Exploring the Notion of the Family Friendly City

Riela Provi Drianda
Faculty of Social Sciences Waseda University
1-6-1, Nishi-waseda, Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo, 169-8050, JAPAN
drianda@aoni.waseda.jp

Abstract. There is a common perception that downtown areas will never attract families and big cities are not the best place to raise children. Particularly the downtown areas of cities been depicted as the place where criminals, prostitutes, drug-sellers, and other dangerous strangers live. People with children are more likely to look for the suburbs to find bigger housing with more affordable prices, cleaner air, richer nature, a slower lifestyle, and safer environment. However, living in the modern suburb is not always easy and cheap, especially for those who need to commute to the central city. Dealing with the long commutes can be stressful and it affects the health, happiness, and well-being of family members. As the number of modern families with both parents in the workforce is rising, the demand to live closer to the workplace is getting stronger and growing. In some parts of the world, more families increasingly want to live in the cities. This trend can be seen in the United States, Japan, Korea, and Canada. Being family-friendly has become increasingly important for modern cities as more millennial generation show the tendency to raise their families in the urban area. Moreover, it is predicted that two-thirds of world’s population will live in cities by 2030. To accommodate the growing population, in particular, those with children, modern cities should be developed to suit urban families. But what criteria and qualities make one city more family-friendly than another? What would a family-friendly city look like? To date, the number studies exploring the notion of the family-friendly city has been very limited. Most studies have been focusing on the notion of family-friendly dwellings, family-friendly workplaces, or child-friendly cities. This paper brings together and examines the dominant and recurring ideas about the family-friendly city represented in the relevant literature and current urban practices. This paper also questions whether the concept of the child-friendly city is adequate to create a better environment to raise families in the city.

1. Introduction
By 2030, it is predicted that two third of the world’s population will live in cities. This prediction signifies the potential increase in urban upbringing in the coming years and it highlights the necessity for modern cities to provide more conducive environments for raising families. Since 1925, cities, particularly the downtown areas, have been perceived as places where hobos, criminals, and poor people gather; thus, people believe that downtown will never attract families. The hustle and bustle of cities has been viewed as an inappropriate environment to raise a child. Once people start a family and have children, they are most likely to move to the suburbs area so they can get bigger housing and a safer environment for their child. Those, who are left in the cities, are mostly families that have no choice about where to live and are dependent on government subsidy for their well-being. In other parts, downtown neighbourhoods are mostly occupied by singles, gays, and empty-nesters. Many scholars believe that this influences the demographic balances, socio-economic conditions, and the sustainability of the city itself.
However, recently there has been a surge of young people flocking back into the city. Millennials might not always stay in the urban core but increasingly young parents choose to raise their families in the urban settings. Compared to the earlier generation, these young urban professional parents (YUPPs) are less interested in having big houses and living far away from the city centre. They prefer to live closer to the urban amenities and adjust their lifestyle by living in a smaller space and using the whole city as their backyard. The middle-class families have started to reclaim the city by constructing their own spaces and are actively engaged in shaping the public domain such as by creating informal playgrounds on the sidewalks or on a larger scale by their consumption pattern and lifestyle choices [1]. Some cities such as Vancouver, Tokyo, Amsterdam, and Toronto have recognized these growing demands and started to transform urban spaces to meet the needs of families such as by providing family apartment units, building public playgrounds and plazas, and providing more day-care, after-school hours and various family-related activities in the central area. The astonishing rise of millennial urban families signifies the necessity for urban planners to design a city that is more family-friendly. But what makes a city good for raising a millennial family? How could we define a family-friendly city?

This paper brings together and examines the dominant and recurring ideas about the family-friendly city represented in the relevant literature and current urban practices. The paper begins with a review of the ills of urban living and the reasons why many families chose to settle in suburb areas. The next section discusses the suburban decline and the tendency of young professional families to reside closer to the urban core. Following this, the paper examines the term family-friendly used in the society and questions how we should define a city that suits family life. The last part of this paper summarizes the definition of the family-friendly city and the challenges that need to be addressed to create a better city for families.

