

Study Notes

Brief Report of Treatment and Education for Children with Autism in China¹⁾

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This research traced the history of support for children with autism in China, and investigated two typical nongovernmental facilities for children with autism. Two critical problems of the support system in China were found. Firstly, the system for early diagnosis and early treatment were not established. Secondly, the school training system was incomplete. More research should be taken for how to build support systems for children with autism in China.

Key words : China, autism, treatment and education

I. Introduction

Autism is a type of pervasive developmental disorder (PDD) that usually appears before a child reaches the age of 3 years. According to DSM-IV of the American Psychiatric Association and ICD-10 of WHO, the diagnostic criteria of autism is defined by function disorder seen in all 3 fields; (1) Impaired social interaction, (2) communication, and (3) restricted and repetitive behavior (quoted from page 3 of “Children and Grownups with Autism Spectrum – Understanding and Support for Them”) In China, since Tao, Guotai of China Children’s Mental Health Center first reported 4 cases in 1982 (Tao, 1982), developmental support for diagnosis, treatment and education for children with autism has progressed and the entire society has started becoming highly interested.

However, supporting systems for each of the fields of medical, psychological, educational and welfare for autistic children have not been established yet. Because a process or system to diagnose autistic children, to guide or give development support based on the diagnosis has not been established, parents in particular are burdened with great anxiety and suffering, all the while seeking their children’s treatment and education. In this report, we focus on the current treatment and education conditions for autistic children in China, and discuss the future challenges for these areas, exploring the condition of 2 private training facilities for autistic people.

II. Current Condition of Developmental Support for Autistic Children in China

(1) Autism called “Guduzheng”(solitude symptom)

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In mainland China, autism is called “solitude symptom”. The autism spectrum is described as “Guduzheng Puxi Zhang’ ai” (solitude symptom spectrum) (note: in Hong Kong and Taiwan, it is called “Zibizheng” (autism) using the same word as in Japan). In China, autism was initially considered to be a type of mental deficiency. However, since the characteristics of autistic children don’t match those of mentally retarded children, it was recognized as “the earliest development of childhood mental disorder”, and then determined to be a general pervasive developmental disorder based on current ICO-10 and DSM-IV (Xu, 1995).

In the past decade or so, there has been active autism diagnoses and treatment all over China, while researchers of autistic children have been greatly interested in the incidence rate of autism among children throughout the country. In recent years, the Chinese administrative department has come to attach importance to the increase of children with psychiatric disorders and started studying it. According to one of the studies, “Report of the Research Extracting Disabled Children from 0 to 6 Years Old on a National Scale in 2001,” 61 out of 60, 124 children in 6 provinces and cities were confirmed to have been diagnosed with mental disease. As can be seen on Figure 1, out of the 61 children with mental disease, 37 were autistic, accounting for 60.66%, while the atypical autism count was 11, or 18.03%. From this research, it

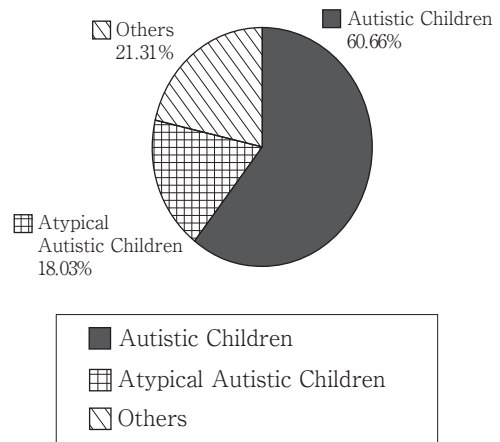


Figure1 Rate of Autistic Children
(After Yang (2004))

became apparent that approximately 80% of mentally disordered children in China are autistic (Yang, 2004). Applying this rate to the results of the 5th national census held in 2000, the number of children from age 0 to 6 with mental disorders can be estimated to be about 104,000. It was also reported that the incidence rate of developing mental disorder among 0 to 6 year old children nationwide in China was 0.145%. As a result, the number of children developing mental disorders annually in China is assumed to be 15,000. Currently, there is no accurate statistics on the number of autistic children nationally, but from above data, experts assumed the total number of autistic children in 2005 was over 400,000 (Sun, 2004).

