

Social Policy and Early Childhood Development: A Field Study in Baghdad City

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Abstract

Social policy includes many aspects, some of which are related to welfare, as well as many social responsibilities and rights that are considered the basis of the early childhood stage, as social policy aims to secure a kind of stimulating, safe and equal environment for children, especially in the first years of their lives, as these early stages greatly affect their growth, development and future capabilities. It aims to study the current facts related to a phenomenon, situation or group of individuals. This study relied on the social survey method by sample and used the questionnaire tool to identify the extent of the impact of social legislation to protect early childhood. A field study in the city of Baghdad, where the study sample amounted to (200) individuals, males and females. The results of the study showed that the highest percentage of the research community are females at 54.4%. The results of the study showed that providing health care to mothers before and after birth is the health system for child health by 60.4%. The results of the study indicate that the early childhood care policy contributed to reducing child mortality rates by 63.2%. The results of the study indicate that one of the most important ways is the contribution of the social care policy to correcting some wrong practices by holding educational courses for workers in health centers by 43.6%. The results of the study concluded that there are educational programs provided for early childhood with cognitive and cognitive stimulation by 58.4%. And the contribution of government efforts to provide development programs for the early childhood stage by encouraging enrollment in education by 55.2%. One of the most important difficulties facing the implementation of policies and strategies for sustainable development for early childhood is the absence of activation of the national strategy by 36%. Therefore, we recommend the establishment of a higher council for childhood that takes on the responsibility of drawing up policies related to children and following up on strategies and programs related to them.

Keywords: Early childhood in Iraq, Child protection, Threats to early childhood.

1. Introduction

Early childhood is a crucial opportunity that must be invested in to shape the path of comprehensive development for children and build a foundation for their future, as different societies witness many remarkable changes in various fields that require rapid keeping pace with this development (Asfour and Al-Jilawi, 2022). In order for children to achieve their full potential and enjoy their human rights, they need health care, nutrition, protection from harm, a sense of security, opportunities for learning in early childhood, and responsive care such as talking to them, singing and playing with them by people who love them. All of the things mentioned above are required in order to care for the development of children's brains and provide their growing bodies with what they need. As it is still only for one period of life, it is the foundation of the personal human personality, and this is what scientific studies and research have integrated, including all that has been accomplished to achieve development for children and indicate the effectiveness, effectiveness and great success of the administrative and developmental programs that crystallized in accelerating the rate of children's growth. In various parts of the world, their note, (Mohamed, 2018). In the world, there are millions of children who suffer from deprivation in many things, including children living in poverty or affected by conflicts and crises, in addition to mobile children, children from communities facing discrimination, and children with disabilities. There are millions of children who do not get the nutrition and health care they need, are exposed to violence, grow up in polluted environments, and are subjected to extreme stress. The exposure of children in early childhood to delayed physical growth is one of the problems that most affects the psychology of the child and the parents together. Therefore, during the period of early childhood, the requirements of this stage must be satisfied, and if they are not satisfied, it is very difficult for them to compensate or be satisfied at another stage because they are busy - the growth process - with satisfying the requirements of the new stage, and even if they are satisfied, they remain weak and not as efficient as they would be if they were. I was satisfied at the time. Observing physical growth and its various indicators, such as height and weight, and comparing them to global indicators at the corresponding age stages helps determine the status of children's physical development, the extent of their adaptation, and the formation of their personalities (Al-Amiri et al., 2014). They miss out on learning opportunities and are deprived of the stimulation their developing brains need to thrive. It is possible to say that caregivers struggle to find the time, resources, and services necessary to provide for children. Because if children are given opportunities to develop their abilities and their parents do not allow them to take advantage of these opportunities, this is a waste of their potential. For children with disabilities, most of them die before they have a chance to live like other children. Children with disabilities struggle greatly to learn and earn a living, and society here has a role to play in making these children more acceptable to other people.

1- Research problem: Social policy includes many aspects, some of which are related to welfare, in addition to many social responsibilities and rights that are considered the basis of early childhood, as social policy aims to secure a kind of stimulating, safe and equal environment for children, especially in the first years of their lives, as these early stages greatly affect their growth, development and future capabilities. The process of correct and honest social upbringing works to provide the appropriate social climate in which this process takes place (Muhammad, 2015). In Iraq, work is being done to reduce the rates of poverty, illiteracy and disease in order

to raise the level of education and innovation, especially in the presence of the major challenges that early childhood is going through, for reasons including the conflicts and crises that Iraq has suffered from in the past years and their negative effects on the lives of many children. This requires the development of policies, legislation, programs and the provision of early childhood care services to create a safe and supportive environment for the development and growth of children in Iraq and to continue institutional efforts to save all children in the field of health and education to ensure the provision of a safe life for children, as the current era is characterized by successive cognitive changes and developments and the increasing amount of information that includes all areas of life, which requires those working in the educational learning process to keep pace with these changes and developments (Al-Dhahabi and Rashid, 2022).

2- The importance of the research:

The importance of the research lies in studying social legislation and early childhood challenges in the city of Baghdad, which represents a fundamental contribution to understanding the social and political reality in the city in a comprehensive and profound manner. This study is pivotal in analyzing the challenges facing children during early childhood, as it sheds light on the influential factors that determine the course of their lives and have a profound impact on their personal and social development and development. By understanding the social and political context in Baghdad, the study can better direct social policies and programs, so that they meet the needs of children and enhance their opportunities for growth and development. The study also contributes to promoting equality and social justice by focusing on the most vulnerable groups that may be subject to marginalization and discrimination.

