

Part 2. Concrete Implementation Status of the Measures against the Declining Birthrate as of 2007

Chapter 1 To Raise Self-Independent and Strong Children

Section 1 Dealing with Issues of Youth Employment Support

1 Comprehensive and Continuous Career Development and Employment Support Measures from Education through to Work

- The "Career Education Project for Local Independence and Private Enterprise Utilization" project implements a systematic and continuous curriculum that incorporates preliminary and subsequent study in addition to work experience. It was executed in FY 2007 in a nationwide project conducted in 28 model areas, by using ideas and experience of NPOs and private companies,.
- In higher education institutions such as universities, internships are being introduced to develop talent that can flourish in various fields of society and to foster work values in students.
- "Career Education Promotion Committee" under the Youth Development Task Force was established in December 2006 to draw up relevant measures for strengthening and accelerating efforts to promote education and careers. In May 2007, the "Career Education Promotion Plan" was formulated.

2 Maintenance of Various Employment Systems That Support Career Paths

- From FY 2007, making use of the know-how of the private sector, a forum for senior part-timers who are not able to effectively look for work was set up to enable interaction among them for the purpose of finding a suitable job and learning about job hunting. Also, "Job Clubs" (i.e., job hunting clubs) were set up to support senior part-timers in acquiring full-time employment by promoting job hunting activities through seminars, group work, and the like.
- Senior part-timers with little work experience are struggling to find full time jobs. A "special incentive to promote youth employment" was provided from FY 2007 to business operators who recruited workers after a short-term trial employment of regular workers, promoting stable employment among the senior part-timers.
- From FY 2005, a private independent school for youth was established. This school gave them work experience in a training camp format. By giving them the necessary confidence and motivation, they are encouraged to work.

3 Infrastructure Developments in the Youth Labour Market, which Enable Matching Based on Abilities.

- The development of the youth labour market was consolidated to eliminate employment mismatch, by accurately understanding what kind of human resources a company needs, by setting up ability evaluation standards in specialized fields such as IT and Management of Technology (MOT), by developing relevant curriculums and materials, and by carrying out demonstration research.

4 Development of One-Stop Service Center (or Job Café) for Young People

- Local governments and business communities, under the cooperation of local schools, in response to an approach by the prefectures, have set up Job Cafes that provide a series of employment support services from counseling to training young people. In FY 2007, Job Cafes have been established in 46 prefectures, in 39 of which “Hello Work” job-placement offices have been established. Not only is job introduction provided for young people, but business operations like corporate meetings and a variety of seminars are also conducted.

5 Promotion of the National Youth Self-Improvement Campaign

- The National Youth Self-Improvement Campaign has been in development since FY 2005 to solve the problem of youth unemployment. There is a need for a united effort by concerned parties in the business community, the labour sector, the educational field, mass media, local communities, and government offices. As of FY 2007, this national campaign is still being promoted through publicity and educational activities.

Section 2 Enhancement of the Scholarship Project

- Attempts have been made to improve the Scholarship Project each year. FY 2007 saw a student increase of almost 52,000 over the year to 1.143 million, registering additional expenses of around 50.4 billion yen to scholarships granted, for a total of approximately 850.3 billion yen.

Section 3 To Foster Enhanced Social Skills through Experience

Promote Voluntary Service and Experiential Activities to Foster Enhanced Social Skills

- From FY 2007, the project to promote experiential activity network in coordination with the government agencies have been implemented with an aim to foster students with enhanced social skills. The project provides continuous opportunities for various experiential activities for young people.
- Measures have been implemented to cultivate children’s sensitivities and personal qualities by exposing them to art and culture, both modern and historical, through participation in cultural and artistic activities.
- In cooperation with local governments and enterprises, the “Junior Eco Club” is being promoted, where children can enjoy learning about the environment in their region and what they can do to voluntarily help protect it.
- From FY 2006 young people from cities and rural areas have been interacting and exchanging experiences of their activities, implemented to foster social skills and independence through agricultural experience and the experience of working in a natural setting.