(2) History of development support for autistic children in China

A. Uneasy Period in 1980s

It was in the 1980s when Chinese

psychiatrists began paying attention to autism and writing case reports. The first research regarding autistic children in China was a case report from autism research team of special education school in Beijing (Center School for the Mentally Disabled in Haidian Ward, Beijing) regarding the treatment and education of one autistic child in the school in 1987. In this case report, abnormal behavior different from mental deficiency was described (Xu, 1995). However, although a majority of medical doctors at the time recognized there were cases different from mental deficiency, they didn't know the existence of "autism" itself. In addition, a few child psychiatrists had diagnosed and conducted follow-up observations of autistic children, but at the time, they didn't know any method of treatment and education. "Autism" was not recognized as a social problem yet.

B. Groping Period in 1990s

In the decade of the 1990s, there was a change of viewpoint toward misconceptions and discrimination towards autism. Big changes appeared in the environment of autism, including the search for full-scale medical, welfare and educational supporting methods. The government started to research autistic children. Experimental research of autistic children's psychological assessment and educational training at the Beijing Municipal Commission of Education and the early education program at Nanjing Psychology Hygiene Research Center

began (Chen, 2004). However, parents of autistic children could not obtain the information gleaned from these studies and started to tear down barriers to get it, while at the same time, anxiously not knowing the future direction of treatment and education.

As the number of autistic children visiting hospitals increased, medical, welfare and educational needs for autistic children gradually increased. Therefore, working with both the parents of autistic children and experts, the first autism support NGO organization in China, the "Beijing Association for Rehabilitation of Autistic Children: BARAC" was established in 1993. There were various members of this association, including government administrators, medical doctors, educators and parents. The purpose of the association was to offer support in 3 areas; medical science, special education and social psychology support. Furthermore, it played a big role in offering systematic and coordinated support, such as advice for parents, treatment guidance for educators, research and information exchange as well as training experts (Lv et al., 2000). Table 1 shows the major support activities among government administrations, parents and private organizations related to the association in the 1990s. As we can see from Table 1, joint associations of parents with autistic children were rapidly established all over China. Also, a movement to establish private therapy facilities and special classes as well as the introduction of advanced countries'

experiences, the areas of diagnosis, education, and welfare for autistic children advanced. This association's support system can be called the first model of a support system for autistic children in China. It deeply affected the foundation of future support systems.

On the other hand, the establishment of private facilities for autistic children's treatment and education became the other pillar of development support for Chinese autistic children. As diagnostic methods became clearer, the number of autistic children largely increased, but due to a delay in establishing

governmental measures, the needs of parents with autistic children weren't satisfied, because many autistic children were diagnosed but unable to receive therapy. Thus, the parents of autistic children started autistic children's educational facilities themselves.

These founders of early private organizations largely contributed in the promotion of autistic children's treatment and education projects in China through the practice of creating the way funds and how organizations should be handled as well as the treatment guidance system learned from the experiences of countries

Table 1 Movement of Major Support in 10 Years

Established Period	Group and Contents of Support	Main Body of Establishment
October 1991	Beijing Joint Association for the Parents of Autistic Children	Parents and autism researchers
December 1993	Beijing Association for Rehabilitation of Autistic Children	Social Business Group (the first autism association in China)
March 1993	Beijing Rehabilitation Center for Autistic Children	Beijing Association for Rehabilitation of Autistic Children
December 1993	Beijing Stars and Rain Education Institute for Autism	Parents (the first private training facility for autistic children)
March 1994	Staff Treatment and Education Center Regarding Autistic Children's Rehabilitation	Cooperation of the Beijing Autistic Children Rehabilitation Association and the Special School for the Mentally Disabled in Fengtai, Beijing
October 1994	"Practical Training Plan Regarding Pre-School and Compulsory Education for Autistic Children"	Beijing Municipal Commission of Education
March 1995	Dalian Parents' Joint Association for Autistic Children	Parents
March 1995	Liaoning Experimental Classes for Autistic Children	Special School for the Mentally Disabled in Shahekou, Dalian
September 1995	Education and Research Team for Autistic Children, Graduate School for Specializing Autistic Children's Education	Liaoning Normal University
August 1995	"Chinese Revised Version of the Psychoeducation Profile (PEP) for Autistic Children/Children with Developmental Disorders"	National Education Department Research Program
September 1996	Autistic Children's Parents' Joint Association in Shanghai	Parents

more advanced in this field.

