

Print ISSN: 1738-3919 / Online ISSN 3058-938X

Seoul's Parenting-Friendly Residential Complex Plan to Respond to Low Birthrates and Reduce Child-Rearing Difficulties*

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Received: November 28, 2024. Accepted: December 08, 2024.

Abstract

Purpose: The purpose of this study is to focus on the residential environment plan that alleviates the difficulties of parenting, and to suggest the direction for the future plan for the creation of a parenting-friendly residential complex in Seoul. **Research design, data and methodology:** The concept of child-rearing and child-rearing-friendly housing, keyword analysis, and the relationship between child-rearing grievances and parenting-friendly residential complexes were examined, and cases of child-rearing-friendly residential complexes in Korea were reviewed. In addition, through the housing policy to respond to the low birthrate of the Seoul Metropolitan Government and reduce child-rearing difficulties, the direction of creating a parenting-friendly residential complex was suggested in the future. **Results:** The certification system for child-rearing friendly housing in Seoul is conducted by evaluating and certifying 3 major areas, 8 areas, and 43 detailed items. Out of the total items, 11 mandatory items and 10 optional items are required for newly built apartments, and 11 mandatory items and 3 optional items are required for existing apartments. The certification target includes both new construction and existing apartments, and there are three types of certification: preliminary certification, main certification (completed apartment after preliminary certification, existing apartment), and maintenance certification (3 years after main certification). When the building owner or the chairman of the residents' representative association submits the relevant documents to the autonomous district under jurisdiction, the certification of the child love home, which is composed of experts in the field of parenting-friendly architecture and care, confirms the certification through an examination such as review of design drawings and on-site inspections. **Conclusions:** The creation of a parenting-friendly residential complex was presented in the following directions. First, we need to raise awareness of respect for orphanages and children's rights. Second, it is necessary to involve parents, children, and local residents in raising children. Third, child-rearing-friendly residential complexes need to share parenting experiences and form a human network that can provide emergency support if necessary. Fourth, there is a need for a counseling professional for childcare support. Most childcare households have one or more children. Fifth, it is necessary to establish a delivery system for childcare support with the local community.

Keywords : Parenting-friendly housing, Certification System, Architectural plan, childcare facility plan, operation management plan

JEL Classification Code : E44, F31, F37, G15

*This study is a revision and supplement of a part of the 「 A Study on the Development of Parenting-Friendly Child Love Home Certification System Evaluation Guideline」 conducted by the SH Urban Research Institute in 2024.

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1. Introduction

The problem of low birthrate in South Korea is very serious. South Korea's total fertility rate for 2023 is 0.72, the lowest since birth statistics began in 1970. The crude birth rate, which is the number of births per 1,000 people, was 4.5 in 2023, a decrease of 0.4 from the previous year. The total number of births in 2023 was 230,000, a decrease of 19,300 compared to 2022. In 2023, the number of first-born births decreased by 6,600 (4.6%) compared to a year ago, while the number of second- and third-born births decreased by 9,600 (11.4%) and 3,000 (14.7%), respectively. The problem of low birthrate is recognized as a situation of population extinction, that is, a situation of national crisis. In the housing sector, the problem of low birthrates is linked to housing prices, housing space and childcare. According to the report 'Housing Demand for Responding to the Low Birthrate of Young Adults and Newlyweds' released by LH Land and Housing Research Institute, a survey was conducted on 400 young adults and newlyweds living in public and private rental housing nationwide. As a result, young adults and newlyweds in rental housing cited 'economic affordability to raise children' and 'stable housing' as important factors in childbirth. When asked whether their current housing is conducive to marriage, 7 out of 10 respondents said that they think public rental housing is effective in supporting marriage, with 16.3 percent saying "very much" and "yes" (56.3 percent). Those who answered that public rental housing is helpful for marriage and childbirth cited 'low housing cost' (26.8%) as the most common reason, while 76.5% of young adults and newlyweds living in public/private rental housing answered that 'their intention to marry will increase if a housing support policy is in place'. In other words, it can be said that housing support policies help increase the intention to marry and increase the birth rate. But if the housing problem is solved, will it be possible to increase births? How can I resolve the pain of parenting? I wonder. In Singapore, despite the government's efforts to solve the housing problem, the total fertility rate is 0.94. Singapore's housing policy is said to be relatively high compared to other countries, but the fertility rate is less than 1.0. This may be an illusion that solving the housing problem will increase the birth rate. I think the formula of "marriage = childbirth" has been broken, and both marriage and childbirth are the result of people's thinking differently than before. Housing issues may be a major factor in avoiding marriage and childbirth, but the problem of parenting may be more significant. As the saying goes, it takes a village to raise a child, so marriage and childbirth can happen naturally when many people's hands, time, and child-rearing environment are all in place. In other words, it is necessary to take a more delicate look at the existing housing support policy to respond to low birthrates so that the housing environment can become a more convenient environment for nurturing. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to focus on the residential environment plan that alleviates the difficulties of parenting, and to suggest the direction for the future plan for the creation of a parenting-friendly residential complex in Seoul.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Definition of parenting-friendly and parenting-friendly residential complexes