2. Finding the best place to raise a family: the city vs suburban areas

2.1 The ills of urban living

Since the industrial revolution, cities have been portrayed as places that are unsuitable for raising a family. The revolution had transformed the urban landscape into a harsher environment for many people to live in. During this time, cities became the centre of industrial growth and attracted many migrants to work and live in their core areas. The expansion happened very quickly and gave very little chance for the cities to accommodate the growing population. The newly arrived migrants often settled in the poorest urban neighbourhoods and occupied the slums areas. Families were huddled in small, dirty and dilapidate tenement rooms. There were no proper waste disposal systems and the newly arrived residents often did not know how to manage their environment. Cities were very dirty, polluted, crowded and people no longer knew their neighbours well. The growth of cities led to unexpected living conditions where epidemics frequently broke out and crimes rose sharply. In addition to this, the urban growth divided the cities into several types of settlements and land-use. Central cities were mostly occupied by the newly arrived immigrants, the poor working class, and ghettos residents. The immigrants settled in these areas because housing values were relatively low and the areas were closer to the factories. The urban core was portrayed by Burgess, a famous Chicago School Theorist, as the zones of slums and ‘bad lands’ with their poverty, degradation, disease, and underworlds of crime. Those who accumulated more economic resourced moved to the zone of better-residence. This settlement offered more spacious areas for middle-class families. During this time, the affluent families were more likely to reside in the urban outskirts. The influx of immigrants and farmers to the central cities had driven the richer communities to escape the city and seek refuge in the suburban area [2].

This practice continues in numerous countries. Even though some urban cores have become much better in terms of physical design, hygiene, and environment, they still end up in being designed as places where the residents tend to give up on having children and raising a family. The ultra-dense cities of eastern Asia and some American big cities are still childless. Big cities are still seen as inappropriate places for raising a family due to the shifting sexual demographics, and economic and moral disasters [3]. This signifies how core cities could only attract the young and fail to keep the residents as they age.
and start families [4]. It further signifies how cities, even with their impressive achievements and outstanding architectures, could not accommodate the whole lifecycle of many urbanites.

2.2 The suburban dream

The damage of the urban core had generated a massive exodus to the suburbs. People who want to escape from the crowds, noise, pollution, and fear of immigrants moved to the hinterlands to seek a better quality of life. Feller [5] described one suburb housing-commercial brochure published during the industrial revolution as a tempting ad. The suburbs were illustrated as areas that offer freedom from dust and smoke and one could have desirable neighbours. During this time, suburban areas were portrayed as the urbanist paradise that offers a greener, cleaner, and safer place to raise a family. Suburbs in America were labelled as a growing-up place where the communities consisted of only the affluent, single-family homeowners and people of one race [6]. Meanwhile, in other countries with homogenous races such as Indonesia, Japan, and China, suburban area not only become an escaping destination for the richer families, but also for the middle-low income families who are looking for more affordable housing in a healthier environment.

The suburb appears as a settlement that can guarantee the family’s happiness and can meet their expectations whether in neighbourhood qualities or good school systems [7]. Compared to the city core, the urban hinterland offers lower density, which is often perceived as a place that is safer, more satisfying, and has a lower risk of depression [6]. Safety is one of the features offered by the suburban housing developers hence many housing complexes were developed with excessive attention to the security. Security fortresses have become a common feature of suburban housing complexes. All buildings and transport systems are inter-connected and all points of entry are protected by private security forces [8].

While suburbs seem to offer an ideal environment for raising children, some suburban residents expressed their concerns about the time and energy they lost during the commuting time. Christian [9] described how for one hour in daily commuting, the male respondents in his research decreased their time with their spouse with 21 to 21.8 minutes and 18.6 minutes with their children [9]. As for the female respondents, he described how their one hour increase in daily commuting is equal to a 11.9 minutes decrease in time with friends. However, Christian’s [9] study showed how females must reallocate time from other usages at greater rates. For example, they need to reduce exercise or skip preparing a healthy meal.

The long commutes reduce the opportunity for one of the parents to engage in full-time work especially when they lack child-rearing support from the day-care or family members. This situation forces one of the parents to work from home or to sacrifice their career for the sake of their children. In addition to this, the cost living in suburban areas is not as cheap as expected. The commuting cost including the highway tickets and gasoline could be significant, particularly if the living area is not connected by integrated public transportation. Brown and Roberts [10] argued that long commutes also sacrifice other activities that are beneficial to well-being and participation in family life. Parents’ work-stress will influence their children and it can also decrease parents’ productivity in the workplace [11]. A study by Li [12] underlined how fathers’ commuting activity influence children’s social relationships. The farther the father’s commuting distance, the less likely children will have good peer relationships. The long commutes prevent fathers to participate in child-rearing and they often report physical fatigue and strains when they come home. Li [12] argues that parents’ mental and physical health is a very important resource to promote healthy child development.