C. Dawn of the 21st Century

After the year 2000, the Chinese people deepened their recognition of the concept of autistic disorder as well as the treatment and education for autistic children. Many people established rehabilitation associations and parents' joint associations in big and middle sized cities, including Wuhan, Harbin, Guangzhou, Shenzhen, Nanjing, Qingdao, Changsha and Chengdu. Also, a cooperative movement among private organizations for autistic children's treatment and education, and experts in overseas countries expanded in various forms. As a result, autism can now be medically diagnosed with DSM-IV at expert hospitals in middle sized or larger cities (Sun, 2004). Therapies used for autistic children are varied, such as sensory integrative therapy, play therapy, behavior therapy, psychotherapy, medical therapy, food and drink therapy, and so on (Xu, et. al., 2005). Early education for those of pre-school age is mostly done through short period therapy at private facilities for autistic children. Short education training for pre-school age is only conducted by a few schools for disabled children, experimental groups and pre-school handling groups. Regular schools conduct classes for minor level autistic children in the form of integrated education.

At the turn of the century, a full scale administrative movement was starting to emerge. Based on the "Outline of the

11th 5-year (2006-2010) Plan of Disabled Chinese People Project" issued on May 25, 2006 by the State Council of the People's Republic of China, the China Disabled Person's Federation determined the measures found in, "Key Points of Rehabilitation Work for Disabled People in China, 2006". Included in the report are contents of the first formal measures regarding autism, in particular, "instructing establishment of experimental working plans for autistic children's rehabilitation and training and startup of a local experimental working plan". Taking this opportunity, the movement to recognize pervasive developmental disorders including autism, which had not been included in the frame of mental disorder, by law started. Direction to examine certifying and establishing model experimental therapy facilities for autistic people on the provincial and municipal level was indicated, too. Therefore, developing future political measures, therapy and support for autistic children has become a big challenge.

(3) Problems in support

A. There are many autistic children who have never received support

According to the results of the "Report on the Research Extracting Disabled Children from 0 to 6 Years Old on a National Scale in 2001" (Yang, 2000), 50.82% of 0 to 6 year old children with mental disorders did not receive proper support, including treatment and rehabilitation (Yang, 2004). A majority of

autistic children mainly receive training at home. In the "Investigative Report of Home Education for Pre-School Age Specific Children in Beijing," even in the capital, which is the most advanced area in China for working with specific children, there is little social support for such children. The total number of parents who have ever received support from a group, such as the civil administration, a disabled people's joint association or rehabilitation organizations is less than 15.0%. This shows how apparent it is that many Chinese autistic children are not receiving any support. One reason is because government administration and welfare sections don't have sufficient support systems for autistic children. Also, there are a lack of expert medical organizations that can diagnose and train autistic children, a lack of experts who are well acquainted with developmental disorder, a lack of parental awareness and financial problems, all of those problems needing to be solved.

B. Systems are not established for early autism diagnosis in infants and early therapy

According to statistics released by the Mental Health Research Center of Peking University, of the 1,180 autistic children who met the standard of DSM-IV from 1986 to 2001, 41.3% were diagnosed between the age of 25 months to 36 months, and 35.2% were diagnosed after 36 months of age. The rate of children

who had their first medical examination earlier than 36 months was 21.4%, while those doing so after 36 months was 78.6% (Yang, 2004). Moreover, people who were medically examined right after abnormality was detected were only 9.0% (Sun, 2004). From this data, we can see that many autistic children didn't receive proper diagnosis and treatment at an early stage. Blame has been assigned to the fact that the Chinese baby health checkup system is not perfected. In large and medium sized cities in China, they conduct baby checkups. If abnormalities are noticed, children can receive experts' diagnosis. But in small cities and rural areas, there are no experts and even if they suspect their child has a problem, they cannot get a quick diagnosis. As a result, even when a problem is disclosed with a baby, it is not rare for a diagnosis to be made several years later, after the baby has entered early childhood.