2.1.1 parenting-friendly

The usual meaning of parenting-friendly refers to an environment or situation that is friendly to raising a child. The terms parenting-friendly, parenting-friendly, and child-friendly are used interchangeably, but the meaning of these is different depending on who the friendly entity is. The dictionary meaning of parenting affinity is a compound noun combined with sheep milk and affinity. Nurturing means taking care of a child and letting them grow up, and affinity means getting along well. In other words, it means a comfortable environment for both caregivers and children, a positive environment in terms of services, education, and time management.

Table 1: Academic Implications of Parenting Affinity

Category	Author	Meaning	Feature
Parenting-friendly	JUNG et al.	Providing mental and material support, support, and an environment for diverse families who are experiencing difficulties in raising and caring for their children.	Caring Perspectives
	KIM et al.	Providing a variety of housing support and high-quality housing infrastructure and services to families so that there are no difficulties in raising and protecting their children in terms of daily and emotional aspects.	
	JUN	In general, it refers to the behavioral traits that the caregiver takes care of the child	

		and helps them grow.	
Child-friendly	YEM	Protection of the human rights of the child, the right of every child to a standard of living suitable for their physical, intellectual, mental, moral and social development.	Human Rights Perspectives
	Kim	Ensuring the basic safety and living environment necessary for children to live in the community, and providing an environment necessary for growth and development	
Child-rearing friendly	JEONG	Creating an environment where parents and children can live together in peace of mind and care for each other.	Caring Perspectives
	CHOI	A concept that includes the various infrastructures related to childcare and the role of communities	

The academic meaning of parenting-affinity defines the academic meaning of parenting-friendliness from the perspective of the care of children and the human rights of children.

2.1.2. parenting-friendly Keywords

In today's society, which is facing an era of low birthrates, the support of care is emerging as a very important issue in the balance between work and child-rearing. In the past, care was limited to the act of caregivers in the household taking an interest in and caring for the child, but in today's society, the role of the household is gradually expanding to the welfare of the public. This means that raising a child requires active public care. In particular, care goes beyond economic support for child-rearing and provides a good environment for raising children, providing safety and comfort from the residential environment and relieving the burden of childcare on caregivers.

Therefore, with the keyword 'care', we would like to explore the keywords necessary for a parenting-friendly residential environment. First, Step 1: Seoul Metropolitan Government Press Release (2023.8.28.) 'Mom and Dad Happiness Project', Phase 2: 72 newspapers nationwide (May 1, 2023-May 13, 2024), Phase 3: 31 newspapers in Seoul (November 28, 2023-May 13, 2024) Care-related keywords were searched in three stages. If we group the keywords derived from this, they are divided into architectural planning, childcare support, community facilities for residents, and childcare support services.



Figure 1. Parenting-friendly keyword analysis results

2.2. Relationship between child-rearing grievances and parenting-friendly residential complexes

When we look at the difficulties of parenting households, there are four main difficulties. First, there is the absence of rest time for caregivers. There is no place to leave the child, such as visiting the hospital or the grocery store, so it is difficult to carry out simple daily activities. There is no place to receive counseling services such as childcare grievances and advice in the

complex, and there are difficulties such as lack of infrastructure such as sports and cultural facilities in the complex and lack of hospitals for children and adolescents.

Second, it is difficult to provide additional child care outside of childcare institutions. They lack information about raising children, and they don't know how much time or how to spend time with them. It is difficult to accompany their children to the hospital, and problems such as financial difficulties and career interruptions are occurring.

Third, when working from home, it is difficult to concentrate on work because they cannot be separated from their children. This is due to the lack of a helper who can take care of them, and the lack of various care services around the house.

