

Chapter 5 Building Foundations of Independence toward Social Participation

1 Measures concerning Education and Fostering of Children with Disabilities

In order for children with disabilities to fully develop their abilities and potential and to acquire the necessary skills to participate in society, appropriate education should be provided for the degree of each disability. For this reason, teaching appropriate to their individual educational needs has been provided at special needs education schools, in special needs education classes, in special needs services in resource rooms at elementary and junior high schools.

In particular, there are some changes in the situation. Recent years, the number of young students with severe or multiple disabilities has been increasing, and educational needs for students with developmental disabilities including LD (learning disability), ADHD (attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder) and high-functioning autism has been increasing in special needs education schools. The schools are to endeavor to fulfill their role as centers for special needs education in local communities, utilizing the expert knowledge and skills that special needs education schools have, and providing advice and assistance on the basis of requests from kindergartens, elementary/junior high schools and high schools.

Also, to step toward the realization of the ideas of the Basic Act on Education, which prescribes educational support for persons with disabilities, it was also clearly specified in the “Second Basic Plan for the Promotion of Education” (endorsed by the Cabinet in June 2013), which presents future measures for the government to work on comprehensively and systematically to promote special needs education.

[Main Measures]

- The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology encourages the publication of large print textbooks by setting standard specifications so that as many students with low vision as possible can use the textbooks. Large print versions that correspond to the standard specifications have been published for all the textbooks of FY 2013 that were approved by the Ministry as suitable to the Revised Course of Study for elementary and junior high schools.
- Because it is important to nurture the ability to utilize information, since FY 2011, in the “Project on Innovation in Learning,” experimental study on the utilization of information and communication technology (ICT) in special needs education schools has been promoted, to promote the utilization of ICT to compensate for disability and support learning.
- The National Institute of Special Needs Education (NISE) is performing research on the utilization of ICT. Also, NISE is improving contents relating to educational support by using information technology to train for teachers and school staff members with leadership positions in each prefecture. In addition to this, NISE provides comprehensive information by distributing various lecture materials for training support at Board of Education and by providing variety of educational information on the website of the Educational Information Center for Developmental Disability.
- The Central Council for Education’s “Special Committee of the Future Directions of Special Needs Education” deliberated the way to revise previous special needs education to suit ideas of inclusive education system in the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and published “Promotion of Special Needs Education to Build an Inclusive Education System Directed at Forming a Cohesive Society”

(Report by Subdivision on Primary and Secondary Education) in July 2012. In August 2013, the Order for Enforcement of the School Education Act was revised based on the report. One of the details of the revision was to change the past scheme where all children and students with disabilities had to attend special needs education schools into a new scheme where Boards of Education in municipalities determine what schools students should attend from a comprehensive viewpoint; the relevant circumstances including the degree of their disability, necessary educational support and the preparation of the educational systems in their regions.

- As for support for children with developmental disabilities, in order to build networks to exchange information and opinions on various issues that cooperation among relevant organizations on education, medical treatment, welfare, health care and labor is important, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology holds a meeting for the “Committee on Promotion of Special Needs Education Networks” once a year.
- In tandem with measures and projects for children with disabilities and for job assistance implemented by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology takes measures including financial assistance, cooperation with related organizations, peripatetic consultation for schools by expert teams, and the improvement and implementation of training of teachers, in order to develop support systems for young students with disabilities including developmental disabilities enrolled in all types of schools, kindergartens, elementary schools, junior high schools, high schools and special needs education schools. Also, as for the expenses incurred in the placement of “Special Needs Education Assistant” who support children with disabilities enrolled in public kindergartens and elementary/junior high/high schools, financial support for these expenses are provided for local government. In the Third Basic Programme for Persons with Disabilities, increasing the percentage of planning individualized education support plan to 80% by FY 2017 with a view to foster special needs education, and increasing the percentage of organization of committees within the school and the percentage of allocation of special needs education coordinators to 90% at public kindergarten and high schools, have been incorporated as numerical targets, and step-by-step efforts have been made.
- In order to foster special needs education for young students with disabilities including developmental disabilities, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology is working on building educational counseling and support systems from the earliest phases of education, enhancing career education for students with developmental disabilities at high schools, improving the expertise of teachers and school staff on developmental disabilities, and conducting practical research on educational materials.
- In order to promote the acceptance of children with disabilities into After-school Services for Sound Upbringing of Children (Children’s After-school Clubs), the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare is changing the previous management style into new management style, where municipalities can allocate instructors who possess professional knowledge to ensure appropriate instruction to the type and degree of disabilities which are becoming more diverse, and to enhance the quality of the instructors.