Section 4 To Support Children's Learning

- School education focuses on detailed training according to the learning proficiency level of each student, and introduction of experiential, problem-solving learning, based on the Teaching Guidelines.
- At high school level, it is very important to diversify the schooling system by promoting a new kind of high school education systems, such as a credit-system, or an integrated course. The integrated course was institutionalized as a new school department, just like the general education department or technical education department. By FY 2007, 319 schools in the 47 prefectures and the four designated cities had set up such departments.

Chapter 2 Reviewing working styles to support balance between work and family

Section 1 Promoting Further Measures in Companies

1 Promoting Efforts to Support Nurturing of the Next Generation by Business Owners

- The ratio of companies with more than 300 regular employees of whom notification was required to be made in the general employee action plan according to the Next Generation Law was 98.3% as of the end of December 2007, while the number of companies with 300 such employees or less was 9,693.
- From FY 2007, the certification system authorized by the Prefectural Labour Bureau when a business owner meets certain criteria such as meeting the goals set in the employer's action plan has been in place. The certified business owners can put the certification mark "KURUMIN" in an advertisement or on a product, and can publicize externally that they are promoting measures to support next generation training. As of December 2007, 403 companies have been certified.

2 Promotion of Family-Friendly Companies

- Awards from the Minister of Health, Labour and Welfare and Chief of the Prefectural Labour Office were given to family-friendly companies in order to fully publicize them, while praising the companies which employ various policies to balance work and child-care/family-care and make efforts to allow workers to choose from among various working styles.

Section 2 Promoting the Child-Care Leave System

1 Promote and Enhance a System to Balance Work and Child-care

- Along with giving ongoing guidance to business operators to promote compliance with the Child-care and Family Care Leave Act, consultation is offered to workers regarding mistreatment on the grounds of child-care leave. Also, from October 2007, as a temporary measure, the allowance for child-care leave has been increased from 40% to 50% of wages before leave to support and promote continuation of employment.

2 Maintenance of a Convenient Employment Environment for Working Together with Child-raising

- Since FY 2007, in addition to grants for small and medium sized companies' child-care support, grants for balancing support improvement and grants for promoting child-care leave are provided to business operators who have independently provided economic support for the child-care leave acquirer, with the aim of actively promoting child-care.

Section 3

Program for Father Participation in Child-care

- Since 2005, participation of the father in child-care has been promoted by assisting business operators who make model efforts to create a workplace that enables father participation in child-care.

Section 4

Environmental Adjustments such as Reduced Working Hours to Achieve Work-Life Balance

1 Promoting the Concept of Work–Life Balance

- 'Charters' showing basic concepts related to balancing work and life and 'Principles' showing policies of concrete efforts by the national and local government and enterprises were agreed upon at the top meeting of representatives from the Cabinet, economic circles, the labour world and local governments in December 2007.

2 Improvement in Working Hours: Reducing Long Working Hours and Granting Annual Paid Leave

- Given the problems of further bipolarization in distributing working hours to two extremes, and the trend of the declining acquisition rate of annual paid holidays, the reduction of overtime working and acquisition of annual paid holidays are being pushed forward by promoting the voluntary efforts of labour and management. Some of the promotion measures involve a grant to small and medium sized enterprises, working on improvements of fixed working hours as a group effort.
- The Working Hours Improvement Policy sets out the items for business operators to appropriately deal with in improving the setting of working hours, and was revised to include the outline of the Charter and Principles.

3 Promotion of Various Working Styles Corresponding to Life Style

- In recent years, the number of part time workers, and the number of them playing a key role in the office, has been increasing. However, sometimes their work and contributions are not evaluated properly or reflected in their working conditions. It is becoming a challenge to resolve the difference of unreasonable working conditions compared to regular employees and to secure appropriate working conditions that recognize their work and contribution. The Revised Part Time Working Law,' which promotes part-timer working conditions in equilibrium with those of regular workers, was enacted in May 2007.
- It is anticipated that regular workers with reduced working hours will be offered various working styles corresponding to each individual's life style such as child-caring, family-caring and self-development

Efforts to disseminate the systems are being carried out by providing grants to business operators who actually introduce the system, while at the same time providing them with a manual that sets out the procedures to bring in regular workers with shorter working hours.

