

Newly-adopted Law of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on Childcare

The Sixth Session of the 14th Supreme People's Assembly of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea adopted a law on childcare early last February.

At the Third Plenary Meeting of the Eighth Central Committee of the Workers' Party of Korea in June 2021, President Kim Jong Un of the State Affairs of the DPRK suggested adopting it as a policy of the Party to supply dairy and other kinds of nutritious foodstuffs to all the children in the country. The meeting adopted a relevant decision, in which specific tasks and ways were spelled out for the implementation of the policy.

This time the DPRK Supreme People's Assembly made the Party's decision a law of the country.

In retrospect, the country, already in the latter half of the 1940s, set up nurseries and kindergartens in different parts and kept them in operation by making a colossal amount of state investment. This meant the establishment of a system under which children were put to public care for their upbringing and education.

According to available information, the DPRK Law on the Nursing and Upbringing of Children, the first of its kind in the country, was adopted in 1976, ahead of the Socialist Labour Law (1978), the Public Health Law (1980) and many other laws. In compliance with the law, the number of nurseries increased 4.6 times and the number of children put to the care of nurseries 3.6 times across the country in the 1970s as against those in the 1960s. As a result the country ranked first in the absolute number of nurseries in the world.

Later, the law was amended and supplemented several times—typically in 1999, 2010, 2013 and 2014.

The recent law on childcare, an annex to the 1976 law on the nursing and upbringing of children, gives stipulations about production and supply of nutritious foodstuffs for children and provision of proper conditions for childcare.

One of the articles of the law, which consists of four chapters and 61 articles, reads:

“The state shall establish a well-regulated system of production and supply of nutritious foodstuffs for children and supply the dairy and other kinds of nutritious

foodstuffs to all children for free and on a regular basis while ensuring the best possible conditions for their upbringing.”

The law gives such prescriptions as using quality-assured materials for production of powdered milk, producing powdered milk in accordance with the state standard by means of modern production lines and equipment and advanced milk-processing technology, bolstering public support to nurseries and kindergartens by virtue of August and September fixed as months of intensified support for nurseries and March and October for schools, choosing proper sites for nurseries and kindergartens to be built, and producing works of art and literature for children to suit their psychological characteristics.

Even matters of supplying nurseries and kindergartens with necessary facilities, musical instruments, toys and drinking water, keeping good temperature in the rooms, providing them with electricity and fuel for heating and cooking, and keeping children under good protection are prescribed in the law.

Probably, the DPRK is the only country in the world which offers a free supply of dairy products to all children in it for free.

As it is pushing ahead with huge projects geared to the comprehensive development of socialism, every penny must count for the country. Nevertheless, the supply of dairy products to children is overriding all those projects.

If children born in this country, our rising generations, are fed well and grow up healthily in a nice environment, our society will, 20 or 30 years later, be that much more lively and vigorous and our national potentiality will be that much greater—this is the conviction of President Kim Jong Un of the State Affairs.

At the moment children in different parts of the world are going hungry, falling sick, getting victimized in uninterrupted conflicts, and roaming about after the grown-ups seeking refuge, when they are expected to enjoy themselves to their heart's content while going to school. This is quite a contrast to the Korean children.