- Because students with various degree of disabilities are enrolled in public special needs education schools and special needs education classes at elementary and junior high schools, each student needs different guidance and accommodation. Therefore, adjustment for class organization and a quota of teachers or school staff are being maintained. In response to the enhancement of special needs education, the quota of teachers and school staff was increased through measures for the allocation of more teachers and school staff. 235 persons were added to the quota, resulting in the inclusion of 6,176 persons in the government budget in FY 2014.
- In order to improve the quality of teachers and school staff engaged in special needs education, the National Institute of Special Needs Education (NISE) is providing training. In addition to this, the National Center for Teachers' Development is also incorporating program relating to special needs education in school management training to foster managerial staff members who will play an active role as core groups in each region. Furthermore, Prefectural Boards of Education is also incorporating program relating to special needs education in training for newly hired workers and training for those with 10 years of experience. Also, the Open University of Japan provides program to acquire teaching license of special needs education schools, mainly for those who are currently teachers.
- In order to promote employment for persons with disabilities, agencies relevant to education, welfare, medical care and labor must band together to formulate and implement measures. Therefore, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, cooperate with the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, encourages entities including each Prefectural Board of Education to enhance efforts to support employment for students with disabilities by proactively utilize various measures through entities including agencies relevant to labor, such as job support seminars and projects to promote on-the-job training for persons with disabilities and by cooperate with welfare agencies for provision of a smooth transition into work. In addition to these measures, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology is working on research relating to the improvement of vocational education in cooperation with special needs schools and agencies concerned.
- It is important to ensure opportunities for persons with disabilities to study. To avoid giving up their opportunity for higher education due to their disabilities, accommodation (i.e. printing examination papers using braille or enlarged characters, extending examination time or allowing the use of a scribe) is provided at the National Center Test for University Admissions and individual entrance examinations for each university. Also, since the 2013 National Center Test for University Admissions (in effect from January 2013), information on the details of accommodations has been made available for persons who expect accommodations, before they apply. Also, the development of school facilities and accommodation in education including learning support is provided at each university so that students can enjoy their lives at school without any hindrances.
- As for the development of school facilities, the "Guidelines on Development of School Facilities" for each type of school presents points to keep in mind in planning and designing school facilities so that appropriate accommodation to different types and degree of disabilities to enable young students to enjoy their lives at school without any hindrances. In addition to this, the "Guidelines on Promotion of Accessible School Facilities," which presents basic concepts relating to making

school facilities accessible and points to keep in mind in planning and designing the facilities, was formulated and specific efforts have been summarized as case examples. Also, “About the Ideal Way of School Facilities That Are Resistant to Disasters Should Be - Measures against Tsunamis and Strengthening of Disaster Management Functions as Shelters” shows the necessity of making school facilities accessible to utilize them as shelters at the time of disasters. These guidelines and case examples are distributed to local governments and awareness-raising are carried out through training opportunities. Furthermore, national subsidies are provided for the development of accessibility of public school through local governments. Also, national subsidies are directly provided to the development of accessibility of private school.

2 Measures to Promote Employment of Persons with Disabilities

In order to realize the basic idea of measures for persons with disabilities, as a society where no citizens are treated differently and all citizens can coexist with mutual respect for one another’s personalities and individuality, social participation through work is important. In accordance with this concept, each measure on strategies for the employment of persons with disabilities is being promoted.