4 Promotion of Tele-Commuting

- The government has been working in unison to promote tele-commuting, looking to double the number of tele-commuters by 2010 by maintaining an overall support environment for the spread of tele-commuting, including steadily promoting the Action Plan for Doubling Tele-commuters in the economic and fiscal reform plan for 2007.
- The Tele-commuting Environment Maintenance Tax System has been newly established for employees working at home using communication technologies. Introduction and operation guide books are being published, and symposiums held with the aim of popularizing it.

5 Review of Civil Servants' Working Style

- Reports regarding the management of personnel affairs of public officers at the time of recommendation by the National Personnel Authority for the FY 2007 mentioned that reducing overtime work is an important issue that needs to be solved urgently. This must be tackled with a view to balance work life and family life, for which planned government effort is necessary.
- The Bill to revise part of the regional civil servants law and the law on recruitment of general fixed-term employees in local governments, which are designed to bring in various working styles to the public sector generally, has established a system for fixed-term working staff with short working hours and work is underway to consolidate it.

6 Balancing Support in Agriculture, Forestry and Fishery

- Symposiums are held, examples of child-raising support activities in agriculture, forestry and fishery villages are given, and information on people participating in child-raising support are provided in agriculture, forestry and fishery villages to reduce the burden on women during maternity and the child-raising period. Another reason for these measures is to promote an environment that supports the management of agriculture, forestry and fishery and allows for participation in local social activities by the region as a whole.

Section 5

Developing a Working Environment where Women with Children can Continue Working Easily

- Under the Equal Employment Opportunities Act, prejudicial handling due to pregnancy or child-raising is prohibited. The Act also states that the dismissal of a woman during pregnancy or within one year after the delivery is invalid unless the business operator proves that the reason for the dismissal is not because of her having a child. Business operators that violate this law are given guidance in order to rectify the situation.

Section 6 Promoting Re-Employment

- As of FY 2007, Mother's Salons (one each in 36 prefectures) have been established at main Hello Work centers (the Japanese government employment agency) in the prefectures that do not yet have a Mother's Hello Work center, and detailed support for finding employment has been provided to those who wish to start working again together with raising a child.
- Re-employment of women who have left their jobs temporarily for child-raising and support for starting a business are promoted through the general support information portal, Supporting Active Women (*Josei Ikiki Ouen Navi*), while developing a course that provides information for women ready to retake challenges by cooperating with the local government supporting the child-raising.

Chapter 3 Understanding the Importance of the Life and Role of the Family

Section 1 Increase Opportunities to Communicate with Infants

- The conclusions of the Central Council for Education, compiled in January 2008, propose the enhancement of guidance for the development of a rich mind and healthy body, as well as substantial experiential activities, as one of the basic concepts of the teaching guideline revision.
- 'Promotion of experiential activities through long-term staying project aimed to improve social skills during school education' was implemented to support strategic nurturing of social skills in FY 2007.

Section 2 Understanding the Importance of Life and the Role of Family

- It is important to teach children at school about the declining birthrate and its effect on society, along with child-care issues and the importance of men and women cooperating together to establish a family. For this reason, education to deepen understanding of child-raising is carried out at each level of education from elementary to high school, during the classes in relevant subjects such as ethics, special activities, and comprehensive study.
- As an approach to a family and a region, a booklet about family education was created to provide tips for child-raising and was distributed to parents with infants or with children of elementary or junior high school age. Also, a child-raising explanatory course has been set up for junior and senior high school students as future parents, along with efforts to promote the participation of fathers in family education by carrying out meetings to study the role of the father in child-raising.

Section 3 Deepen Understanding of the kind of Society Structure for Worry-Free Childbirth and Child-raising

- Cooperation of the public and the government to establish a national movement demanding re-thinking of labour and management for review of working methods

Section 3

Deepen Understanding of Social Structure in which Childbirth and Raising Children is Carried Out Easily

- In order to carry out a nationwide campaign to promote reform about awareness of labour management as it relates to a revision of working styles, forums and symposiums coordinated by the public and private sectors are being held and the Promotion of Public-Private Coordinated Child-raising Support project has been implemented.
- From FY 2007, every third Sunday of November was designated as “Family Day,” and the preceding and following week, “Family Week.” During this period, in order to strengthen ties between families and their regions, a national campaign is being developed. In the first fiscal year, the National Convention was held in Toyama prefecture and the regional conventions in Ibaraki, Kochi and Shizuoka prefectures.