Longer commuting trips are also associated with fewer socially oriented trips and less access to social capital [13]. Delmelle [14] also highlighted how commutes of 30 minutes or more have a negative effect on social satisfaction. In addition to this, suburban living also poses a risk of social isolation [15]. Miller argued that the social and spatial structure of suburbia can promote familial isolation through a lack of public space and an emphasis on home maintenance and home-centred entertainment.

2.3 Living closer to the core
In recent years, there have been some changes in the behaviour of young professional parents in some countries such as The Netherlands, the US, and Canada [16]. Compared to the previous generations, today’s parents show more interest in staying closer to the central area, particularly the young urban and professional parents. Urbanized suburbs and downtown areas have become some of the favourite places where these young parents prefer to live. The urbanization of edge cities has transformed the traditional residential community into a more complex mix of domiciliary and economic functions. These shifting suburban areas are often landlocked, therefore, they could not expand their territory outward. The only choice left is to expand the territory upward and with these vertical urbanism characteristics, the distinction between the cities and the suburbs has become blurrier, particularly in large contemporary metro areas [17].

Some young urbanites started to look more comfortable in raising their kids in high-rise buildings. In many core cities, the downtown areas are no longer seen as dangerous and inappropriate areas for raising children. As for these young urbanites, the whole city is becoming their living room and hinterland areas have become destinations for their weekend getaways. Even though they probably live in smaller places than before, they have more access and freedom to explore the surrounding urban parks, museums, and community centres. Living with kids in a smaller space is stressful for them but the millennial parents make some efforts to stay closer to the city by adjusting their lifestyle such as reducing the number of furniture in their house [18].

Today’s families, or also known as millennial families, are debunking the stereotype of the traditional family. The lifestyle and values they hold are quite different from the previous generation. Futurecast has divided millennial families into a number of categories, starting from those with a more stable income to the families on a tighter budget. As for the families with more stable income and higher education level, children come first and they were least likely to sacrifice time with family [19]. Even though they have enough money to spend they shop wisely and teach their kids to value money. Parents in this category are also health conscious, child-oriented, and they actively seek parenting related information from online resources [19]. In line with this, McCulloch, and McCann [20] also argued that many millennial parents greatly value parenting, about a 10 percent increase over the previous generation. This may explain why the young urban professional parents (YUPPs) tend to avoid long commutes and live closer to the core so that they can have more time with their children.

Vancouver and Toronto have started to respond to the rising demands of these YUPPs. These cities have started to accommodate the need for bigger rooms for the downtown condominiums after discovering that the residents have difficulties to store children’s stuff in the small apartment rooms. From the very beginning, the condominiums were not built and designed with the family needs in mind, thus, there is not enough space to put the baby stroller and/or children’s bicycles. This situation leads many families with small children to use the bathtub to store children’s stroller and bicycles. To accommodate the growing needs of YUPP families, the government of Toronto established guidelines for vertical neighbourhoods and buildings fit for families with children. Vancouver also echoes this movement as the number of Vancouverite who move into multi-family units such as apartments and condominiums is rising significantly.

The tendency of young families to live closer to the core area is also shown in other big cities such as Amsterdam and Tokyo. The rise of YUPPs who live in the downtown and urbanized city’s edge has transformed the urban landscape and generated the birth of family-oriented consumption spaces [16]. This situation can be seen also in Tokyo, which faces a significant increase of families living near urban core. The ultra-convenience of the Greater Tokyo Region has increasingly attracted young families to leave the countryside and reside nearer to the capital area. To respond to their needs, numerous housing units and condominium complexes for families have been built intensively within the Greater Tokyo Region.

Even though the four cities above have started to identify the necessity to create a family-friendly environment for their young professional inhabitants, their initiatives are quite rare. Other core cities have not completely considered the needs of families or transformed their physical and social environment to suit family life. The ultra-dense cities of Eastern Asia such as Hong Kong, Singapore,
and Seoul exhibit the lowest fertility rates on the planet. Kotkin [21] further argues that to flourish, these core cities need to change and be responsive to the different human needs - from birth to the end of life. Otherwise, cities will be childless and only filled with singles who will leave the area or emigrate when they grow old and start families.

3. The notion of family-friendly and the family-friendly city

The term of family-friendly was introduced mainly in the field of personnel management [22, 23, and 24]. This term is used to define the opportunity for women in particular, to juggle their career and family life. The term family-friendly is also used to describe the type of community-based service given to children and families [25]. However, there is very limited academic research investigating the term family-friendly from the perspective of urban physical and social planning. Recent studies have focused on the development of the child-friendly city instead of the family-friendly city. Compare to the term ‘family-friendly city’, a ‘child-friendly city’ has a more lucid definition and the term has been officially acknowledged by many governments and institutions as the platform to ensure the rights of every child in the city. The child-friendly city initiatives promoted by UNICEF have guided many cities in the inclusion of children’s rights in their goals, programmes, components, and structures.

