purchase services and that professional social work service institutions and charitable social organizations be directed to provide professional services for special children, such as orphans and children in distress, through government purchase services. Second, establish a horizontal coordination mechanism in which social workers can participate. The social work service station should actively participate in the joint meeting of minors protection departments at the town (street) level, maintain close communication with minor protection-related departments, and participate in difficult case management services. Thirdly, the social work service station must strengthen its contact network with the village (community)

children's director and the children's social workers in the village (community) social work room, as well as cooperation in the discovery report, emergency response, evaluation, and assistance of children in need. Chen and Lang (2022) also suggested that social work service stations should establish and improve the child protection service system through innovative screening mechanisms, evaluation mechanisms, the provision of professional services, the guidance of social participation, and the establishment of specialized teams in their services.

Professional services to promote the professionalization of child protection services

The social work service station is oriented toward grassroots service groups, including children. To some extent, the work content of the social work service station includes child protection services. Social work service station and child protection workstation 'double station' service integration is conducive to reducing service repeatability, improving service efficiency, improve the level of specialization of children 's services. There are the following services should be focused on:

First, services for children themselves. Tong and Fang (2021) believed that the supply of children's services should reflect the services provided to various groups and at various stages of child injury incidents. From the perspective of child protection, children can be categorized as either ordinary, at-risk, or injured. The service content of social work must be differentiated based on the needs of individual children. In practice, the service stations for the protection of minors and the social work service stations can jointly provide services for special groups such as children left behind in rural areas, children in distress, orphans in the diaspora, and de facto unsupported children, in addition to universal, preventive and developmental services for all children. The use of case counseling, group services, and child-friendly building community service methods to provide targeted services for minors in need.

Second, cultivate community social organizations and volunteer teams for children. Community social organizations play a crucial role in the protection of children. Incubation, project cultivation, and local cultivation are all viable methods for cultivating community-based social organizations for children. Cultivate it to carry out various forms, rich content, and proximity to the needs of uninsured children and families. In the cultivation of volunteer teams, we can recruit social lovers who are enthusiastic about the protection of minors to actively participate in the uninsured volunteer team and perform volunteer services such as matching assistance, psychological counseling, emotional care, and rule of law publicity for disadvantaged children.

Again, conduct family education counseling services. The family's role in the protection of children is self-evident. The family-centered protection system for children in distress proposed by scholars such as emphasizes the crucial role of families in protecting children (Xu et al., 2019). It is worth mentioning that the Family Education Promotion Law of the People's Republic of China intends to encourage social work institutions, social workers, and volunteers to provide family education counseling services. To be specific, social work service stations can provide these services: improve parent-child relationships, increase the awareness and competence of family guardians, conduct family guardianship evaluations for children in distress, and promote family education promotion laws.

In general, social work service stations should build a strong social support system and social ecosystem environment for the protection of minors. Based on the service and support platform of social work service stations, link resources inside and outside the jurisdiction, and serve minors in the jurisdiction when carrying out services.

Conclusion

The social work service station is an innovative practice of social governance. Social workers participate actively in the protection of children. It is possible to realize the specialization of social work, the grassroots of child welfare, and the standardization of child services through the joint construction of social work stations and children protection workstations. With the gradual improvement of social work service stations and children protection workstations, more practical experience will be consolidated and enhanced. It is of great practical and theoretical value for social work service stations to participate in the protection of minors, given their position as frontline service providers. This paper attempts to discuss the possibility, role positioning, and possible paths for social work service stations to participate in the protection services for minors. This is only a preliminary discussion, more achievements should be produced in practice. Therefore, further studies regarding the practice of social work participation in children's protection would be worthwhile. We hope to have more localization paths based on local conditions in the future.

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