Chapter 4 New Support and Unity for Raising Children

Section 1

Enhance Preschool Education and Childcare

1 Strategy for a Zero Waiting List for New Entrants

- In 2003, the number of children on the waiting lists of kindergartens and nurseries peaked. However, from FY 2002, thanks to the utilization of day care centers with nurseries, childcare givers and kindergartens, the number of children accepted rose to approximately 156,000, exceeding the target within 3 years. As a result, waiting list figures decreased over 4 consecutive years to 179,260 in April 2007.
- Between FY 2005 and FY 2007, efforts to increase the number of accepted students focused on the Child and Parenting Support Plan. According to the Plan, 81 municipalities with more than 50 children still on the list, as of April 1, 2006, were to systematically reduce the number to zero.
- From February 2008, a new strategy for a “zero waiting list for new entrants” was developed to enhance, secure and promote the quality, as well as the quantity, of childcare facilities such as day care centers.

2 Child Care Services to Meet Various Needs

- Extended day care, holiday childcare, nighttime childcare, transportation and childcare stations are continuously promoted to meet the diverse needs of childcare.
- Before and after the regular hours of preschool education (a standard 4 hours) and during the long vacation period, kindergartens that provide day care upon the request of parents and regional situations are supported.

3 Collaboration of Kindergartens, Day Cares, and Certificated Children’s Nurseries

- Collaboration between nursery schools and kindergartens is promoted by ensuring consistency in the revised (on March 2008) childcare centers guidelines and nursery school education policies.

○ A system was put in place by which the prefectures recognize any facility at kindergartens and day-care centers that have the capacity to provide education and day-care to preschool children and to provide child raising support in the region as a “Certified Children’s Nursery” and it provide every special measure. As of August 1, 2007, 105 have been certified throughout Japan.

4 Promoting the Evaluation and Information Services of Kindergartens and Day Care Centers

- Information services regarding kindergartens are encouraged, along with efforts to carry out self-evaluation and to disclose its results. The School Education Act, revised in June 2007, also states that the standard of education has to be improved through the implementation of school evaluation and the disclosure of its results.
- Regarding childcare center services, third party evaluation is promoted in order to improve the services from children's point of view.

5 Promoting Setting up Day Care Facilities in Office

- As part of the effort to support business operators and their organizations, half their costs are paid to those who install, manage and expand childcare facilities for employees in their offices (Grant to support upgrades – course for installing and managing childcare facilities within the office).

Section 2

Enhance After-school Measures

1 Creation of Comprehensive Measures for Children after School ("After School Care Program")

- In FY 2007, the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology and the Ministry of Labour and Welfare jointly cooperated and promoted comprehensive measures for children after school called the "After School Care Program," providing a safe and healthy place to be.

2 Steadily Promotion of the "After School Care Program"

- In FY 2007, after-school children's classrooms (including those planned) were established in 6,267 places. After school clubs for children were established in 16,685 places.

3 Creation of After School Children's Club Guidelines

- In October 2007, guidelines for After-School Children's Clubs were planned to improve the quality of the clubs. Each local government was notified of this. This guideline shows the basic items necessary to manage After-School Children's Clubs, in order to ensure the wholesome development of children who use the club as a living space."

Section 3

Enhance and Maintain Support Bases for Raising Children in the Region

1 Promotion of Regional Support Services for Raising Children

- Existing parks and regional support centers for raising children have been reorganized since FY 2007. Along with utilizing children's houses, a project for regional support bases for raising children was begun and, in FY 2007, 6,000 bases, the target figure for the FY 2009 child and parenting support plan, were established.

- Vacant shops on a shopping street were used to set up community centers which function as support bases for raising children and parent-child communication spaces. This is expected to reduce the number of vacant shops and to deal with the issue of the aging society. Measures were thus taken to enliven the community by organizing activities in shopping streets.