**Table 1.** Child’s rights in the city. [26]

| No. | Rights to                                      |
|-----|-----------------------------------------------|
| 1   | Influence decisions about their city          |
| 2   | Express their opinion on the city they want   |
| 3   | Participate in family, community, and social life |
| 4   | Receive basic services such as healthcare and education |
| 5   | Drink safe water and have access to proper sanitation |
| 6   | Be protected from exploitation, violence, and abuse |
| 7   | Walk safely in the streets on their own       |
| 8   | Meet friends and play                         |
| 9   | Have green spaces for plants and animals      |
| 10  | Live in an unpolluted environment             |
| 11  | Participate in cultural and social events      |
| 12  | Be an equal citizen of their city with access to every service regardless of ethnic origin, religion, income, gender, or disability |

There have been magnificent and outstanding movements to make today’s cities friendlier for children such as providing more spaces where children can play in their neighbourhood or even developing official children’s forums in the city. However, this paper argues that the concept of the child-friendly city (CFC) itself could not solely support young urbanites to raise a family in the city. The concept does not completely represent the needs or considers the characteristics of other family members who act as the children’s guardians. In addition to this, the CFC concept does not discuss family’s access to economic capital. The costs of raising a child in the city from birth to maturity are quite expensive. Apart from food budget, the young parents need to rent or buy property that suits family activities and is also close enough to their workplace, groceries, and childcare facilities. The provision of housing that suits families and of spaces and places for children in a family-friendly planning idea should be followed by the effort to increase affordable and decent housing for the middle-class family and even increase the service of public transportation or other mechanisms that would support parents’ trip chains.

Supporting parents’ trip chains is very important to ensure that parents can balance their work and family life. In households with children, women create substantially more complex trip chains than women in households without children. This situation led women with children to travel in private vehicles to juggle multiple activities within a limited time. As women have always taken a bigger
responsibility in maintaining the household, the lack of workplaces that offer family-friendly policies and benefits can also impact their choices to join the workforce or even to have a child. The attitudes toward women with children are still discriminative in some parts of the world. It is not always easy to find or change job for women with children. Inflexible working hours and long commutes often prevent women to take on full-time employment. If cities continue to be designed or end up being designed as places where women cannot balance work and family life, then women with higher education might prefer the childless lifestyle as what happened in many countries nowadays.

As important as mothers are, today’s fathers also play very important roles in raising their families [27]. Unlike the previous generation, the millennial fathers are more likely to participate in child-raising. The change in fathers’ attitudes signifies the necessity to improve the child-rearing facilities within the cities. The increased roles of fathers in family-raising should also be considered in the design of the family-friendly city for example by installing diaper-changing stations in men’s toilets or introducing more incentives for fathers who participate in child-raising activities. The millennial fathers are also showing the tendency to participate in local movements and civic participation and they know that their voices can influence how the city works.

Based on the phenomena discussed above, this paper argues that several matters need to be considered in the development of the family-friendly city. Both physical and non-physical factors contributing to the family’s well-being in the city should be addressed carefully, such as family’s access to economic capital, family-friendly transportation, considering current trends such as the shifting roles of modern parents and different characteristics of millennial families.

### Table 2. Key features of family-friendly planning. [28]

| No. | Key feature                                      |
|-----|-------------------------------------------------|
| 1   | Housing                                         |
| 2   | Spaces and places for children                  |
| 3   | Inclusive, high quality of public space         |
| 4   | Greening the city                               |
| 5   | Knowledge-based urban planning                   |
| 6   | Children as stakeholders                        |

### 4. Cities that suit families

The above discussion showed how the use of the term family-friendly is not yet uniform and similarly, there is still very limited discussion about what a ‘family-friendly city’ is. There are very few studies that have investigated the notion of the family-friendly city and the things that should be developed to support family’s well-being and sustainability in the modern cities. Even so, for a long time, people have believed that families could not thrive well in the big city particularly the core areas. To some extent, the industrial revolution had influenced people’s perception of the ideal place to raise a family. The following section discusses insights from some cases of the American ideal ‘family-friendly city’. Smaller towns, suburb cities, and less dense cities are considered by most American families as a good place to start a family. The latest surveys by Forbes, Niche, and Kiernan revealed the criteria used to define a family-friendly city from the perspective of American families (see Table 3).