3- Research objectives:

The most important objectives of the study:

1- It contributes to enriching theoretical knowledge about the relationship between social policy and early childhood. It provides a deep understanding of the factors that affect children's lives in the city of Baghdad.

2- It provides reliable evidence and data that contribute to analyzing causal relationships and social and political disparities in the context of the city of Baghdad, which contributes to developing new theories and deepening our understanding of political and social decision-making processes. 3- It provides accurate and reliable evidence for decision-making and developing social policies and programs targeting early childhood in Baghdad. By understanding the challenges and actual needs of children

2. The theoretical aspect of the research:

Definition of scientific concepts and terms:

1 - Social legislation

Social legislation refers to the protection of childhood through a set of laws and policies that aim to promote the rights of the child and ensure his safety and care. These legislations differ from

one country to another, but there are some general points that most social legislations include to protect childhood, and this importance includes through child rights laws, which include the rights of the child in society. (Kazem, 2006)

2- Childhood

Childhood linguistically Childhood: A word whose origin is the noun (Tofu L) in the form of a broken plural and its root (Child) and its stem (Childhood) and its analysis Childhood in the Arabic language refers to the first age stage in a person's life (2), and covers the period of childhood from birth to puberty. Its general meaning: It refers to the first age stage in a person's life, which is the period in which a person is a child. Derivation: Derived from the Arabic root "

As for the term childhood, it refers to the young person since birth who has not completed his psychological and social maturity and has not completed the elements of maturity and awareness, i.e. the inability to understand and comprehend his surrounding environment. (4) As it is one of the last stages because it constitutes the problems and difficulties that they are exposed to in their childhood and leaves an impact on their personality. (5).

Childhood can be interpreted as a social concept, which is the stage in which the child learns the highest social behavior that expresses the social status of individuals at this age. It includes the behaviors, customs, and values that distinguish children and determine their position in society (Kariman, 2004)

The operational definition of childhood: - It is the stage that begins from the moment of birth until the age of twelve, as this age stage is characterized by the ability to learn and the child acquires habits and skills and transforms

Fourth: - Early childhood

Childhood in its linguistic meaning: - Early: A word whose root is the noun (mubkara) in the form of a singular masculine and whose root is (bakr) and its stem is (mubkara) and its analysis is (mubkara + h). Childhood: A word whose root is the noun (Tufool) in the form of a broken plural and its root is (Child) and its stem is (Childhood) and its analysis is (Al + Tufool + ة). (Ibn Manzur, 2010)

Childhood has a broad meaning that refers to the first stage of life in a person (Muhammad, 2010). Etymology: Derived from the Arabic root "T F L" which means smallness and weakness. Early in its general meaning: It means "from the beginning" or "before the usual time". Etymology: Derived from the Arabic root "B K R" which means the beginning or the first.

Using these words, the meaning of early childhood is formed as follows: It is the age stage that extends from birth until the age of five or six years (Salah, 2022), and is characterized by smallness, weakness, and physical and psychological development, and carries the concept of the beginning or early beginning of this age stage. (Magdy, 2007)

As for the term: It refers to the period of childhood that is considered crucial in the development of children and the formation of the initial foundations for their physical and mental growth And social. Example: This term can be used in a context such as "Investing in early education contributes to enhancing children's growth during early childhood and preparing them for the

next stage of education." (Al-Farah, 2007) The operational definition of early childhood is a stage of childhood and a pivotal stage for the growth and development of the child, which begins from birth to the age of 6 years, and some reach the age of 9 years. It is an important stage in the life of childhood that requires attention and care and the provision of the most important supportive programs that develop the child's physical, mental and psychological abilities and capabilities.

Third: The most important social legislation for the protection of early childhood:

The protection of early childhood is of utmost importance in most societies around the world, as children are considered one of the most vulnerable groups that deserve care and protection. As for the most important aspects of interest in childhood, tracking the efforts made and the programs, projects and social legislation in the protection of childhood that have been implemented and are still being implemented at the international level in educational magazines reveals a renewed and increasing interest in everything related to the rights of the child in education and the development of young children before entering school. Many countries have organized the formation of a national committee, and today the number of participating countries has reached about seventy countries. It was formed to guarantee basic rights, which include basic child rights such as the right to life, protection from violence, abuse and exploitation, health care rights, education and legal protection through duties and responsibilities. Legislation also defines duties and responsibilities for children and society in general towards them, including the duty of care and providing a safe and appropriate environment for their development by combating assault and abuse. Legislation establishes a legal framework to combat domestic violence and assault on children, and determines penalties for perpetrators. Accordingly, work is done to provide social protection so that social legislation provides social protection for children living in difficult or dangerous conditions, and provides the necessary support for them and their families, through adoption and orphan care, so that legislation regulates adoption and orphan care processes, and sets controls and procedures to ensure the safety and care of children living outside their original homes. The Iraqi family Child protection legislation in Iraq is represented by several laws and legislations that aim to protect the rights of the child and ensure his safety and care. Among these legislations (Kazem, 2006):

The Iraqi Constitution of 2005, Article (29, 32) stipulates that the state shall care for the disabled and those with special needs and rehabilitate them in order to integrate them into society and prevent forms of abuse and violence in the family and school.