2 Creating a Network for Regional Child-raising Support

- Local governments are made responsible for acquiring integrated information on various regional support services for raising children, such as temporary childcare projects, parks, and support for raising children implemented by private organizations, including NPOs. This also includes providing information to users, coordinating case management work, and utilizing any support available for child-raising.
- To improve “child-raising supporters” stationed throughout Japan, “child-raising supporter leader” training is conducted. This aims to enhance the consultation system relating to bringing up a child.
- Welcoming workers or homemakers with infants or elementary school children as members, family support centers are established and promoted to carry out mutual support activities such as picking up and dropping off children and caring for children after school. This was carried out in 540 places in FY 2007.

Section 4 Support Family Education

1 To Provide Information and Opportunity to Study Family Education

- Utilizing the opportunities for maximum parent participation, such as medical checkups for infants and preschool checkups, courses are to be set up that teach how to raise children depending on the stage of their growth. Furthermore, a course for junior high and high school students is to be set up to deepen understanding of child-raising. Opportunities to study family education are thus advanced.

2 Maintenance of the Regional Environment that Supports Family Education as a Whole Society

- In order to contribute to the promotion of mutual cooperation between “child-raising supporters” who become the parent’s close advisers in bringing up a child, and to providing opportunities for exchanging information, child-raising support leaders who work in a wider area are being trained to further enhance the consultation system in the region.

3 Training a Child in Basic Life-style Habits

- Besides research on activities to promote the improvement of life rhythm and its practice, with the cooperation of various institutions like PTA, a nationwide movement, “early to bed, early to rise, and breakfast,” is being promoted regionally with the aim to improve the rhythm of life.

Section 5

Promoting Support by Local Residents, Private Associations and Inter-generational Communication

- Regional organizations that involve voluntary participation by local residents, such as mothers' clubs and child-raising circles, proactively carry out activities like monitoring school zones for children, checking the safety of playing equipment in parks, and offering exchange opportunities between parents and children on the one hand and elderly people on the other.

Section 6

Promoting Child Abuse Prevention Measures

1 The Child Abuse Situation

- The systematic approach to tackle the problem of child abuse has been enhanced through revision of the Child Abuse Prevention Act and Child Welfare Act. However, serious cases of child abuse resulting in the child's death still occur, and the number of consultations at child consultation centers regarding child abuse is still increasing.

2 Child Abuse Prevention Measures

- To prevent abuse, it should be detected and dealt with at an early stage. Moreover, it is necessary to enhance the ongoing comprehensive support system in order for protection and support for the child who has been abused to be independent. For this, it is necessary to work on setup and functional reinforcements by visiting homes that have infants of four months old or less. Promotion of measures for the protection of children include the induction and functional enhancement of visits to families with babies of four months old or less, known as the "Hello baby project," and regional conferences (regional networks that defend children).
- In January 2007, the child consultation center management guidelines were revised. Regarding the handling of child abuse cases by a child consultation center, a time rule is set for carrying out a safety confirmation, and the revision clearly laid out the basic rules of safety confirmation and stated that it should be carried out within less than 48 hours

3 Revision of Child Abuse Prevention Act and Children's Welfare Act

- The 2007 revisions to the Child Abuse Prevention Act and the Children's Welfare Act (that came into force in April, 2008) contain the following: (1) reinforcement of inspection that allows entry by unlocking doors with the permission of the court for the confirmation of children's safety; (2) Establishing a system that reinforces restrictions on parents to see or communicate with their children and by which the governors of prefectures can prohibit the stalking of children by the parents and their presence in the vicinity of the children's residence. (3) Stipulation of measures to be taken in the case of parents not obeying orders.

4 Raising Child Abuse Prevention Awareness by Public Relations

- November is designated as "Child abuse prevention promotion month". To aim at rousing social awareness about child abuse problems, intensive public relation and educational activities are carried out in cooperation with the related institutions.

5 Inspecting Cases of Child Abuse

- The inspection of fatal cases by child abuse is important in order to establish preventative measures. The Special Committee for the Inspection of Child Abuse Cases and Others Requiring Protection has analyzed the cases and published its third report in June 2007.