Table 3 indicates how American families define some criteria of the family-friendly city in the same way. Some common criteria included the availability of affordable housing, urban safety, and education quality. Despite some similarities, there are also some subtle but important differences to help understand and enrich our perspectives. For instance, Forbes mentioned commuting as one of its family-friendly city criteria. As described in the previous section, millennial parents are less likely to sacrifice their time with family, thus, commuting time has become one of their considerations in choosing a home location.

However, commuting may not be the only factor contributing to the friendliness of a city for family life. A survey by Niche revealed different factors such as the importance of outdoor activities, the
percentage of children under 17 in the area, and the diversity to make a city friendlier for families. These
criteria are aligned with the latest research by Futurecast [19] which described how millennial families
value life-experience and changed the way people look at diversity. For these families, it is important to
ensure that their kids have access to great outdoor experiences and encounter different people. The
survey showed that millennials may not be very rich but they would spend their money on facilitating
their children to experience more in life [19].

Table 3. Criteria of Family-Friendly City (American version). [30, 31, and 32]

| Criteria          | Forbes                     | Niche                        | Kiernan                  |
|-------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 Median income   | Public schools grade      | Family-fun                   |                          |
| 2 Cost of living  | Crime and safety grade    | Health and safety            |                          |
| 3 Housing affordability | Higher education rate | Education and Childcare |                          |
| 4 Commuting       | Cost of living grade      | Affordability                |                          |
| 5 Owning homes    | Family amenities grade    | Socioeconomics               |                          |
| 6 Crime           | Housing grade             |                              |                          |
| 7 Education       | Outdoor activities grade  |                              |                          |
| 8 Percentage of residents between the ages of 0 and 17 | Diversity grade |                              |                          |

Similar but a little bit different, Kiernan also mentioned a criterion related to family’s opportunity to
generate in fun activities in the city. However, unlike the other surveys, Kiernan clearly specified about
care facilities as one of a family-friendly city’s criteria. As there has been a rise in dual-career
couples in Western countries, there are big challenges for millennial families to balance the demands of
two working partners with children at home. For these young professional parents, a family-friendly
working environment and access to affordable and good child care services are very important [24].

According to the above surveys, the best cities in the US to raise a family are Overland Park, Madison,
Plano, Grand Rapids, Idaho, Provo, Naperville, The Woodlands, and Columbia. Nevertheless, none of
the cities mentioned above appear in the ten best cities in the world to raise a family, according to
Homeday’s best cities for families index 2017 (see Table 4).

Table 4. Best cities to raise a family. [33]

| Rank | Name                  | Rank | Name                  |
|------|-----------------------|------|-----------------------|
| 1    | Copenhagen, Denmark   | 6    | Vancouver, Canada     |
| 2    | Oslo, Norway          | 7    | Basel, Switzerland    |
| 3    | Zurich, Switzerland   | 8    | Toronto, Canada       |
| 4    | Stockholm, Sweden     | 9    | Stuttgart, Germany    |
| 5    | Hamburg, Germany      | 10   | Munich, Germany       |

Interestingly, cities that rank higher in the Homeday Index are mostly big cities with a large
population. This finding simply refuses the idea that large cities are not appropriate for families. The
criteria set by Homeday to measure the level of family-friendliness in the city are described in Table 5.
Table 5. Criteria of Family-friendly city (Homeday version). [33]

| No. | Criteria                                               |
|-----|--------------------------------------------------------|
| 1   | Housing                                                |
| 2   | Education system                                       |
| 3   | Safety                                                 |
| 4   | Unemployment                                           |
| 5   | Pollution                                              |
| 6   | Transportation                                         |
| 7   | Maternity and paternity law                           |
| 8   | Healthcare                                             |
| 9   | Happiness                                              |
| 10  | Kids friendly airport                                  |
| 11  | Activities for kids                                    |
| 12  | Green spaces                                           |
| 13  | Parents’ perceptions                                   |
| 14  | Professionals’ perceptions                             |

Compared to the surveys carried out by the American counterparts, Homeday’s survey covers different but interesting matters such as transportation, maternity and paternity law, happiness, and kids’ friendly travel and activities. The difference in the family-friendly criteria is probably influenced by the European culture that values the family-work balance and independent mobility. Parents’ right to take a leave after childbirth is carefully considered in many European countries and fathers are also expected to take part in the child-rearing activities. Thus, it explains why paternity law is also considered as the criteria of a family-friendly city. Transportation is also an important factor because European families tend to use public transport and/or bicycles in their trip chains. Cities without proper and integrated public transportation would pose more obstacles for parents to juggle their career and family life.