1- Child Protection Law No. 78 of 1980: This law relates to protecting the child from all forms of violence and abuse, including physical and mental harm and neglect.

2- Public Health Law No. (89) of 1981 (Analytical Booklet, 2023), Article (3, 6, 7) aims to care for school health, psychological and mental health, provide an environment and services for children, and conduct periodic examinations for each child to ensure their growth and maintain their health.

3- Penal Code: This law includes penalties for anyone who commits crimes against children, such as sexual assault or exploitation in any way.

4- Laws related to human rights: These laws include many provisions that protect children's rights as part of human rights, such as the child's right to education, health care, and protection from discrimination. Including the right to protection from assault, abuse, and neglect, the right to receive adequate education and health care, and the right to be heard and express their opinions. They are also represented in anti-domestic violence laws, which include legislation aimed at protecting children from violence and abuse within the family (Muhammad, 2023), and specify the measures that can be taken to protect them and provide support to victims. There are laws to protect children from exploitation. These laws address a variety of issues, including child labor, child trafficking, and sexual exploitation of children, and specify penalties for violators. The importance is also evident through care and adoption laws, which regulate social care procedures for children living outside their original homes, whether due to neglect, poverty, or other family circumstances, in addition to regulating adoption and alternative care processes. 5- Social Welfare Law No. (32) of 1990 according to Law (38) of 2013 that persons with disabilities receive financial aid and services provided by the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs and health and rehabilitation services from the Ministry of Health. (Amal, 2004)

6- Child protection provided by the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, which is responsible for providing a legislative basis for the protection of the child and the family. (Amnesty International, 2004)

7- Compulsory Education Law No. (118) of 197 Article (1):

First - Education in the primary school stage is free and compulsory for all children who complete the age of six, at the beginning of the school year.

Second - The state is obligated to provide all necessary capabilities for him.

Third - The child's guardian is obligated to enroll him in primary schools.

Article (10) of the Iraqi Constitution states:

1 - Compulsory education shall be applied at the primary education stage at the beginning of the 1978-1979 school year, and this shall be announced by a statement from the Minister of Education.

2 - The Ministry of Education and relevant popular and professional organizations shall organize an awareness campaign after the issuance of the statement on the implementation of compulsory primary education. (Muhammad, 2022)

8 - Juvenile Care No. 76 of 1983 and the main objective of this law is to care for the child and protect him from delinquency and to create an integrated system that has foundations and consistency in work and the objectives of the Juvenile Law:

- Creating an integrated system based on scientific foundations and consistency in work.

- Exceptional importance of protection, prevention and appropriate care for the child, knowing that this is one of the basic factors in protecting the juvenile from deviation and delinquency.

- Allocating appropriate and diverse therapeutic institutions at an appropriate level of education managed by specialists in juvenile affairs.

- The principle of the issue of guardians through the approval of the judiciary's seizure of parental authority when the interest of the juvenile requires it. (Mazen, 2021)

Fourth: Examples of international treaties for the protection of children:

- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

This organization was established on (4) November of the year (1946) after (20) countries deposited their acceptance documents for the organization's constitution with the British Foreign Office with the aim of contributing to the consolidation of peace and security through the development of cooperation between nations in the fields of education, science and culture, where global respect for justice increases throughout the world, and encouraging respect for the law and human rights. In accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and the International Covenants on Civil, Social, Cultural, Political and Economic Rights without discrimination on the basis of religion, language or gender, and the exchange of knowledge and increasing understanding between peoples and encouraging the dissemination of culture among young and old. (United Nations, 2000)

- United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF))United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund

On (11) December 1946, after the end of World War II, the General Assembly established the International Children's Emergency Fund, which is an independent international emergency relief agency that helps children who were devastated by World War II, especially in Europe. UNICEF is a United Nations agency specializing in the protection of children. It works with governmental and non-governmental organizations within the framework of organized programs for cooperation in developing countries by carrying out its tasks to defend children's rights to achieve their goals. (Betsam, 2006)

_International Labor Organization (I)

Special for social, cultural and economic rights 1976 according to Article (13) where it contributed to the establishment of peace and social justice through international rules with the aim of reducing the mortality rate for children and ensuring the healthy growth of the child, improving industrial and environmental aspects, freeing children from social and economic exploitation, making primary education compulsory and making it available free of charge. (Abdullah Al-Majidil, 2002)

- World Health Organization: World Health Organization

This organization was established in the month of April of the year (1948), and since the year (160) countries have participated in its membership, and the organization is headquartered in the city of Geneva. This organization aims to raise the health level of peoples, improve serums, and care for the use of nuclear energy in health aspects, maternal and child care, and nutrition. _The World Summit: For Children, which was a historic event for the United Nations and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), as this was the first time a high-level meeting was held to address children's issues in health fields, as it was held at the United Nations headquarters in New York. (Pamphlet, 2020)

- Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989 The Convention on the Rights of the Child is an international charter that defines the civil, economic, political and educational rights of children according to Article (28, 29) Every child has the right to education and encourages children to go to school to develop the child's personality and talents and prepare him for a life that makes him feel responsible, and the implementation of the agreements is monitored by the Committee on the Rights of the Child of the United Nations, as the principles declared in the Charter of the United Nations included recognition of the inherent dignity of all family members and their rights on the basis of justice and freedom:

- 1) The child should grow up in a family environment in an atmosphere of happiness and love
- 2) The child should be prepared for an individual life declared in the Charter of the United Nations, especially in the spirit of peace, dignity, tolerance and equality.
- 3) Because of the child's physical and mental immaturity, he needs special preventive and care measures, including
- 4) That is legal protection.