The willingness of persons with disabilities to work is increasing and in this situation, it is necessary to further enhance measures for the employment of persons with disabilities in order to realize the social participation of persons with disabilities through work and in order for persons with disabilities to live independent active living.

[Main measures]

- The employment situation for persons with disabilities in 2013 made further progress; for example, the number of employees with disabilities has been at an all-time high for 10 years. Also, the percentage of employees with disabilities at private companies were 1.76%. Meanwhile, the percentage of companies that met the legal employment rate was 42.7%, still less than half, for reasons including the fact that the legal employment rate had been raised in April 2013. In addition, the number of employees with disabilities increased compared with that reported in the previous year for all sizes of companies. Also, the percentage of employees with disabilities (legal employment rate 2.3%) and the number of employees with disabilities at national agencies were 2.44% and 7,371 persons respectively.
- Based on the fact that the legal employment rate had been raised in April 2013, “Meetings of Personnel Management Section Chiefs by Regions on the Promotion of Employment of Persons with Disabilities in Public Service Departments” were held in eight regional groups, with a view to promoting the employment of persons with disabilities by national governmental agencies.
- For the purpose of adjusting the financial burden to employers caused by the employment of persons with disabilities, facilitating the employment of persons with disabilities and increasing the employment level of persons with disabilities in society as a whole, the Levy and Grant System for Employing Persons with Disabilities was set up to collect levies from private companies that fail to meet the legal employment rate as well as to pay an adjustment for the employment of persons with disabilities, and grant to private companies that employ a number of persons with disabilities that exceeds a certain level.

- “Trial Employment” is program for persons with intellectual disabilities. After working at each government office, ministry, or in local governments for 1–3 years as part-time personnel and gained work experience, they try to find jobs at ordinary companies through entities including Public Employment Security Offices.
- As for responses to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, an overall and comprehensive international convention to protect and promote the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities, in fields of work and employment, discussions were held by the Labor Policy Council’s Subcommittee on Employment of Persons with Disabilities. On April 19, 2013, the “Bill on the Partial Revision of the Act on Employment Promotion of Persons with Disabilities,” which prescribes the inclusion of persons with mental disorders in the basis for calculating the legal employment rate, was submitted to the Diet, and was enacted as an act in June. With regard to the prohibition of disability discrimination, the Minister of Health, Labour and Welfare is to specify Guidelines Relating to Prohibition of Discrimination and Guidelines Relating to Guarantee of Equal Opportunity (Guidelines on Reasonable Accommodation). Since September 2013, discussions have been held at the “Study Group about Guidelines on Prohibition of Discrimination and Reasonable Accommodation on the Basis of the Revised Act for Employment Promotion of Persons with Disabilities Should Be,” where persons including academic experts are serving as members.
- In April 2013, the Act on Promotion of Procurement of Goods Supplied by Facilities Where Persons with Disabilities Work by the National Government became effective. In order to contribute to the promotion of the independence of persons with disabilities who work at sheltered workshop for persons with disabilities and persons with disabilities who work from home. This act expects public agencies including the national government and local governments to preferentially make purchases from work facilities for persons with disabilities when goods and services are procured.
- For persons with disabilities whose disabilities are too severe to receive vocational training at regular public human resources development facilities, human resources development school for persons with disabilities are being established, and these schools are providing vocational training. Based on the fact that the disabilities of persons who enter these schools are becoming more severe and diverse, the schools are providing various support while adequately taking into consideration the status of the disabilities of the individual trainees. Also, the schools are enhancing vocational training program along with the development of IT, so that will contribute to the promotion of employment of persons with disabilities.
- The National Skills Competition for Persons with Disabilities, nicknamed the Abilympics, has been held since 1972, and in FY 2013, the 34th National Abilympics was held in Chiba Prefecture. The aim of Abilympic is to promote the development of the vocational abilities of persons with disabilities, for persons with disabilities to confidently and proudly participate in society as skilled workers, and widen and deepen public understanding and awareness of persons with disabilities to promote the employment of persons with disabilities.