Also, the so-called experts use DSM-IV to diagnose, but it's pointed out that the degree of observation and evaluation of autistic children from the viewpoint of therapeutic guidance and development support based on the psychological development of babies is weak (Shirasaki, 2003). At hospitals and children's centers where autism can be diagnosed, there is no process to proceed from diagnosis to guidance and development support, so that even today, many diagnosed cases of childhood autism don't quickly enter therapy.

C. Private autistic children's facilities are relied on for early therapy of pre-school autistic children

In China, pre-school age autistic children are not permitted to enter regular kindergartens. Also, there have been cases in which teachers at schools for mentally disabled children refuse entrance to autistic children because they don't have expert knowledge about autism. Early therapy for autistic children naturally relies on short period educational training at private educational organizations. In China, one of the entities really working to educate autistic children is Beijing Stars and Rain Education Institute for Autism, the first such facility in the country. Currently, many of the heads of private training organization facilities for autistic children in China are parents who received parent and child support training at "Stars and Rain". The founder of the Shanghai Silent Angel Kindergarten is one such parent. As of 2006, there are more than 50 private facilities offering treatment and education for autistic children in China, established by the parents of such children. While there are not many private facilities for autistic children, there are many families who hope to get into these facilities. Therefore, there is a backlog of autistic children who are waiting to enter these few private facilities. Background, opportunity, training policy and the adoption of a

training system are different at each private training organization. According to research conducted at private autistic children's facilities in China about the needs of mothers of autistic children on children's care support and development support, it became apparent that there have been a considerable number of cases where mothers pull their children out of facilities because they are not satisfied with the educational policy at the private facility and their children's insufficient development (Lv, & Takahashi, 2004).

D. Low school enrollment ratio in school-age children

There has been some movement by government administrations such as the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China to meet the objective of, "...offering proper educational places for autistic children who it seems possible to educate" in their "Special Education Plan" for the education involved "9-5" Plan (Sun, 2004). However, in reality, the entrance into schools of autistic children is not defined within the scale of 9 year compulsory education. Only a very few mild level autistic children finish their compulsory education at schools for disabled children or regular schools in urban areas, then spending their lives at home or facilities for mentally disabled adults.

III. Current Conditions and Problems of Private Autistic Children Facilities – Cases from Beijing Stars and Rain Education Institute for Autism and Shanghai Silent Angel Kindergarten

(1) Beijing Stars and Rain Education Institute for Autism

Writers heard a lecture delivered by Tian, Huiping, the head of Beijing Stars and Rain Education Institute for Autism, at the Institute of Human Sciences of Ritsumeikan University in March 2006, and obtained some data of the Institute. We'll introduce the current conditions of this institute based on those data.

A. Purpose of establishment

The Beijing Stars and Rain Education Institute for Autism (hereafter, Stars and Rain) was established in 1993 as the first private NGO in China to offer educational services to autistic children and their families. The purpose of its founding was based on the following 3 points. The first is to help children with autism through a well developed, structured Individual Education Plan. The second is to help parents to understand autism and to learn the skills they need to improve their children's daily life. And the third is to help Chinese society to recognize and accept people with autism and other disabilities. (Quoted from the website of Stars and Rain)

B. Therapy and education at Stars and Rain

1) History

According to the annual report 2004 of Stars and Rain, there had been 3,164 autistic children who had received advice, individual guidance or home training guidance, and 1,249 parents who had received training in the 12 years since its foundation. These were the largest totals in China. Currently, Stars and Rain is leading the way in the therapy and education of autistic children in China. Looking at the development of Stars and Rain since its foundation, there have been 4 stages.

First Stage: Period of determining the organization's direction. It was the initial stage of Stars and Rain's foundation (1993). The major service was to take care of autistic children 24 hours a day, but there were problems about the form of this service and what type of organization Stars and Rain would strive to become.

Second Stage: The period when the parents' participation system made some progress. In this second stage, which continued until the middle of 1995, the system changed for autistic children from 24 hour care to commuting, and parents' participation was requested. The facility thought about appropriate ways of service that suit the Chinese home condition, examples of which include the establishment of parents' work groups and active usage of communication notebooks with family members.