- International Labor Organization Convention No. (182) of 1999, regarding the prohibition of the worst forms of child labor and immediate measures.

- The four Geneva Conventions of 1949.

- The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights of 1966.

- The Arab Convention on the Employment of Juveniles. (Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, 2020)

As for the Arab efforts, all Arab countries under the umbrella of the League of Arab States have contributed to them within the framework of the tasks of the General Secretariat of the League of Arab States. For about three decades, the Arab League has been contributing tangibly to activities and events related to childhood, whether through its interest in the family and developing its conditions or its interest in childhood and developing the conditions of childhood. International, regional and Arab concerns have greatly motivated the governments of Arab countries to develop their interests in children's rights and led them to issue the necessary legislation in the field of children's rights and protection. Some Arab countries have actually issued laws for childhood, including Yemen, which issued Child Law No. 45 in 2005.

Third: General principles and rights in the early childhood stage according to the Convention on the Rights of the Child:

Although the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) established common standards for all countries, taking into account the cultural, social, economic and political reality of each country in a way that enables it, through its own means, to exercise the rights common to all, it gave implementation priorities to four principles due to their special importance in interpreting and clarifying the Convention and at the same time guiding National programmes of countries to implement the articles listed elsewhere in this agreement. These principles are specifically mentioned in Articles (2, 3, 6, 12), which are:

1- Non-discrimination (Article 2) This article guarantees all children the right to enjoy all their rights without any discrimination, and includes a fundamental point embodied in equal opportunities. Women should be given the same opportunities as boys, and refugee children of foreign origin, and children of indigenous groups or minorities should be given the same rights as all others. As well as children who live in extremely difficult circumstances and give them the same opportunity granted to others to enjoy an adequate standard of living. (Khaled bin Mohammed, 2002)

2- The best interests of the child (Article 3) This article obliges all state parties to take decisions and legislative measures in which the interests of the child are among the primary considerations. This principle is related to the decisions of the judicial courts, legislative bodies and administrative authorities in addition to the decisions of general social care. This article represents a basic message of the agreement. 3- The right to life, survival and development (Article 6) This article emphasizes the necessity of taking all available measures and means that would guarantee the child this right to development to include all aspects of the child's development from sports, educational and artistic achievements and the child's individual identity within his family and home. 4- Respect for the child's opinions (Article 12) This article is embodied in the necessity of paying attention to the child's opinions according to his age and maturity; Based on the child's right to be heard and to have his or her opinions and expressions taken seriously, especially in areas that include any judicial or administrative procedures affecting the child (United Nations, 2013).

Fourth: Children who need special protection according to the international convention:

Young children are exposed to and affected by dangers. It is noted that large numbers of young children grow up in difficult circumstances that often constitute a violation of their rights. Young children in particular are exposed to harm resulting from unreliable and inconsistent relationships with their parents, or they grow up in situations of absolute poverty and deprivation, or situations of conflict and violence, or are displaced from their homes as refugees, or are exposed to any number of other hardships. Young children are less able to understand these hardships or to resist their harmful effects on their health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development. They are particularly vulnerable when parents or other caregivers are unable to provide adequate protection, whether due to illness or death or to disruption in families or communities. (Wissam, 2019) Whatever the difficult circumstances young children face, they need special attention because of the rapid changes in development they go through and are more vulnerable to disease, trauma, and abnormal or accelerated growth. They are relatively helpless in avoiding or resisting difficulties and rely on others to provide them with protection and promote their best interests. In the following paragraphs, the Committee draws the attention of States parties to the main difficult circumstances referred to in the Convention that have clear implications for rights in early childhood.

In general, the goal of these States Parties should be to ensure that every child, in every circumstance, receives adequate protection in the fulfillment of their rights, in terms of protecting them:

1_ Protecting children from abuse and neglect: Article (19) of the Convention states that young children often fall victim to neglect, abuse and neglect, including physical and mental violence, and abuse very often occurs within families (Mukhtar. 2012). There is compelling evidence that trauma resulting from neglect and abuse has negative effects on development, including (case study):

Yazidi children in Iraq, Article (39) of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child calls for appropriate measures to encourage psychological and physical rehabilitation and reintegration of children who are victims of exploitation, abuse or torture, as the importance of this article is highlighted in the plight of Yazidi children, as the armed group called (ISIS) committed crimes against humanity against the Yazidi community, where they were tortured and forced to The fighting and were subjected to the most heinous abuse and violations, as they were subjected to killing, kidnapping and rape. Although there were those who survived and returned, their return was not the end of the suffering they experienced, as the surviving children continued to face great challenges documented by Amnesty International. However, they did not receive any assistance, and upon their return, their communities isolated them, as Amnesty International called for expanding the draft law on displaced persons to include children. (Children's Rights, 2020) 2- Children deprived of families: In the definition of an orphan, he is a child who has lost one or both parents. The loss of one of the parents makes the orphan more vulnerable to violations. They may be subjected to sexual assault or forced labor. Iraq, as a party to the Convention on the Rights of the Child since 1994, is obligated to provide protection to a child who is temporarily or permanently deprived of his family environment or who is allowed to remain in that environment. (Hanan, 2002) The state takes care of children, young people and juveniles who suffer from (family disintegration or loss of one of their parents or suffer from family problems such as the guardian being afflicted with the following: disability, arrest, detention, imprisonment, incompetence, unknown parentage) by providing them with a healthy atmosphere to compensate for the affection they have lost, and avoiding everything that makes them feel that they are inferior to others, as the state provides them with their needs for free, including housing, clothing, food and pocket money, based on the provisions of Chapter Three of the aforementioned Social Welfare Law and the provisions of the State House System No. 5 of 1986.