Fourth, it is very difficult to juggle childcare and housework. It requires constant efforts to change the work form from non-regular to regular work, the remuneration of the non-regular work form is very low, and they are often excluded from the welfare system of the workplace.

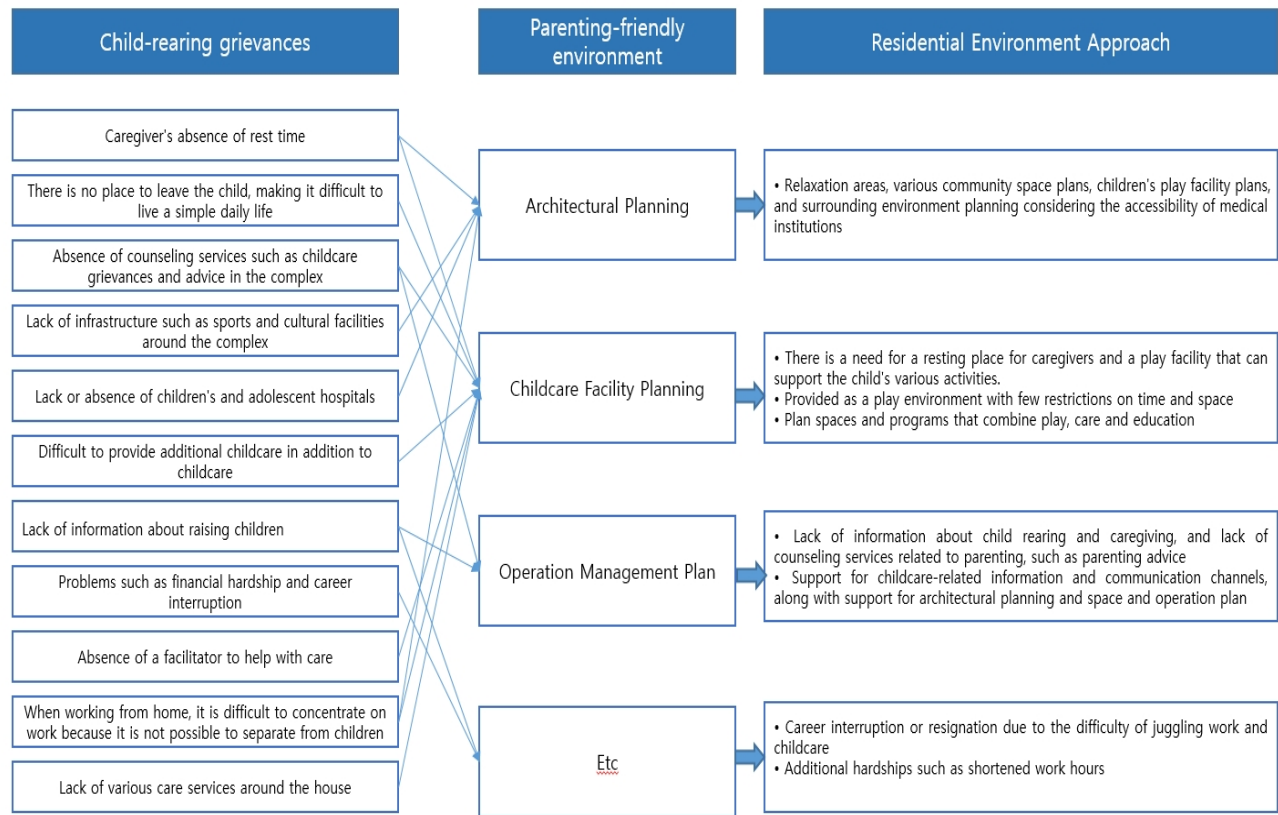


Figure 2. Relationship between child-rearing grievances and housing environment

3. Case Study

3.1. Characteristics of Parenting-Friendly Complex

Until now, the supply of parenting-friendly residential complexes in Korea has proceeded in the direction of mandating the facilities necessary for child-rearing by adding ancillary facilities, rather than planning and designing the residential complexes themselves in a parenting-friendly way. In the case of public housing, the main method was to set up facilities according to the size of the complex, such as dividing the size of the daycare center into more than 1,500 households and less than 1,500 households. With the supply of happy housing for young adults and newlyweds and hope towns for newlyweds, regulations for the establishment of child-rearing facilities are prepared or stipulated separately to reflect the demand for child-rearing, and standards for the supply of facilities that can carry out child-rearing-related programs are being prepared separately.