The keyword of happiness is also used in Homeday’s criteria of the best city to raise a family. The ability of the city to promote residents’ happiness has been considered one of the important features in future urban design and planning [34]. Leyden et al. [35] underlined how cities that can provide easy access to convenient public transportation and to cultural and leisure amenities would promote happiness. In line with this, the research indicated that cities that are affordable and support urban upbringing would affect the residents’ happiness. Surprisingly, a kids-friendly airport has also been considered as one of Homeday’s criteria of a family-friendly city. This support another finding that millennials would rather travel than buy a home [36]. The availability of activities for kids in the city during vacation, weekends, and bank holidays appears to be very important for parents. It is obvious that for the millennial parents, travel is not seen as a luxury but more of a necessity.

5. Conclusion

This paper attempts to provide a review of millions of people’s efforts to find the best place to raise a family. The industrial revolution made many families think twice about raising a child in the city, particularly in the downtown area. Families who could not endure the city life would escape to the suburbs once they had enough more money to buy or rent a bigger house. The suburbs are filled with families who are trying to find a better quality of life for their families. However, suburbs also have several problems that force some families to flock back into the city. To sum up, people seek to find a better place for their families because they are looking for the following matters, (i) a healthier environment; (ii) a safer environment; (iii) a less dense settlement; (iv) a better social life; (v) better access to jobs and other economic opportunities; (vi) longer time to spend with their family; (vii) a better education system and quality; and (viii) work-family balance. The qualities that people seek in the new place signify the ideal urban characteristics for modern families. As more people will live in the urbanized areas, it is very important to understand the kind of cities that can support the lifestyle of
modern urban families. Unfortunately, there is neither a single definition of what a family-friendly city is nor some global consensus on the definition and establishment of the ‘family-friendly city’ yet. However, the term ‘family-friendly’ itself is used frequently in personnel management, community-based services, parenting, and real estate discussions.

Compared to the child-friendly city, the concept and movement to build a friendlier city for families still lacks official recognition. A shared vision of what kind of city should be developed to accommodate the growing urban population is needed. The trends show that today’s families prefer to live closer to urban cores and urbanized suburbs. The young families have gradually left the traditional suburbs and moved closer to the cities to provide better experiences for their children and spend more quality time with their family members. These families would put in some efforts to adjust to the vertical living and its different lifestyles, including dealing with the constant needs of recycling and space management. Therefore, this paper strongly argues the necessity for cities to carefully address and pay attention to the growing and changing demands of families that live in high-rise settlements.

The paper underlines the necessity to develop a more solid definition and define a clearer scope of ‘family-friendly city’ development. The current concept of CFC has not covered a number of matters related to parents’ ability and the things that parents need to raise their children in urban areas. The CFC concept is inadequate in ensuring family’s well-being and sustainability. The well-being and sustainability of a family involve more complex issues ranging from the stability of parents’ jobs, incomes and even their work and family balancing skills. Transportation to support parents’, particularly mothers’ trip chains, should also be listed in the features of the family-friendly city. However, the current family-friendly urban planning’s concept has not touched upon this issue and to some extent is still much focused on fulfilling children’s needs. With the women’s issues in work-family balance and the shifting roles of fathers in modern society, this paper suggests the necessity to establish a new vision of a ‘family-friendly city’ that will help the urban planners and society to plan a friendlier city for the millennial families.

The surveys carried out by private institutions and real estate companies have given us some clues about the characteristics of cities that are suitable for raising a family. A city that is affordable, safe, and offers good education quality for children can be defined as the simplest version of what a family-friendly city should be - regardless its size and density. Even though there are some differences in families’ perception about cities that are friendly to a family, there are some similar matters that need to be provided by cities to support urban upbringing such as housing that suits families and environments that are conducive for families to carry out their daily activities. The author of this paper believes that the more the city could provide families with various amenities and accessibilities, the friendlier they are to raise a family. Therefore, all criteria mentioned in the above surveys should be deeply considered. Finally, this paper suggests the necessity to research more communities to understand the growing demands of millennial families and the kind of cities that should be provided to support the young urbanites to raise a family. Further and bigger-scale research needs to be carried out to investigate more literature and current practices of family-friendly city development in various countries and continents around the world.

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