3- Strengthening the reality of child protection in Iraq

The Iraqi constitution has stipulated the enactment of a law that would provide health and social security. These laws must work to protect the child from marginalization, fear and poverty by providing programs and housing. The Social Welfare Law (Secretariat for Drawing Up the Child Protection Policy in Iraq, 2011) No. 126 of 1980 is in line with the Convention on the Rights of the Child in terms of recognizing the child's right to protection through the state's role for orphans. Which provides a safe environment for the child. The law also requires the establishment of a social researcher office that is responsible for following up on orphans, addressing their problems, integrating them with their families, and ensuring that they receive education. Juvenile Care Law No. 76 of 1983 regulates the sponsorship process (which is the alternative system to the adoption system of 1983) regarding placing the child with two parents who care for him, as follows:

(a) Article 39 (The spouses may submit a joint application to the Juvenile Court to include a child whose parents are orphans or whose lineage is unknown to them).

(b) Article 40 (The Juvenile Court shall issue its decision to include the child temporarily and for a trial period of six months, which may be extended for another six months. During this period, the court shall send a social researcher to the couple's home at least once a month to verify their desire to include the child and their care for him, and shall submit a detailed report to the court on this matter);

(c) Articles (41, 42 and 43) of the law organized the conditions for the inclusion of the child and protection upon the death of the spouses or one of them by bequeathing to the youngster an amount equal to the share of the smallest heir, provided that it does not exceed a third of the estate and is obligatory and cannot be revoked according to Sharia. The draft law for the care of people with special needs, prepared by the Department of Care for People with Special Needs, also included legal articles that allow the authorities in (20 and 21) that the right of children to grow is exposed to severe danger when they are orphaned or abandoned or deprived of family care, both of them (Sabah Sadiq Jaafar, 2005), as children under the age of three years are also in the case of children under the age of five years. Alternative care is required, as placing young children in family or quasi-family care is more likely to achieve positive outcomes for them. (Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, 2004.)

States Parties are encouraged to invest in and support forms of alternative care that can ensure safety, continued care and love, and provide young children with the opportunity to form long-term tendencies based on mutual trust and respect, for example through foster care, adoption, and support from extended family members. (Abdullah Al-Turkmani, 2005.)

Fourth: The size of the phenomenon of orphanhood in Iraq: According to the data obtained from the Central Statistical Organization, the percentage of orphans in Iraq under the age of eighteen reached 9.2% (1,359,743) orphans, where the percentage of fatherless orphans constituted (2.5)%, and the percentage of motherless orphans constituted (2.5)%, while the percentage of both parents' orphans was (1.4)%. After taking a random sample of these orphans out of (100) thousand orphans, the survey concluded that Baghdad ranked first in the number of orphans, most of whom were elementary school students. As for the causes of orphanhood, they varied, and disease constituted the first place (54.8)%, and terrorism came in second place, where they constituted a percentage of (26.8)%. It is noted that the number of orphans in government institutions is very small and the number of state homes affiliated with the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs / Department of Care for People with Special Needs (23) homes distributed across the governorates of Iraq and that the actual number of beneficiaries from these homes is small compared to the capacity of these homes, as the total number of orphans inside the homes is only (376) orphans. It is noted that there is a gap in the total number of orphans in Iraq and the number of beneficiaries from these homes, and this is due to the values, customs and traditions that govern Iraqi society. (Ministry of Planning, 2019). The number of children registered in the social care network in the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs reached (238,253) orphans, the names of 97% of whom appeared in the widowhood record in 2009. This data indicates that there is a large gap in the number of orphans in Iraq and beneficiaries of government protection programs. A study conducted on a sample of street children in Baghdad Governorate, numbering

(307) homeless children, indicated that 57.3% of them were orphans. Orphans also suffer from poor economic conditions, as a relief committee stated that need has pushed orphans to engage in drug abuse, which makes them outcasts from society and ends up on the streets, making them more vulnerable to exploitation. UNICEF indicated that 60% of orphans are the sole breadwinners for their families. 4- Armed conflict and crimes of selling and trafficking children: Iraq has been suffering from crises and instability for decades, including terrorism, as terrorism is one of the serious problems that many societies suffer from at the present time, and the methods of implementing terrorist operations have diversified (Abbas, 2019). This is reflected in the decline of all sectors of life, and Iraq is one of the countries that signed the Convention on the Rights of the Child. It has pledged to protect children from all forms of exploitation, and everything related to reformative and criminal justice for juveniles, and to follow best practices in dealing with them, such as allocating a judge and an investigator for juveniles and achieving the principles of reformative justice in the right to obtain a defense attorney during trials (Ala, 2010) and to guarantee the child's right to protection from violence, discrimination and marginalization in reform schools through deterrent laws and clear foundations that workers work on, and to qualify workers in aftercare programs and reform schools, and for the infrastructure of reform schools to be strong and meet all the needs of children and allocate a larger number of them to females, and to ensure the integration of children who have been involved in armed conflicts into society after undergoing treatment. Health and psychological, and the inclusion of play and artistic talent programs within the activities of reform schools. (Imad, 2015)

Human trafficking is divided into two types:

- Smuggling migrants voluntarily through arranging smuggling from one country to another.
- Trafficking in human beings is linked to the exploitation of victims and forcing them to practice prostitution, which is considered the oldest profession in the world.