Section 7

Promoting Child Raising Support for Families, Especially Those in Need

1 Support for Fatherless Families to Become Independent

- According to the Child and Parenting Support Plan, support centers for the employment of fatherless families and for their independence are to be set up in all prefectures, in specified cities, and in core cities, within five years as a goal. In FY 2007, they had been set up in 99 places.
- The independence support program planners are posted at the welfare office. They provide individual interviews and consultations for the recipient of child support allowance, and thus implement the mother and child independence aid program operation with meticulous care to support the independence of the recipient of a child support allowance.

2 To Support Healthy Development of Children with Disabilities

- As measures for building emotional health, consultation by experts in adolescent children at child consultation centers will be carried out. Children with disabilities are admitted for a short time stay in a clinic and provided with protection (“Temporary admission”)
- The revised school education act enforced from April 2007 clarified that special support education is promoted at all levels of school, from elementary, to high school and secondary school. In FY 2007, promotion was made through various operations such as "special support education system promotion project" and "integrated support model project for the early stage of developmental disorder" and local finance measures regarding the placement of "special support education support members."

3 Countermeasures for Specific Chronic Diseases of Children

- Among children suffering from chronic diseases, the treatment for specific diseases like childhood cancer requires a long time, and the total medical treatment cost is high. Hence, a treatment research project for specific chronic diseases of children has been implemented to assist with part of the medical expenses.

Section 8

Promote the Unification of Administrative Services

- After the drawing up of the Important Strategy, the Charter and the Principles in December 2007, a notification to local governments, jointly produced by the Cabinet Office, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications and the Ministry of Labour and Welfare, requested the improvement of the system by such means as establishing a Declining Birthrate Countermeasure Promotion Headquarters, and conference with relevant personnel in the region. It also requested that the information about child-raising support be provided in an integrated manner for reasons of accessibility.

Section 9

Enhance Infant Medical Treatment System

- Since it is necessary to reduce the load on hospital workers, to offer safe and secured medical treatment, and to respond to children's sudden illnesses in a way that reduces the worries of their parents, from FY 2004, the Child Emergency Telephone Consultation Service (speed dial "#8000") was implemented, and, from FY 2006, training sessions on how to handle sudden illness have been held and a guidebook distributed to parents.
- Regarding infant medical treatment, a major appraisal was implemented of the succession of revisions to medical treatment remuneration, and measures were put in place to more thoroughly evaluate FY2008 revisions to the medical treatment remuneration, medical treatment for hospitalized children, and the nighttime and holiday emergency medical treatment system for children.

Section 10

Support Children's Health

1 Dietary Education Promotion

- Nutrition teachers, a system put in place in April 2005, have had great success in promoting dietary education by managing the school lunch and giving guidance about diet. As of September 2007, 986 nutrition teachers have been placed in 45 prefectures, not including Tokyo and Shizuoka Prefecture.
- From January 2007, informal gatherings of knowledgeable persons discussing dietary education promotion were held. Comprehensive, systematic arrangements were made concerning the detailed efforts and the role expected of people in charge of dietary education promotion in related organizations that practice dietary education, based on the recommendations by the committee members and special committee members of the dietary education promotion conference. Furthermore, the Dietary Education Promotion Evaluation Committee sat from October 2007 to evaluate the progress of dietary education promotion, and an Investigatory Conference for Dietary Education Activities by Enterprises was also held to investigate the content of the information provided by enterprises.

2 Children's Accident Prevention

- In 2004, Health, Welfare and Labour Science Study drew up The Handling Manual for Activities in Municipalities to Prevent Accidents Involving Children. Efforts are being made to spread awareness by the publication of the results of studies on its website and by distributing an accident prevention check list that can be used at health checkups in local municipalities.

3 Children's Mental Health Support

- Based on the report of the Investigatory Commission for Training Physicians to Check Children's Mental Health, drawn up in March 2007, training is provided for future physicians specializing in children's mental health, and a textbook is prepared.

4 Healthy Awareness about Sex

- An increase in the number of abortions among teenagers and the spread of sexually transmitted diseases are a great concern. Enhancing guidance relating to sex is an urgent issue. To deal with various health

problems, such as the problem of sex among children, health counseling and education on children's physical and mental health is carried out in cooperation with a regional health organization, at the request of the school.

