The Present Status and Tasks of Evaluation for Early Childhood Teacher’s Professional Development in Korea

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Abstract. The purpose of this study is to explore the status and establish tasks of early childhood teacher’s ability development in South Korea. The evaluation system is total assessment for teacher working with young children in Korea. For the aim of the study, related literatures and documents were examined in depth. Current competence development evaluation for early childhood education teachers in Korea is reviewed and suggested the tasks for the future. This study offers ways in which teacher evaluation for competence development could be used as a tool of professional development for early childhood teachers for the future in Korea. And the evaluation system could applicable to other countries to develop and establish teacher evaluation system.

Keywords: Early childhood teacher, Professional development, Evaluation, Korea

1 Introduction

Contemporary society has been changed to be complicated and compound. It comes from high degree of science and technology, information and communication technology development, and complex awareness of members in society. Due to the characteristics of these social changes, educational field has required change a lot with the current. Early childhood teacher play an important role in educational field. Recently OECD and many countries have emphasized to produce outstanding individuals for forming the foundation for national development in 21st century and made investments in education increasingly at the same time (Ji et al, 2014). OECD puts emphasis on the importance of quality control for early childhood education and care, especially the role of curriculum and teachers (OECD, 2013). Following this tendency of the world, the Ministry of Education of South Korea have developed Nuri curriculum integrated early childhood education and care. Nuri curriculum refers to national level curriculum and is for any children who are 3 to 5 years old in Korea.
That means a great deal in terms of the equality of education opportunity (Kim & Sung, 2016).

The Ministry of Education in Korea also has developed early childhood teacher evaluation system for competence development for many years. It has been underlined that early childhood teachers should be qualified fully for competence to fulfill quality level improvement (Kang, Jin, & Kim, 2016) because teachers are critical factor in learning and development of young children as well as decision quality of education (Kim & Park, 2006). In particular, the roles and qualities of teachers are of great importance since early childhood education has special features like developmental stage or curriculum and instruction unlike other education level (Park & Hong, 2005). Teacher competences help that teachers could fulfill needs in education and care for young children consistently (Strohmer & Mischo, 2016). So the aim of this study is to grasp present situation of early childhood teacher evaluation for professional development in Korea and suggest tasks for tomorrow. The research questions for this study are as follows: How is current status, contents, and problems and tasks of early childhood education teacher evaluation for professional development in South Korea?

2 The History of early Childhood Teacher Evaluation for Professional Development

The teacher evaluation for competence development in Korea has implemented since 2005 unlike existing efficiency and performance-based pay for personnel administration. The aim of teacher evaluation is to improve teachers’ professionalism and to encourage the communication with consumers of education. In early childhood education field, the assessment was test-operated since 2009 based on to promotion plan for education advancement by Korea government. The evaluation system based on promotion plan for professional development of teacher in primary and second education and reflects special features and situations of each kindergarten (Cho, Back, and Kim, 2015).

Ministry of education Korea designated three national kindergartens affiliated with national university as standing research schools for 2011 and then found ways to establish teacher evaluation system by setting conditions for desirable operation of assessment, rational evaluation enforcement, application plan for the evaluation. For 2012-2015, the teacher evaluation system has test-operated gradually depend on class size. The evaluation carried out for national and public independent kindergartens in 2012 and for national and public kindergartens which have three classes and voluntary private kindergartens in 2013. In 2015, the teachers of whole national and public kindergarten and voluntary private kindergarten were evaluated by stages. In addition, policy research for recognition of problems and looking of improvement plans was paired with the assessment. Until now, the government has continued researches on specific reviews and reformation of teacher evaluation system.

Figure 1 shows the process of early childhood teacher evaluation for professional development in Korea.
3 The Contents of Early Childhood Teacher Evaluation for Professional Development

The object of evaluation is for whole national and public kindergarten teachers and voluntary private kindergarten teachers. The types of evaluation are self-evaluation, peer rating, and parent satisfaction research. Peer rating evaluation is implemented by director, assistant director, head teacher, teacher each other. Parents participate in online satisfaction survey for kindergarten education.