The factors that develop this trade are many, including the prosperity that some countries experience after World War II, poverty and internal problems or disasters, social violence, corruption in administrative, military and judicial bodies. (Maad, 2007.)

Agreement No. 190 of 1999 was issued in this form, containing 16 paragraphs, all of which aim to eliminate the sale of children, as well as the exploitation of children and the use, employment or offering of children for illegal activities, drug production and work that is likely to lead to harm to mental health, safety or moral behavior. Trafficking in children's organs while they are alive and well, this talk seemed years ago like a kind of media excitement, it is a special and very hidden black market trade because it is illegal (Adnan, 2011)

Fifth: The National Strategy for Early Childhood Development in Iraq Challenges and Opportunities

The strategy in general is a comprehensive and integrated plan that takes into account the challenges and opportunities represented by the surrounding factors as it seeks to achieve the general and specific goals that the strategy works on by adopting policies, projects and programs in each of its axes (Obaid, M. Y. 2021).

The world has achieved many amazing gains on different fronts during the past two decades, as the focus was on the idea of children obtaining basic education and achieving many fundamental breakthroughs in terms of promoting gender equality in addition to providing job opportunities for women, caring for youth, providing social protection and caring for people with disabilities and special needs (Eli, 2015).

One of the most important axes that the social aspects focused on is the axis of childhood care, as the early childhood stage is the formative period for the child and at the same time it is one of the most dangerous stages of life that has many effects on the process of building the individual's personality and determining the level of his future giving, which requires providing a good and supportive environment for the child's upbringing, but there are many factors that have a negative impact on the child's formation and growth, including wars, conflicts and changes. Iraq is one of the countries whose children suffer the most from the effects of wars and crises as a result of the increasing challenges witnessed by Iraqi children, which led to the emergence of a group of many plans and policies related to (Magic 2022) vulnerable groups, especially children and people with disabilities. Many programs have emerged that support social work during the past few years in response to the economic problems that accompanied the increase in violence, displacement, terrorism, and the increase in poverty rates. The most important social problems surrounding children were identified and a set of goals were emphasized in order to improve children's rights in Iraq in terms of quantity and quality(Obaid, M.Y. 2020). The Iraqi government was able to secure a safe living environment for children that enhances their access to their rights and also helped the Iraqi government to develop a development vision for people with disabilities and special needs. Accordingly, a set of goals and objectives are adopted, including ensuring children's education, health and well-being. These goals are national goals included in plans, strategies and policies related to early childhood. One of the crucial steps (Maha, 2010) adopted by UNICEF in order for all children, boys and girls, to receive education is early childhood development by providing them with good care so that they are ready for primary school. In Baghdad in 2022, the Iraqi government launched a strategy that represented a comprehensive and consistent approach that recognizes the different stages of children's development up to the age of eight and gives the relevant authorities, service providers and communities a great responsibility to secure and protect children's needs. The strategy followed by the Iraqi government was largely in line with the global upbringing framework, as it will greatly benefit Iraqi children in two ways that have an impact on the early periods of their lives on their health during the critical first days extending from pregnancy to the first and second years of life, in addition to focusing on the strongest levels of growth up to the age of eight, which ensures psychological and social safety. Over the past years, Iraq has made significant progress in the most prominent indicators of child survival and nutrition in order to achieve early childhood development and raise children in their early ages quickly. This strategy forms the strong foundation upon which the "Prosperity Agenda" was built, as it focused extensively on the health aspects and achieving the well-being of Iraqi children and ensuring their presence in a safe environment away from disturbances, encouraging and providing them with a strong incentive for educational achievement, and obtaining their upbringing.

Field side:

3. Research Methodology :

. Social Survey Method

The social survey approach is one of the most famous means and methods of social research, due to its roots rooted in history and its multiple experiences that are reflected in its characteristics and uses in the applied and academic fields. (2) It is an approach to collecting data by asking questions orally or in writing to the respondents, and the interview is used in the oral questionnaire and the questionnaire. In the written questionnaire. The sample survey relies on collecting information from a portion of the population chosen to represent the entire population.

Second: Study Sample

The sample is part of the population on which the study is conducted, and it is chosen by the researcher to conduct his study on it according to certain rules in order to accurately represent the population.

1. Sample selection:

2. Sample size:

Third: Methods of data collection

The researcher used some scientific methods when collecting data in order to reach the goals through which the problem of this study was determined. It is known that the diversity in the use of these methods helps the researcher reach the scientific and objective facts of the study problem. These methods were determined according to

1- Interview:

2- The questionnaire: (The questionnaire).