3.2. Examples of the central government (Oryu-dong Happy Housing)

The central government's public housing parenting-friendly complex is a complex that supports child-rearing facilities such as a public daycare center, a waiting area for children to go to and from school, and a short-term childcare consignment facility in order to increase the convenience of raising households with children in new public housing. The central government has planned a specialized parenting-friendly complex with a focus on happy housing and newlywed hope towns.

The representative material is the Oryu-dong Station Happy Housing. Oryu-dong Happy Housing is a project promoted in accordance with the Comprehensive Measures for Normalization of the Housing Market and the Happy Housing Project Promotion Plan for the Stability of Housing for Western Residents, and is a nest housing project for the construction of Happy Housing. The purpose of the program is to relieve the anxiety of newlyweds and newlyweds about housing, and to revitalize regional exchanges through the complex development of housing, culture, and public facilities.

Oryu-dong Happy Housing maximized the convenience of residents by installing a daycare center for newlyweds who earn double incomes, a joint childcare center in the complex, and placing the main building of a newlywed couple-specialized household close to the childcare facility, and also created a youth-specialized space and a social enterprise space for the creation of jobs for young people. The complex community facility built adjacent to the complex is operated as the Oryu Cultural Center, and it has a performance hall, Dream Tree Toyland, a residents' café, a Guro Cultural Center, a senior citizen's hall, and a social economy center, contributing a lot to the improvement of the cultural life of the residents and local residents of Happy Housing. The cultural park is a cultural exchange space for young people and newlyweds, and it has been created with a kids plaza, a lawn plaza, a play garden, and a picnic garden.



Note: KAA Homepage(kaa.kira.or.kr)

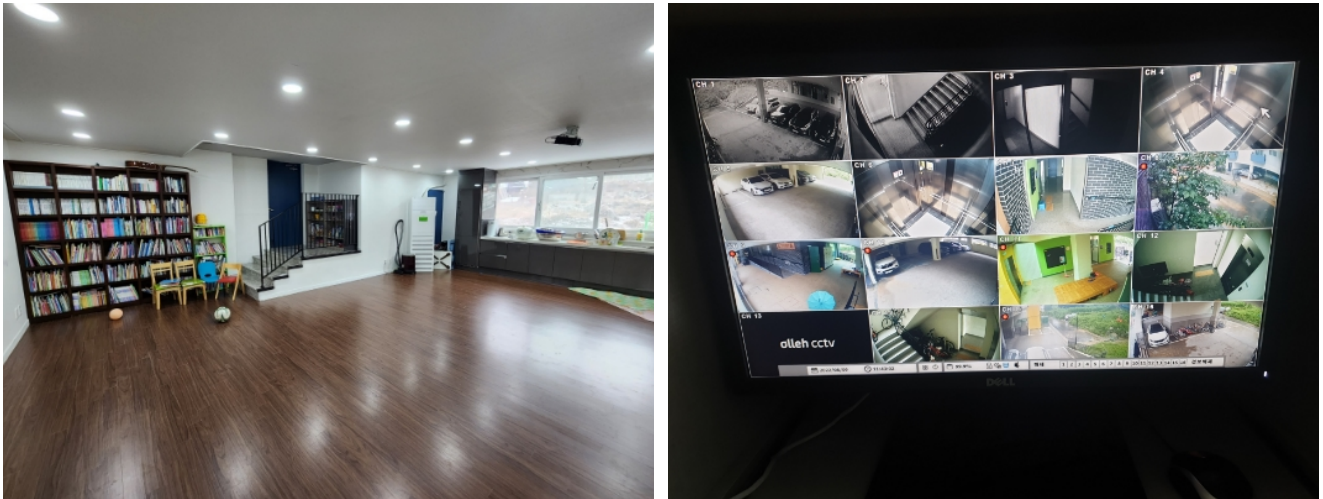
Figure 3. Playgroud for Chilren and Residents' Sports Facilities in Oryu-dong Happy Housing

3.3. Examples of local government (Sinnae-dong shared child-rearing community housing)

Local governments' parenting-friendly housing is a representative example of co-parenting community housing being supported by local government units, including the Seoul Metropolitan Government. Community housing is defined as a house in which the tenants have a community space and community protocols, and where community activities are a daily life by resolving common concerns among the residents at all times. (Ordinance on Support for Revitalization of Community Housing in Seoul) Community types include public-private partnership type (land lease), private rental type, and self-owned type, and the project target is multi-family, multi-family, urban-type living housing, and multi-family housing (apartment).

