

# Analysis of countermeasures of after-school care services for primary school students in Baotou City

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**Abstract:** Since the implementation of the "double reduction" policy, Baotou City, as a pilot area in Inner Mongolia for promoting the "double reduction" work, has been actively, steadily, and orderly advancing the "double reduction" work. This paper analyzes the difficulties in the construction of after-school care services for primary school students in Baotou City and puts forward corresponding countermeasures, which have promoted the development of after-school care service institutions and facilitated the implementation of the "double reduction" policy.

**Keywords:** Double reduction policy, After-school care service, After-school care facility.

## 1. Introduction

The implementation of the "Double Reduction" policy in 2021 has brought about many positive impacts. For instance, it has cracked down on the improper practices of training institutions in the market, effectively reducing the study pressure and homework burden on primary school students. Simultaneously, it has also protected parents' wallets, ensuring that family economic conditions are not adversely affected. However, while the "Double Reduction" policy has yielded a series of positive effects, many parents are not entirely supportive. This is because, alongside the favorable impacts of the policy, it inevitably generates a series of market demands. These centers provide vital services for many families by enabling parents and caregivers to achieve a balance between childcare, social responsibilities, and work.[1]

For many dual-income families, the issue of early dismissal for primary school children is a concrete problem. Many primary schools end classes at four-thirty in the afternoon, while parents have their own work commitments and cannot pick up their children, leading to the issue of unsupervised children. Even if some families can arrange for grandparents or other elderly relatives to pick up the children, many of these elderly individuals may not be able to take on the responsibility of supervising the children's studies once they return home. This includes broadening the scope of educational curriculums to include programs that target children's health and well-being and, importantly, delivering programs not only in formal school hours but also in before and after school care.[2] Consequently, the problem of unsupervised children's study time persists, resulting in potential time wastage or low productivity in the after-school hours.

According to survey data released by the Education Department in Baotou City, there are currently over 120,000 elementary and middle school students in the city, with over 80% of parents being dual-income earners. These families all face the challenge of unsupervised children after school. The strong demand for after-school care is no longer just an individual requirement for a few families but a common necessity for the majority. ASCs provide a wide range of services to help parents cope with many problems of the

current stressful world, especially with reducing the negative effects of urban poverty on children. When children participate in ASCs, they not only experience enhanced academic achievement, and personal and social growth, but their parents also greatly benefit from their involvement.[3] Currently, the quality of after-school care services is not merely a concern for individual families but a prominent social issue that affects the daily lives of thousands of families.

## 2. Problems in the After-school Care Services for Primary School Students in Baotou City

### 2.1. The hardware facilities of after-school care services are rudimentary

The threshold for running extracurricular care programs for primary school students is extremely low in many cases, with operators often only needing a single room, a few desks and chairs, and one or two teachers to start operations. Initially, operators set relatively low fee standards to attract parents to enroll their children. Once the operation reaches a certain scale, they expand by renting more space, making simple modifications, and replicating their business model. This low entry barrier and high profitability have attracted many opportunists rather than educators with a spirit of dedication to run these care programs. On the positive side, young have been somewhat people benefit when they spend time engaged in structured pursuits that offer overlooked opportunities for positive interactions with adults and peers, encourage them to contribute and take initiative, and contain challenging and engaging tasks that help them develop and apply new skills.[4] To reduce costs and expenses, operators typically rent old residential buildings near schools, conduct basic renovations, purchase or lease some simple desks and beds, hire a couple of chefs for cooking, and employ a few university students to assist with homework supervision before officially opening. Their sole purpose in establishing these care programs is to assist busy parents who have no time to care for their children, helping the children complete homework assigned by school teachers. As for facilities for enhancing children's comprehensive abilities after completing homework, such as recreational and skill-building equipment,

most care programs are lacking in this aspect.

## **2.2. The faculty of after-school care services are weak**

The lack of qualified teaching staff in extracurricular care institutions for primary school students is a significant issue. Unfortunately, children's physical inactivity and sedentary behaviors during school time have increased from the school curriculum in recent years.[5] Extracurricular care activities fundamentally constitute a form of social educational endeavor, aiming to assist schools and families in fulfilling educational responsibilities that they cannot accomplish alone. The teachers employed in extracurricular care institutions essentially function as educators, and the professional competence and educational capabilities of these practitioners are crucial criteria for evaluating educational activities. The quality of their educational capabilities directly determines their ability to successfully fulfill their educational responsibilities. This holds true for extracurricular care activities as well. In reality, compared to school education, the overall quality of teachers hired by extracurricular care institutions is not high, and this has become a widespread phenomenon in the market. The majority of teachers engaged in extracurricular care activities have never obtained professional teaching qualifications, and many of them have never systematically studied theoretical subjects such as education and psychology. These fundamental professional knowledge, which is essential for assessing whether an individual is a qualified educator in school education, is often lacking among many teachers in extracurricular care institutions. The guide includes four evaluation indicators: program organization, academic programming practices, Program Organization, academic programming practices, supportive relationship sin afterschool and achieving program outcomes[7]. Another widespread phenomenon in extracurricular care service institutions is the hiring of tutors who are mostly current university and graduate students from nearby universities. These young tutors, lacking extensive work experience and educational backgrounds, can only rely on their own learning experiences and knowledge reserves to mechanically assist the students under their care in completing their homework. As a result, they may not provide sufficient help and guidance for the holistic development and mental growth of the children beyond completing their assignments.