Third Stage: The period when parents' applied behavior analysis (ABA) training system started. In this stage, Stars and

Rain's service period changed to 3 months and a parents' ABA training system was established.

Fourth Stage: The period of making the parents' ABA training system more systematized, specialized and regulated in order to develop it to an international level. (Annual Report 2004 of Beijing Stars and Rain Education Institute for Autism)

2) Contents of treatment and education

Treatment and education include the offering of service and advice as well as home training guidance to children in all parts of the autistic spectrum, their parents and families, and to let those who treat and educate (including parents) autistic spectrum children to learn the techniques of "behavior therapy". In detail, this is separated into following three areas: 1) Offering individual therapy service to autistic children from 3 to 12 years of age using ABA, 2) In what is currently the most emphasized point, having parents acquire ABA training techniques and the home training guidance program in 11 weeks, while developing a continuing guidance system after the child graduates, and 3) Holding workshops in areas away from Beijing (Annual Report 2004 Of Beijing Stars and Rain Education Institute for Autism).

(2) Shanghai Silent Angel Kindergarten

Writers conducted interviews and observed teachers and parents of autistic children with the cooperation of Shanghai Silent Angel Kindergarten for 2 weeks in

February 2006. We'd like to introduce the current conditions of the facility based on the results of our investigation.

A. Aspect of establishment

The city in which Shanghai Silent Angel Kindergarten (hereafter "Silent Angel") is located, Shanghai, is one of the 4 elite government-ruled municipalities in China. It is a large city with a population of 17,780,000 and is the center of national finance, commerce, trade and industry. Shanghai is the leading center of education and medicine in China. There are 3 types of educational organizations for disabled children in the city; special education and regular schools (in the form of united education called "suibanjiuxue"), mainly operated by the government, and private educational facilities. However, the united groups of special education schools and regular schools are mainly used for deaf-mute and blind children, and mentally or physically disabled children, including those with cerebral palsy. Therefore, most autistic children are not admitted by them. According to estimates by the Shanghai Mental Health Center, the number of Kanner type autism cases in Shanghai is more than 10,000. There are no clear statistics on the number of Asperger and atypical type autistic children. Since many autistic children do not receive proper diagnosis, treatment or education, some parents of autistic children asked the Local Welfare Ministry in 2003 for permission to rent an abandoned kindergarten at Pingfu

Housing Complex in Xuhui Ward from the government at a low price and to establish an educational organization, Silent Angel, by themselves. Silent Angel was the first private therapeutic facility for autistic children in Shanghai. It is located a bit far from the center of Shanghai, taking a drive of about 50 minutes.

B. Therapy and education at Silent Angel

1) Outline of establishment

Silent Angel is a private welfare facility NGO founded with the permission of the Local Welfare Ministry. Representative of the corporate body is one of the mothers of autistic children, Jiang Liming. Silent Angel conducts methodical early therapy to autistic children aged 3 to 9 years old from Shanghai and the surrounding area. Its purpose is to promote early education of autistic children, to deepen the awareness of parents of autistic children about autism and to acquire knowledge and techniques helpful for their children's everyday lives. Furthermore, it wished to establish an environment and living space comfortable for autistic children as

researches pushed forward. During its 3 years of existence, approximately 160 autistic children have received training (quoted from the Silent Angel website).

2) Organization

Because it is an NGO, Silent Angel cannot receive grant money from the national government. Operating funds are raised through a monthly guidance fee, 1,800 yuan paid by parents, irregular donations from the Shanghai City Benevolent Fund Group and a few individual donations.

As shown in Figure 2, Silent Angel's operation is comprised of 3 departments; Administration, Education and External Development. The Administration Department conducts internal management, fund management and systems operation. The Education Department mainly sets subject curriculums, researches educational content, guides teachers and evaluates children. The External Development Department is in charge of external communication, advertisement and the publication of the organizations official bulletin, "Silent Angel Message".