Section 11

Enhance the Support System for Pregnancy, Maternity and a Perinatal Medical Treatment System

1 Spread of "Good Birth"

○ To create a suitable environment for pregnant women and nursing mothers, the "maternity mark (a visible mark that shows you are pregnant)" is spreading, as well as the expansion of public expenses paid from local governments when carrying out prenatal checkups, and research projects to secure a place of safe birth are being implemented. At the same time, it is important to build a trusting and cooperative relationship between pregnant women or nursing mothers, the obstetrician and maternity nurse, and those related.

Local finance measures were enacted in the FY 2007 budget to enhance the public aid for prenatal checkups. The Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare encourages local governments to increase public aid for at least five checkups as a basis: the minimum necessary for healthy pregnancy and childbirth.

2 Enhancement of Perinatal Medical Treatment System

○ In order to offer appropriate highly developed medical treatment to pregnant women and newborn babies at high risk, a medical treatment network with integrated perinatal mother and child medical treatment centers at its core is maintained, and a coordinated system has been established between regional delivery facilities and highly equipped medical treatment facilities.

3 Secure the Obstetrics Department Emergency Acceptance Systems

○ To understand the current situation of obstetrics departments and perinatal emergency systems, from transportation to hospital accommodation, the Investigation of the Actual Conditions of Emergency Transportation to Obstetrics Departments of Injured Perinatal Women (published in October 2007) was carried out. The results showed that the number of cases in which patients was repeatedly rejected are on the rise in recent years, and that this was more often the case in larger cities. Also, given the above investigation along with the case in Nara Prefecture, a notification was sent out, which showed the issues and the countermeasures that were considered should be common nationwide.

Section 12

Work on Support for Infertility Treatment

1 Reduction of Infertility Treatment Expenses

- The expenses for test tube fertilization and micro insemination are huge. Therefore, a grant is given to cover a part of the cost required for infertility treatment for the couples. This aims at the reduction of the economic burden. From FY 2007, the maximum amount of the allowance has been increased to 100,000 yen per treatment, approved for up to twice in a year, and also income restriction has been eased to a total of 7,300,000 yen per couple.

2 Maintenance of "Special Infertility Consultation Centers"

- At the health medical facilities which play a core role in the region, specialists in the "infertility special consultation center project execute: (1) medical consultations related to infertility and (2) consultations about the worries due to infertility.

Section 13

Secure Good Quality Domiciliary and Residential Environment

1 Support for Securing a Comfortable House that Supports Nurturing Children

- From FY 2007, durability and adaptability in housing were added to the good housing acquisition system supported by the Japan Housing Finance Agency. The JHFA offers support by reducing the interest rates for mortgage loan securitization.

2 Support for Child-raising Households in Public Rented Accommodation

- The local government, as business proprietor, gives priority to households with children when they select and judge a tenant. The income standard for moving in to such accommodation is lowered for households with preschool children.

3 Promoting Residence near Workplace as well as a Countermeasure to Sick House Syndrome

- In order to support households with children to live close to their work place in the city center, the supply of city housing is promoted by converting existing offices into family rented accommodation. Moreover, considering the influence on children's health, countermeasures against sick house syndrome are promoted further at school, in addition to advancing investigations into countermeasures against sick house syndrome. It is promoted by deepening the understanding of those working at school

Section 14

Promoting Barrier-Free Child-raising

1 Promotion of Barrier-Free Measures Based on the Idea of Universal Design

- Since transport facilities including stations, roads, city parks and buildings do not have continuous barrier-free connections between them, to promote an overall barrier free system as a whole, the Barrier-free Traffic Act and the “Heart Building” Act were integrated in a new barrier-free law (enforced in December, 2006) which seeks to improve facilities.

2 Promoting Barrier-Free Buildings

- Architectural design standards with consideration for the elderly and the disabled promote barrier-free measures in architectural spaces and facilities that take into consideration use by expectant mothers, children/infants, the elderly, and the disabled.