## **2.3. After-school care services have a single teaching activity**

Differences are universal and absolute, and individual differences are an important objective fact. The purpose of education is not to eliminate differences or personality, but to make the most of each student's strengths and advantages, allowing their individuality to develop fully and freely. However, school education has limitations, which require extracurricular care classes to provide students with rich educational resources after school, to complement school and family education and form an educational synergy. Therefore, on the one hand, extracurricular care classes should create conditions and provide some interest courses to meet students' needs. On the other hand, extracurricular care classes should develop different educational content and plans for different students to promote personalized development. However, due to their own limitations and economic interests, the so-called "educational" activities provided by care institutions are

gradually deviating from the essence of quality education. Their teaching activities mainly extend from school education, with the main focus on simply supervising and urging students to complete their homework. After class, the main task for students in extracurricular care classes is still to complete their homework, which essentially amounts to changing locations to solve the same problem.

## **3. Countermeasures**

Education should permeate every space and time of a child's growth stage. How to ensure that students spend their valuable after-school time effectively and happily is a formidable task for families, schools, society, and the nation as a whole.

### **3.1. Strengthen the supervision of the operation of the after-school care market**

In the current context of strong demand and chaotic development in the care market, it is particularly urgent to strengthen supervision, effectively regulate, and guide extracurricular care.

#### **3.1.1. Establish a clear monitoring mechanism**

Firstly, establishing a clear supervisory mechanism is crucial. This involves designating a specialized supervisory team or individual responsible for overseeing all aspects of the operation of the after-school care market. These supervisors should possess relevant professional knowledge and experience to comprehensively understand the requirements of market operations and care services. Secondly, defining the responsibilities and authority of the supervisory team is essential. They should be accountable for monitoring and inspecting the implementation of after-school care activities in the market to ensure compliance with relevant regulations and standards. Hurd and Deutsch suggest several ways to professionalize after-school work—for example, by boost professional development and creating more opportunities for career advancement [8].Lastly, implementing a supervisory process that includes regular patrols, spot checks, and periodic inspections is necessary. Supervisors should follow this process for oversight, promptly documenting and reporting any issues that arise.

#### **3.1.2. Formulate detailed management rules and regulations**

Firstly, establish safety management regulations covering venue, equipment, and personnel safety. These regulations should encompass safety inspections, contingency plans for accidents, insurance coverage, and other relevant aspects to ensure the safety of students. Secondly, formulate regulations for organizing activities, clearly outlining the purposes, formats, content, and procedures of the activities. These regulations should cover activity planning, venue reservation, staffing, risk assessment, and other elements to ensure the smooth implementation of the activities. Finally, establish daily management systems encompassing personnel management, behavioral norms, and disciplinary measures. These regulations should address personnel recruitment, training, assessment, rewards, and penalties to ensure rigorous and standardized management.

### **3.2. Parents are involved in after-school services**

Parents actively collaborate with childcare agencies, participating in and supervising the implementation of service

work. After-school services operate on a "government-led, agency-hosted, teacher-involved, parent-implemented" model, where responsibilities are shared among all parties. Parents play a supplementary and supervisory role, with parents engaged in specialized or professional industries such as firefighters, police officers, doctors, engineers, chefs, drivers, and lawyers welcomed into after-school classrooms as parent volunteers. They share insights on their professions and experiences, teach children skills, provide relevant knowledge, and more. Parents' involvement in after-school activities not only enhances students' learning experiences but also brings a sense of novelty and familiarity to the classroom. Consequently, students gain valuable knowledge, promoting curriculum innovation while facilitating parental participation.

Furthermore, parents with more available time can also participate in other aspects of the program. During the after-school service hours, they can take on roles such as conducting inspections, assisting teachers, or providing basic care. These opportunities allow parents to gain the most direct and immediate understanding of their children's after-school activities, experience the challenges of teaching, enhance their understanding of teachers, and support childcare agencies' work. This also contributes to the cohesion of future educational efforts, ultimately achieving the common goal of child development. Additionally, parents should be involved in supervising the implementation of the childcare agency, ensuring the comprehensive execution of the implementation plan, enhancing transparency, and ensuring fairness. These are crucial aspects affecting the quality of childcare services, and as primary stakeholders, parents should actively participate to ensure transparency throughout the implementation process. These efforts represent the contributions and dedication that parents can make to after-school services. Parental involvement is essential for the success of after-school programs, as the collective body of parents not only embodies significant educational resources but also serves as a driving force for the efficient development of after-school services.