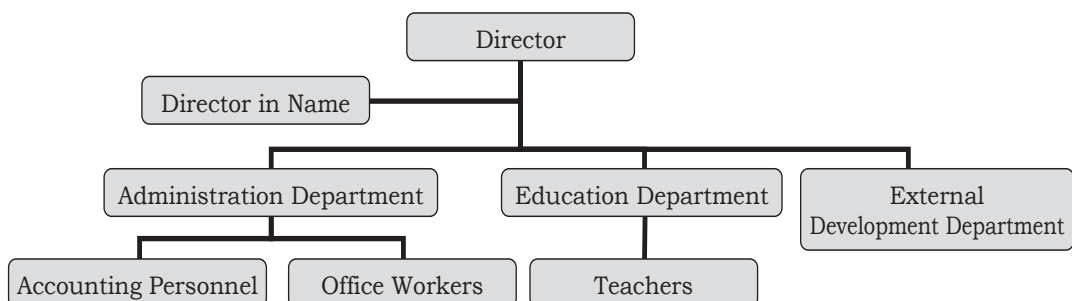


Figure 2 Organization Chart of "Silent Angel"

(Note: writers created it by referring to the "Annual Report 2006 of Shanghai Silent Angel Kindergarten")

3) Flow of support and content of therapy

The flow of support at Silent Angel starts from parent's inquiry. When a parent calls Silent Angel, it asks the parent to visit. Initially, the organization hands out information such as brochures to introduce aspects of Silent Angel. Then, the parent is asked to fill out forms concerning their child's growth, development and other conditions to obtain data on the child. After that, therapy begins as the parent and child commute to the facility.

When the child comes to the facility, teachers from the Education Department observe the child and hold IEP (Individual Education Plan) evaluation meetings, using the growth and development form and condition form to help them. In detail, a comprehensive evaluation is conducted using the "PEP examination", the "WISC-III intelligence test" or the "Shuangxi measurement chart" (Taiwan), depending on each child's condition, to come up with a total evaluation for each level of recognition, language, physical movement and sociability. From the results of the evaluation, teachers plan a therapy guidance program and decide which class the child enters. At that point, full-scale therapy starts. Therapy for children is comprised of individual guidance and group guidance, as per ABA therapy, sensory integrative training and music therapy. At the same time, counseling and conferencing with parents regarding

the therapy guidance program the school has created for their child begins. Also, the group supports parents by delivering training methods at home, pointing out what needs to be noted, and teaching home therapy measures. As of March 2006, 12 teachers administer therapy training to 35 autistic children separated into 4 classes.

(3) Prospects in the Current Conditions and Future Assignments

In this section, the authors analyze the current condition and examine future assignments.

A. Current development support measures for autistic children and problems in China

Movement in development support for autistic children in China has been making progress little by little. However, compared to the rate of new cases every year, the current movement doesn't come close to fulfilling the support needs. At this point, it is felt that the biggest issue that needs resolving as soon as possible is what kind of measures will offer support that meets the needs of all autistic children and their families. Through the interview conducted at this time, we'd like to note the following measures and assignments.

1) Measures regarding early detection and early diagnosis of autistic children

Compared with 10 years ago, the age of autism diagnosis has dropped thanks to an increase in the numbers of medical

doctors who can diagnose autism at children's hospitals. Also, the gap in autism detection rates between children living in big cities and middle-small-sized towns is narrowing. However, some pediatric doctors and medical health nurses who conduct medical checkup on babies don't have enough knowledge of psychiatric medicine, so the screening capability for development disorders, including autism, is very weak. As a result, early stage discovery of autistic children is overlooked. In order to discovery and diagnose autistic children in early stage it is very important to acquire more child psychiatric experts and enrich the health examination system for babies in China. For example, when doctors who will conduct baby health are training with psychiatric knowledge, items to check developmental disorders can be added into their training course. It will be a very effective measure to discover and diagnose early autism in children.

2) Support based on law

In existing legislation, the Chinese government has issued a "Constitution of the People's Republic of China," the "Disabled People's Security Law of the People's Republic of China," the "Education Law of the People's Republic of China" as well as the by law, "Education Ordinance for Disabled People". Also, measures regarding autistic children's rehabilitation training were recently issued in the "Key Points of Rehabilitation Work for Disabled

People in China, 2006". However, it is necessary to formulate a detailed scale and set of contents to conduct autistic children's compulsory education as well as measures for early therapy and rehabilitation training. Law based support means all children with developmental disorders, including autistic children, can receive support without being left behind.