The areas of evaluation are overall educational activities of teachers like guidance of learning and life, support for instruction and study activities, and management of kindergarten. However, district office of education in each province or city can add contents such as job performance ability or teaching personality. Table 1 shows ----

The opinions of participant teachers for evaluation questions are gathered and then are opened to teachers in advance. The introduction for educational activities of teachers should be presented to peer teachers and parents. The methods of teacher evaluation for professional development are used Likert five point scales and free narrative description. Likert rating scale has example to choose such as very excellent, excellent, neutral, insufficient, and very insufficient in peer evaluation and very dissatisfied, dissatisfied, neutral, somewhat satisfied, very satisfied in parent satisfaction research.

4 The Problems and Tasks of Early Childhood Teacher Evaluation for Professional Development

The problems for teacher evaluation were pointed out from early childhood education field in process of review. The drawback is that it is overlapping assessment due to efficiency rating system and performance-related pay, it is less reliable because of different evaluation for one teacher, and it is done on the basis of seniority. Also it might be instigated ranking of early childhood teachers and the evaluation system makes the teachers to feel competitive for other teachers.

The limitations of professional development were realized and discussed by the early childhood teachers. Some teachers underline that real significant evaluation system is needed for early childhood teachers’ professional development. Others raise issues that teachers who teach young children have planned based on their needs and plan. This situation correspond with Guo & Yong (2013)’s research results.

Therefore, it should be offered that a more effective approach to early childhood teacher evaluation. The teacher assessment system makes teachers are diagnosed for professional level of role and function on guidance of learning, educational life, and instruction and activities. The abilities and skills of early childhood teachers should be improved and valued to a greater degree that actual competence.

The teacher evaluation for early childhood teachers’ professional development in Korea has the tasks for the future. It is essential to do improvement of evaluation system and apply the voices of early childhood education field.
5 Discussion and Implications

The aim of this study is to draw implications for early childhood teacher evaluation for professional development. Professional development is the key to build a high-quality early childhood education program (Riley & Roach, 2006). Professional development is facilitated teaching and learning experiences that are transactional and designed to support the acquisition of professional knowledge, skills, and dispositions as well as the applicable of this knowledge in practice.

The teacher assessment system makes teachers are diagnosed for professional level of role and function on guidance of learning, educational life, and instruction and activities. And the evaluation let directors and assistant directors are diagnosed for kindergarten management. The staffs in kindergarten could create foundation for professional development by smooth sharing of members’ mutual experiences. It is also enables them support planning and enforcement of in-service training according for evaluation result. Kindergarten teachers have big autonomy by their judgment on choice and organization of educational content. Early childhood teachers have an important influence on learning children unlike teachers in upper school level. The teachers who have professionalism is needed and for quality education. The professional development should improve continually for development of early childhood education.

Teacher competences are complicated combination of knowledge, skills, understanding, values and attitudes, leading to effective action in situation. Since teaching is much more than a task, and involves values or assumptions concerning education, learning and society, the concept of teacher competences may resonate differently in different national contexts. Teachers’ continuous professional development is highly related both for improving educational performance and effectiveness and for enhancing teachers’ commitmen, identity, and job satisfaction. Although teachers are interconnected with the characteristics and constraints of specific educational contexts and national education systems (OECD, 2009), teachers’ competences have powerful effects on children’s achievement (Rivkin, Hanushek, & Kain, 2005).

If designed and implemented well, evaluation for professional development can affect systemic improvements in early childhood programs and systems (American Institutes for Research, 2014). The implementation of the teacher evaluation systems in early childhood education could catalyze the development and adoption of more comprehensive education. It is hoped that other countries can look for suggestion about the evaluation of early childhood education teacher through evaluation system in Korea.

References