Statistical methods

Statistics are one of the important methods used by researchers in all fields of knowledge, as statistics provide researchers with tools that help them analyze data scientifically and accurately and extract results, based on which decisions are made.

The most important statistical methods used in the study are:

1- Percentage: (The Percentage)

It was used to determine the relative value of the respondents' answers, as follows:

Percentage = $\text{part/whole} \times 100$

Second: Results of the primary data of the study sample

1-First: sex

Table (1) shows the gender.

Answer:	Frequency	%
: Male	114	45.6
Female	136	54.4

The data in Table (1) which shows the gender of the study sample individuals showed that the highest frequency was from the study sample individuals category (females) whose number reached (136) at a rate of (45.4%), while the category (males) reached (114) at a rate of (45.6%). We conclude from this that the highest percentage of the study sample individuals consists of females compared to males. It was shown through the field visit conducted by the researcher on the study sample individuals within the institutions that the percentage of females was greater than males.

2-: age

Age is one of the factors that affect the answers of the respondents, and age differences also affect their opinions and answers. This is due to the nature of the social and cultural conditions that each age stage passes through, and that young people are the most energetic and energetic and most likely to attend forums and engage in activities and events.

Table (2) Age Group

Age Group	Frequency	%
30-25	55	22.0
36-31	72	28.8
42-37	51	20.4
47-43	32	12.8
53-48	26	10.4
60-54	14	5.6
TOTAL	250	100

The data in Table (2), which shows the age groups of the study sample, show that the most frequently occurring age groups are those between the ages of (31-36), whose number reached (72) at a rate of (28.8%), followed by the age group between (25-30), whose number reached (55) at a rate of (22%), while the age group between (37-42), whose number reached (51) at a rate of (20.4%), while the age groups between (43-48) reached (32) at a rate of (12.8%), followed by the age group between (49-54), whose number reached (26) at a rate of (10.4%), while the age group between (55-60) reached (14) at a rate of (5.6%). The arithmetic mean of the age groups of the study sample individuals was (38.25), while the standard deviation of the age group was (8.739). We conclude from this that there is a variation in the age group of the study sample individuals, which ranges between (25-60). This helps to obtain information for the study, ideas and the way of thinking of many individuals in the study sample, which differs from one generation to another..

3- The health system providing care for the child's health includes the delivery of quality care.

Table (3) shows the health system providing care for children's health, including the delivery of quality care

Answer	Frequency	%	Rank
Providing health care for mothers before and after childbirth	151	60.4	1
Reducing maternal and child mortality rates	92	36.8	5
Vaccination schedule	145	58.0	2
Child health card	122	48.8	3
Immunization against infectious diseases	114	45.6	4

The data in Table (3), which shows the health system providing care for children's health, including the delivery of quality care, indicate that the most important health systems provided for child care are providing (health care for mothers before and after birth) with a frequency of (151) at a rate of (60.4%), while in second place is providing care through (vaccination schedule) with a frequency of (145) at a rate of (57%), followed in third place by (child health card) with a number of (122) at a rate of (48.8%), while in fourth place is providing care (Immunization against infectious diseases) was repeated (45.6%), its frequency was (114) at a rate of (45.6%), and finally came the provision of care (reducing mortality rates among mothers and children) was repeated (92) at a rate of (36.8%). Providing health care to mothers before and after birth, which is considered one of the most important health systems that can be provided to care for the child's health by providing the most important guidelines and instructions and providing care to mothers through follow-up with periodic examination.

4. Contribution of early childhood care policy to reducing child mortality rates:-

Table (4): Contribution of early childhood care policy to reducing child mortality rates:-

Answer:	Frequency	%
: Yes,	158	63.2
, No	92	36.8
Total	250	100

The data in Table (4), which shows the contribution of early childhood care policy to reducing child mortality rates, show that the highest frequency of the answer from the study sample members who confirmed the existence of political contributions to child care was (yes), their number was (158) at a rate of (63.2%), while those who answered (no) that there are no contributions to early childhood care policy were (92) at a rate of (36.8%). The world as a whole is working to accelerate the pace of progress in reducing child mortality rates by establishing an early childhood care policy to reduce child mortality rates.

5 - Contribution of social care policy to correct some wrong practices

Table (5): Contribution of social care policy to correct some wrong practices young people

Answer:	Frequency	%
: Yes,	167	66.8
, No	83	33.2
Total	250	100

The data in Table (5) which shows the contribution of the social care policy to correcting some wrong practices, showed that the highest frequency of the answer was (yes) which reached (167)

at a rate of (66.8%), while those who answered (no) reached (83) at a rate of (33.2%). We conclude from this that the highest percentage was that the social care policy contributed to correcting wrong practices, and the social policy basically refers to providing guidance, principles, legislation and activities that affect the living conditions that help in well-being. By holding educational courses for workers in health centers and providing community awareness through the media. These draw up policies and strategies related to childhood and holding seminars, conferences and workshops in the field of awareness of children's rights, and participating in international and local scientific forums to follow up on the implementation of international recommendations and agreements related to children.