3) Building a comprehensive medical treatment and care system with the cooperation of welfare, education, society and health care

To build a comprehensive medical treatment and care system for autistic children, it is necessary to have support from various fields, including welfare, education, society and health care. Currently, early therapy models for disabled children in China are conducted mainly in 4 ways: home therapy, therapy at training and rehabilitation centers, comprehensive medical treatment and care system (cooperation between training-rehabilitation centers and home) and medical rehabilitation therapy. However, most autistic children only have the home therapy model available, and only a few of them are receiving short period therapy under comprehensive medical treatment and care system model at a facility such as Stars and Rain. On the other hand, under the special education system in China, only mild level autistic children can be accepted by special kindergartens or special groups of regular kindergartens. Many autistic

children must rely on their parents for early education. Support program should be developed by each the welfare, education, society and health care fields, so that children can use all models. For that, we consider ensuring the opportunity of early education for autistic children to be the first step in building a comprehensive medical treatment and care system.

B. The present and future of private organizations

Private facilities, as the main part to support autistic children currently, have developed rapidly in the past 10 years. On the website “China Autism Network”, there are many names of private facilities for autistic children listed. This seems to show the results of increasing the needs of parents with autistic children, and at the same time to no small extent, the chaos of the conditions for national support of autistic children.

The two facilities introduced above, “Stars and Rain” and “Silent Angel”, are approved as formal private facilities for autistic children, because they obtained permission from the Civil Administration and Education Ministries. However, although both are private facilities for autistic children established by parents, their operating policies, emphasized educational subjects and contents are different.

“Stars and Rain” has introduced overseas treatment and educational methods while grouping supporting methods matching the condition of autism

in China. As a result, its focus is to let people (including parents) who treat and educate children throughout the autism spectrum learn the techniques of “behavior treatment”. The main body for the subject of therapy is the parents. The advantage of this method is to let parents acquire this training technique involves the parents more actively in their children’s treatment and education. By having parents’ participation in the training, their way of thinking can be shaped. Also, there is a big advantage in gaining opportunities to train more autistic children.

The focus of “Silent Angel”, however, is to conduct early therapy on autistic children with subsidiary programs to support parents. However, parents don’t directly participate, so they may not sufficiently understand the therapy’s purpose. Often, they just leave the therapy of their children to the teachers at Silent Angel.

The subjects of the services and support at such private facilities for autistic children are those children’s parents and family members, but in reality, they cannot respond to every need. Also, managers and advisors at private facilities want, as a first priority, to study to gain specialized knowledge and to receive training to improve their guidance methods and ways of advice to the set contents of the service subjects. However, there is no special organization at which teachers can receive training and advice, and there are very few

detailed and systematic data or specialized books on therapy and training methods for autistic children. Furthermore, as these children grow, therapy systems and support methods for autistic preteens, adolescents and adults must change, creating new needs for parents.

When a child is diagnosed with autism, it is necessary for a family to accept it. At the same time, it becomes necessary to have a total support system, including systems for child development, education and training, and family lifestyle, as well as support from the community and society. However, currently, families with autistic children in China hardly receive any systematic support with public expertise. Also, many doctors and special educators in the public sector don't have expert knowledge regarding development disorders, including autism, so autistic children have very little chance of receiving public system support. Currently, the majority of support for autistic children comes from private facilities. However, due to limited funding, manpower and social resources, the support given by private facilities is insufficient for parents and families of autistic children. To establish a systematic support system with expertise in development disorders including autism, it is necessary for private facilities to cooperate with the fields of health care, education and welfare to establish a network of private organizations and encourage others to provide fair welfare

opportunities to families with autistic children. Additionally, it will become very important for them to cooperate with local communities to improve social understanding, while actively providing service for families of autistic patients and using networks made up of those families.

IV. Conclusion

Nearly 20 years have passed since the first diagnosis of autism was made in China. People enthusiastic about autistic children projects and the families of autistic children have been continually seeking methods of therapy and education for autistic children and making an effort to look for support in China. We believe in developing a support system in the near future that allows every autistic child in China to receive scientific therapy and education programs that correspond with his or her life stage.

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