



Urban Transitions Conference, Shanghai, September 2016

Exploration on Ways of Research and Construction of Chinese Child-Friendly City---- A Case Study of Changsha

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Abstract

With the rapid development of urbanization, children's health has been becoming one of the most prominent problems in many countries, of which the lack of friendliness in urban is a main reason. This paper, takes Children's Participation Work Camp of Changsha 2050 and Fengquan Furui child-friendly community as an example, systematically summaries the research and design methods of Chinese Child-Friendly City (CFC), evaluates its generalizability, and puts forward that conducting a regular and continuous survey of Children's Drawing Camp and transforming public environment and establishing connections between community residents based on children focus are referencable ways for building CFC in China .

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Peer-review under responsibility of the organizing committee of the Urban Transitions Conference

Keywords: Child-Friendly City, Children's participation work camp, Community design

1. Introduction

With the rapid development of urbanization, traffic safety issues, lack of outdoor playing-space and enjoyment caused by road motorization, high-rise residential building, indoor and static urban living are main reasons[3] for children's obesity, physical function decline and independent mobility¹⁾reduction which has been becoming an outstanding problems in many countries[1,2].Researches have shown that playing in open space is a prerequisite for the healthy development of children[4], and the environmental quality of open place is closely linked with children's independent mobility, social and intellectual development[5,6].There are about 100 million urban children in our country ,they are the future masters of city, how can we build child-friendly city for their healthy growth is a burning question to maintain sustainable development of family and society.

Western countries have paid an early attention to children and urban spatial relationship since the 1920s, and began to build CFC in 1990s. Now, they have accumulated fruitful achievements both in theory and practice. Its theoretical research has become systematic and mature through three stages---- “material space requirement →

independent mobility → public participation”. Children's spatial preference, the influence factors of independent mobility, and the children's environmental friendly evaluation standards have been deeply studied. For example ,Simmons etc. studied the children's spatial preferences for natural environment and pointed out that children prefer to urban natural environment rather than wild nature[7];Community parks, sidewalks, streets, shops and other formal, informal spaces²⁾are children's playground and the informal space is more popular among children[8,9]. All of this provides effective guidance for the construction of CFC. In actual investigation, researchers also find a variety of research methods from sociology, communication and other fields[10].Basing on an empirical investigation of Finland and Belarus, Keita's series of studies raised the concept of the available degree of children's play space[11],and put forward that scope of the independent mobility and actual degree of supply could be used as a standard to judge the children's environment friendly[12].Using the cognitive map , Kinoshita Yong insisted on studying the map of three generations' game field for more than 30 years . With the maps, he recorded the situation of being squeezed of block children's play space during the urban process and its influence on children's independent mobility. His research has strong continuity and persistence, and be able to accumulate long-term data for related research. In practice, Germany, the Netherlands, Britain and other countries have created many successful child-friendly cities. The practice model includes "top-down" government driven, for instance, Munich of German has established the Munich City children's games and landscape spatial network by the form of Game Landscape City Association and other non-profit organizations and the government as leading, public participation. And Child and Family Policy Guidelines has been published to guide the construction of child friendly cities as well. Bottom-up construction model also exists. Holland ,for example , in order to resist private car dominated community, its residents once carried out spontaneous community movement (called woomnerf in Holland),which developed into "homezone" in the United Kingdom, and promoted by the UK government from the legal and policy aspect. At present, our country accumulates some achievements on children space research as well. Qualitative description is the major method used in the study. In recent years, quantitative research has increased, but researches are mainly concentrated on residential district, the overall level of urban research is still lack. Questionnaire is usually used in research, field observation, interviews and other methods are also used to collect data. However, the data acquired by those methods are processed simply and lack of systematicness. Thus, current studies are difficult to provide a strong foundation for the creation of child friendly cities. In practice, Nanjing is pioneer of creating a child friendly city in China, however its focus is on putting forward policies and laws to protect the interests of migrant children, not on doing spaces landing practice. If we want to achieve the goal of building child-friendly city, it is urgent to explore the continuous and persistent research methods and the design strategy that can be carried out. This paper, takes Children's Participation Work Camp of Changsha 2050 and Fengquan Furui child-friendly community as an example, evaluates its generalizability of research and community construction methods, provides regular and continuous method, feasible mode and referential design strategies for building CFC in China .

2. Current situation in Changsha

The definition of child-friendly city shows that building a child friendly city needs not only healthy space environment, but also policy of sustainable development and the support of the government. However, preliminary study shows that lack of children's outdoor activities space , low quality game space, serious road mobility and other issues are permeating in central Changsha[5]. Sorting out urban planning regulations of Changsha, we also find that there are no local urban planning laws and regulations which involves the terms of the children activity space , legal protection lacks seriously. The Children Friendliness of Changsha needs to be improved urgently.

Nowadays, the government has been deeply aware of these issues. In 2015, Changsha City, proposed to create a child friendly city. In the Changsha 2050 overall planning, organizing the public participating in research, drawing up Children Friendly City Planning guidelines and discussing the distribution of primary/middle schools in the city are all included. The theme of caring for the elderly and children in Changsha's community micro-reconstruction project in 2016 is also a great achievement on the process of building child friendly city.

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