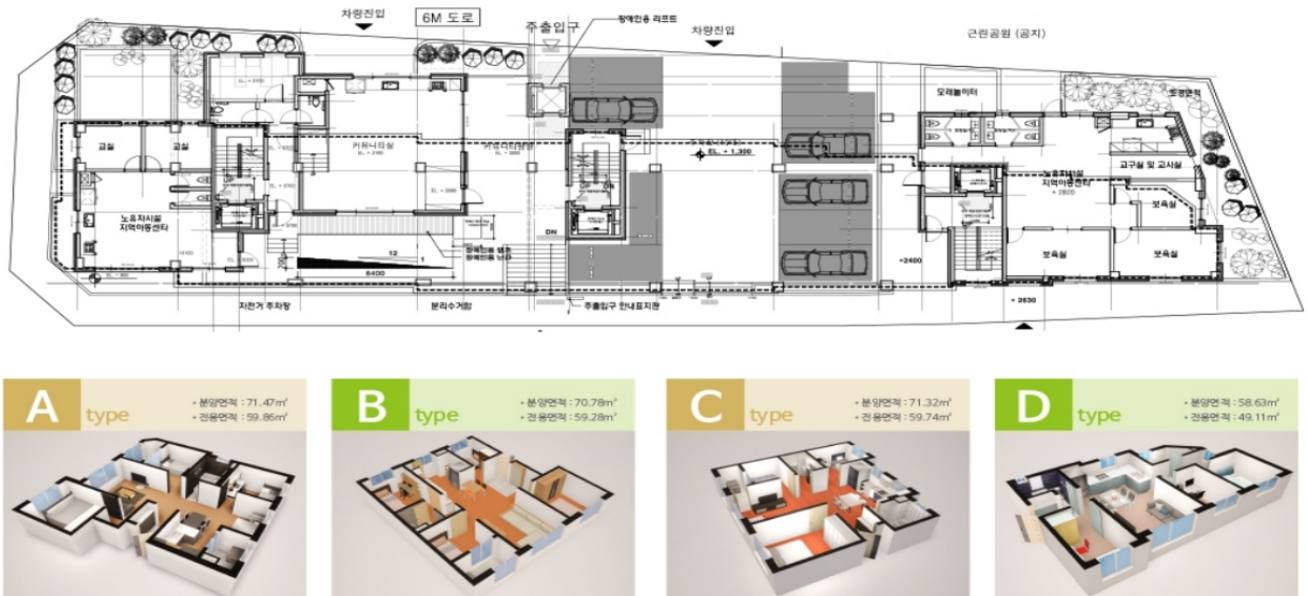
Seoul's Sinnae-dong co-parenting community housing (Sinnae Sohaengju) is a new way of living in modern society that pursues a community life where families live together and share each other's lives. Children grow up with people of different generations and accumulate a variety of experiences, which is a great help in developing social skills and comprehension skills that are important to our children. Rather than simply limiting the living space to one's own space, the company aims for a richer and

more diverse life through connection and fellowship with various neighbors. There is a common community room, a co-parenting daycare center, and a care center (after-school classroom) in the complex.



Note: Co-housing Platform Homepage(<https://Soco.seoul.go.kr>)

Figure 4. Children Playroom and CCTV in Sinnae Sohaengju



Note: Co-housing Platform Homepage(<https://Soco.seoul.go.kr>)

Figure 5. Floor plans and types in Sinnae Sohaengju

4. Efforts to create a parenting-friendly residential complex in Seoul

4.1. Background

The Republic of Korea has a total fertility rate of less than 1 among OECD member countries, and in particular, the total fertility rate in Seoul is 0.55 in 2023, the lowest among the 17 cities in the country. Recently, the central government has been promoting

policies to support childcare such as time support services such as daycare centers and kindergartens, cash subsidies such as child allowances and family care allowances, and the provision of physical housing to respond to the problem of low birthrates. However, the existing child-rearing support policies alone have not had a significant effect on the recovery of the birth rate, or have enjoyed practical policy effects such as stabilizing housing for policy consumers, alleviating the burden of housing costs, and reducing the burden of child-rearing. Therefore, in addition to existing policies such as quantitative supply of housing and support for housing costs, it is necessary to support a parenting-friendly residential environment in a space where actual parenting takes place, suggesting that it is time to combine childcare policies and spatial policies. In addition, while the central government is promoting a residential space policy that is mainly limited to public rental housing, the Seoul Metropolitan Government has reviewed and is in the process of introducing the 'Seoul Child Love Home Certification System' to provide a balanced housing environment between the public and the private sector.