### **3.3. Establish standardized tutoring**

#### **3.3.1. Build a learning profile**

Establishing individualized learning profiles for each student is essential. These profiles will document students' completion of assignments and examination results. Based on students' varying learning abilities and knowledge retention, teachers in the after-school program provide targeted support to help students reinforce daily lessons and complete assignments to a high standard. It is the responsibility of the teachers to maintain daily records in the learning profiles. In the long term, the establishment of these learning profiles allows for close monitoring of each student's learning progress and situation, enabling timely identification and correction of issues, as well as addressing any gaps in their learning.

#### **3.3.2. Development of assistive learning software**

Developing auxiliary learning software that allows students to take photos of their daily homework completion and upload them to a dedicated app can provide parents with a more intuitive understanding of their children's learning progress. This approach not only helps parents feel the service but also enhances their involvement in their children's learning. Additionally, teachers can capture photos of mistakes, gather image-based questions, and utilize OCR technology to convert the images into text. The system can

then automatically analyze students' weak points and plan personalized learning paths, as well as recommend tailored learning materials. This way, parents can have a clear daily insight into their children's learning challenges, while teachers gain a better understanding of students' knowledge structures to provide targeted guidance, fostering a strong home-school education system.

### **3.4. Personalized course services are available**

#### **3.4.1. Collaborate on the development of courses**

External hosting institutions can collaborate with other third-party organizations and institutions to offer supplementary courses. For instance, they can partner with youth centers, science museums, libraries, and other institutions to provide additional courses for students. Engaging the staff of these establishments in hosting services not only broadens students' extracurricular knowledge but also enhances the sense of responsibility and service awareness of these organizations. Together, they contribute to the development of hosting education. Furthermore, hosting institutions can cooperate with qualified third-party tutoring agencies to introduce professional teaching assistants who can offer diverse afterschool hosting programs to promote students' extracurricular interest development.

#### **3.4.2. Introduce hands-on activities**

To meet the requirements of the "double reduction" policy, after-school care programs should offer labor and club activities that align with students' interests. To fulfill this mandate and truly enhance the quality of after-school care services, teachers in childcare agencies can introduce hands-on practical activities. By incorporating hands-on activities using educational tools or everyday materials, students are encouraged to engage in practical exploration, fostering the development of a proper work ethic and enhancing their manual dexterity. This approach aims to promote a better understanding of the value of labor and strengthen students' practical skills within the context of after-school care.

#### **3.4.3. Carry out special talent training**

With the increasing diversity of societal demands, parental emphasis on talent cultivation has grown. The federal government invested \$3.6 billion in after-school programs in 2002[9]. Some traditional after-school care programs lack the qualifications and facilities for talent training, and parents often lack the time to transport their children to separate talent classes. Modern after-school care programs are expanding their offerings to include training in singing, tea art, calligraphy, painting, handicrafts, chess, and gardening. These types of talent training require minimal space and have lower facility costs, making them more feasible to implement. By hiring teachers with teaching qualifications to conduct talent training, the quality of training can be significantly improved.

#### **3.4.4. Regular talent shows**

Regularly organizing talent showcase events and encouraging active participation from both students and parents is beneficial for fostering a sense of unity within the after-school care program. It also facilitates improved communication between students and parents, as well as providing parents with the opportunity to witness their child's progress, thereby increasing their approval of the program. This, in turn, supports promotional efforts and facilitates student enrollment. Furthermore, talent activities aid students in developing brave and resilient personalities, overcoming

timidity, and freeing their natural inclinations.

#### 4. Summary of the Study

Genuine education does not solely come from schools and families; it requires the joint efforts of families, schools, and society to cultivate highly competent individuals. The primary school stage is also considered the optimal sensitive period for the physical, psychological, and emotional development of young children. As crucial locations and environments where children experience life and growth outside of school during this stage, external hosting institutions hold significant importance in terms of their impact on children's physical well-being, academic progress, and psychological development. Positive relationships between physical activity and cognitive performance have been established in recent systematic reviews [10]. Therefore, optimizing the environment and governance of these institutions is undoubtedly a matter of great significance for the future development of our country.

In our future studies and work, we hope to deepen our understanding of scientific theories, broaden our research perspectives, and creatively enrich the theoretical landscape of scientific thought. This will provide valuable insights and references to facilitate the development of extracurricular hosting programs for primary school students.

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