3 Promoting Barrier-Free Public Transportation

- Barrier-free public transportation is aimed at by various means of support, such as subsidies, tax systems and financing. Example measures taken include the removal of steps in transport facilities, installing multi-purpose rest rooms (diaper exchange boards, etc.), and introducing non-step buses and light rail vehicles (LRV).

4 Promoting Barrier-Free City Parks, Natural Parks, River Spaces, etc.

- City parks that expectant mothers, children or people with children can use to exercise, play, take a rest and interact are systematically maintained within walking distance. Also in natural parks, facilities to make them barrier-free, such as visitor centers, footpaths and toilets, are promoted at spots where many expectant mothers, children, and people with children visit, . Moreover, in districts where hospitals and welfare facilities are located near rivers, barrier-free measures are implemented, such as hand rails and slopes for stairs and providing gentle slopes, etc., for easy access to the banks of the waterway.

5 Providing Information on Barrier-Free for Child-raising

- In order to maintain a childcare environment where families with pregnant women and mothers with babies can live with safety in the area, support is provided to municipalities when they draw up basic plans for barrier-free, childcare-friendly towns. Moreover, municipalities provide maps to families with children, showing playgrounds, breast-feeding rooms, and places which provide temporary childcare.

6 Maintenance of a Road Traffic Environment which Supports Child-raising

- In order that expectant mothers, children, or people with children can walk safely without worries, 796 districts surrounded by arterial highways have been designated as “Safe Walking Areas” in residential or commercial districts with high rate of fatal and injury accidents. Priority is given to the maintenance of signals, optical beacons, etc., by the Administrative Division’s Public Safety Commissioner to try to maintain walking spaces on residential roads, to restrict passing traffic, and limit the speed of vehicles.

7 Promotion of Safety Measures in Playgrounds

- Regarding play equipment in city parks, the guidelines for playground safety and security provide the basic concept of safety and security. This is notified to each facility manager and used by educational institutions such as schools and welfare facility managers.
- The formulation of maintenance plans, carrying out of regular inspections, and creation of inspection reports are promoted for specific special buildings used by many people in order to maintain required performance levels in buildings and keep them in the condition prescribed by law in order to secure the safety. This forms the basis for the promotion of appropriate safety maintenance and necessary refurbishment.
- From FY 2007, the development and spreading of "kids design," aimed at the creation of a living environment leading to safety and the healthy growth of children, has been promoted. The "Kids design award" has been founded to award products or approaches with excellent kid's design and the award winning work gets the "Kids design mark". Moreover, in order to maintain a safe living environment in which to bear and nurture children, information on accidents involving children is collected, analyzed and shared. The project to construct a society in which safety knowledge is circulated is thus put into practice.

8 Promotion to Protect Children from Becoming Victims of Crime

- Based on the plan to improve children's safety, crackdowns on crimes targeted at children, and patrolling of school zones when children use them are enforced. Furthermore, support for crime prevention volunteers, patrolling by mothers' clubs, and houses designated as safe houses for children to escape from danger, are making headway. During FY 2007, a crisis-management manual for schools, including children's safety measures on the way to and from school, was published and distributed to every school in Japan.

9 Promotion of "Safe and Peaceful Towns"

- Besides trying to identify and improve areas where crimes against children could take place around schools, and areas of potential danger in commuting roads and paths used by children, and in parks, emergency red lights, emergency bells, closed circuit TV cameras and "Child emergency alert devices" that can be used to report emergencies to the police, are provided.

Section 15

Enhance the Child Allowance and the Examine the Nature of the Tax System

1 Enhancement of Child Allowance

- In April 2007, the Child Allowance Act was revised with the aim of reducing the economic load on young couple households with children. The monthly allowance paid to the nurturer with an infant less than three years old has doubled to 10,000 yen, uniformly. This applies to the first and second child, regardless of the birth order..

2 Tax System-based Measures

- Tax laws allow for a special 5-year ordinary additional depreciation limit of 20% (30% for small and medium businesses) for childcare facilities built between April 1 2007 and March 31 2009 by businesses

that fulfill certain requirements, thus promoting childcare support by enterprises.

3 Pension Plan-based Measures to Support Next Generation Training

- Pension plan-based measures to expand next generation training support involves extension of the waiver of premiums during the childcare leave until the child reaches 3 years old.