4.2. Overview

As part of the "Birth Support Seoul Project" to overcome the low birthrate, the Seoul Metropolitan Government has launched the 'Parenting-Friendly Housing Child Love Home Certification System' for private apartments (more than 300 households) with a good environment for raising children. If you are a caregiver of children, you may want to live in an apartment with childcare facilities such as kindergartens and elementary schools within walking distance, CCTV cameras to ensure the safety of children in various places such as pedestrian paths and playgrounds in the complex, and childcare support facilities such as a small library. The Seoul Metropolitan Government wants to certify such a child-friendly apartment in Seoul as a 'parenting-friendly housing child love home'. In order to tackle the housing problem and the burden of caregiving, which are the biggest pending issues of caregivers, the construction of apartments with nurturing infrastructure such as a Seoul-style kids café, a neighborhood kium center, and a daycare center is currently being built at two sites: the Dangsang public parking lot site (380 households) and the site of the Southern Women's Development Center (150 households). As there is a limit to simply supplying housing from the public, the plan is to spread awareness of the nurturing-friendly residential environment and induce the creation of it by certifying the excellent model among general (private) apartments.



Note: Jung(2024), Childcare-Friendly Housing, Child Love Home Certification System Evaluation Guidelines, Seoul City & SH Corporation.

Figure 6. Certification Indicators

4.3. Authentication method

The certification system for child-rearing friendly housing in Seoul is conducted by evaluating and certifying 3 major areas, 8 areas, and 43 detailed items. The three major areas are architectural planning, childcare facilities, and operation management, and the architectural plan evaluates the location of children's facilities such as kindergartens and elementary schools within walking distance, the installation of CCTVs, emergency bells, and pedestrian paths in the complex, and the diversity of unit floor plans. Childcare facilities deal with childcare support such as indoor and outdoor playgrounds, small libraries, and residents' cafes in the complex, as well as the installation of common facilities for residents. The operation management evaluates whether on/off childcare information communication channels are installed and whether safety inspections of children's play facilities are carried out by item. Out of the total items, 11 mandatory items and 10 optional items are required for newly built apartments, and 11 mandatory items and 3 optional items are required for existing apartments. The certification target includes both new construction and existing apartments, and there are three types of certification: preliminary certification (before completion), main certification (completed apartment after preliminary certification, existing apartment), and maintenance certification (3 years after main certification). When the building owner or the chairman of the residents' representative association submits the relevant documents to the autonomous district under jurisdiction, the certification of the child love home, which is composed of experts in the field of parenting-friendly architecture and care, confirms the certification through an examination such as review of design drawings and on-site inspections. The benefits of the Seoul iSarang Home certification system include the attachment of a certification plaque, a maximum of 5 million won per subsidy complex, and an annual membership to "Seoul Sang-sang-nara"



Figure 7. Certification Benefits

5. Conclusions

This study aimed to suggest the direction of creating a residential environment to respond to the low birthrate and alleviate the child-rearing difficulties of child-rearing households, that is, to create a parenting-friendly residential complex. Accordingly, the creation of a parenting-friendly residential complex was proposed in the following directions. First, we need to raise awareness of respect for orphanages and children's rights. In child-rearing-friendly residential complexes, it is required to share community philosophies and values in which parents' parenting rights and children's rights are respected. Second, it is necessary to involve parents, children, and local residents in raising children. A residential complex is the foundation of daily life and a space where daily life takes place. This needs to be diagnosed from the perspective of the people who live in the residential complex and the improvement points need to be derived. Third, child-rearing-friendly residential complexes need to share parenting experiences and form a human network that can provide emergency support if necessary. It is necessary to have neighbors who raise children together, to share each other's parenting experiences, and to build a human network that can provide emergency support if necessary. And fourth, you need a parenting counseling specialist. Most childcare households have one or more children. Despite the need for supportive counseling related to parenting, it is not easy to find such a specialist. Fifth, it is necessary to establish a delivery system for childcare support with the local community. In addition to the creation of parenting-friendly residential complexes, there must be human and material networks and delivery systems in the local community in relation to child-rearing support, and such a delivery system can eventually become the basis for

alleviating the difficulties in responding to and raising children in the low birth rate.

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