6- Educational programs provided for early childhood with cognitive and perceptual stimulation:

Table (6): Educational programs provided for early childhood with cognitive and perceptual stimulation: -

Answer:	Frequency	%
: Yes,	146	58.4
, No	104	41.6
Total	250	100

The data in Table (6) which shows the educational programs provided for early childhood with cognitive and perceptual stimulation, showed that the highest frequency of the answer was (yes) with (146) at a rate of (58.4%), while the lowest frequency of the answer was (no) with (104) at a rate of (41.6%). Educational programs are considered the basis for early childhood education with the aim of providing children with cognitive and perceptual skills, and education in the early childhood stage aims to facilitate their cognitive and perceptual development and provide good quality education.

7- Contribution of government efforts to provide development programs for early childhood: -

Table (7): Contribution of government efforts to provide development programs for early childhood: -: -

Answer	Frequency	%
Did not contribute	7	2.8
Encouraging enrolment in education	138	55.2
Achieving psychological and social well-being	36	14.4
Protecting children from violence and abuse	52	20.8
Protecting children during armed conflicts	10	4.0
Protecting children during disasters and crises	7	2.8
Total	250	100

The data in Table (7) which shows the contribution of government efforts to provide development programs for the early childhood stage, shows that the highest frequency of the answer was the contribution through (encouraging enrollment in education) with a frequency of (138) at a rate of (55.2%), followed by contributions through (protecting children from violence and abuse) with a frequency of (52) at a rate of (20.8%), while through (achieving psychological and social well-being) with a frequency of (36) at a rate of (14.4%), while (protecting children during periods of armed conflict) with a frequency of (10) at a rate of (4%), and government efforts contributed to providing development programs for the early childhood stage through (protecting children during disasters and crises) with a frequency of (7) at a rate of (2.8%), and

government efforts (did not contribute) to providing development programs for the early childhood stage with a frequency of (7) at a rate of (2.8%). We conclude that investing in early childhood development benefits society, and one of the most important government contributions and efforts is to provide and encourage enrollment in education and schools as a right guaranteed to all children at an early age. Through the interview conducted by the researcher with the respondents, it became clear that early childhood development is a fundamental factor in protecting every child's right to survival and development, and education plays a pivotal role as the first educational institution that provides him with the right to life and protects the future.

8- Difficulties facing the implementation of sustainable development policies and strategies for early childhood:

Table (8) shows the most important difficulties facing the implementation of sustainable development policies and strategies for early childhood.

Answer	Frequency	%
Lack of activation of the national strategy	90	36.0
Insufficient financial resources	57	22.8
Weak human resources	28	11.2
Lack of coordination between information centers	20	8.0
Weak community awareness	36	14.4
Other (all of the above)	19	7.6
Total	250	100

If the data in Table (8) which shows the most important difficulties facing the implementation of sustainable development policies and strategies for early childhood, it is clear that the most important difficulties are (the absence of activation of the national strategy) which was repeated (90) times (36%), followed by the difficulties (insufficient financial resources) which was repeated (57) times (22.8%), then the most important difficulties are (weak community awareness) which was repeated (36) times (14.4%), (weak human resources) which was repeated (28) times (11.2%), and among the difficulties facing the implementation of sustainable development policies and strategies for early childhood is (the absence of coordination between information centers) which was repeated (20) times (8%), and finally came (all of the aforementioned difficulties) which was repeated (19) times (7.6%). Since many of the difficulties facing the implementation of sustainable development policies and strategies towards early childhood and the absence of activating the national strategy is the first difficulty facing the implementation of development policies and strategies, i.e. activating the developmental role of childhood by implementing effective development plans and strategies with future goals, as it includes strategic trends to support the comprehensive growth of children from birth to the age of three. It aims to stimulate multiple sectors including health, education and child protection.

4. Research Results :

1- The results of the study showed that the highest percentage of the research community are females at 54.4%.

- 2- The results of the study showed that the highest percentage of respondents were between the ages of (25-30) at 22%.
- 3- The results of the study showed that providing health care to mothers before and after birth is the health system for child health at 60.4%.
- 4- The results of the study indicate that the early childhood care policy contributes to reducing child mortality rates by 63.2%.
- 5- The results of the study indicate that the most important ways for the social care policy to contribute to correcting some wrong practices are through holding educational courses for workers in health centers at 43.6%.
- 6- The results of the study showed that there are educational programs provided for early childhood with cognitive and cognitive stimulation at 58.4%.
- 7- The results of the study showed the contribution of government efforts in providing development programs for the early childhood stage by encouraging enrollment in education by 55.2%.
- 8- The results of the study showed that the most important difficulties facing the implementation of sustainable development policies and strategies for early childhood is the absence of activation of the national strategy by 36%.

5. Suggestions and recommendations:

Recommendations

- 1- Strengthening the institutional efforts of the Child Welfare Authority by affirming its independence and expanding its powers and capabilities.
- 2- Establishing a Higher Council for Childhood that takes on the responsibility of formulating policies related to children and following up on strategies and programs related to them.
- 3- Continuing basic food and nutrition services and focusing on infants and children under five among the most vulnerable populations of displaced persons and returnees.
- 4- Maintaining basic life-saving health services and addressing the increasing risks of deaths from diseases.

Suggestions

- 1- Conducting more studies and research on social policy, its challenges and its direct and indirect impact on early childhood, its stability and future.
- 2- Intensifying qualitative studies and research on early childhood as one of the most vulnerable groups in society.
- 3- Expanding the dissemination of the rules of international humanitarian law in all state institutions by teaching it in educational institutions and not limiting it to law schools.

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