

Part 1 Current situation and Subject of Children and Childcare Support Measures

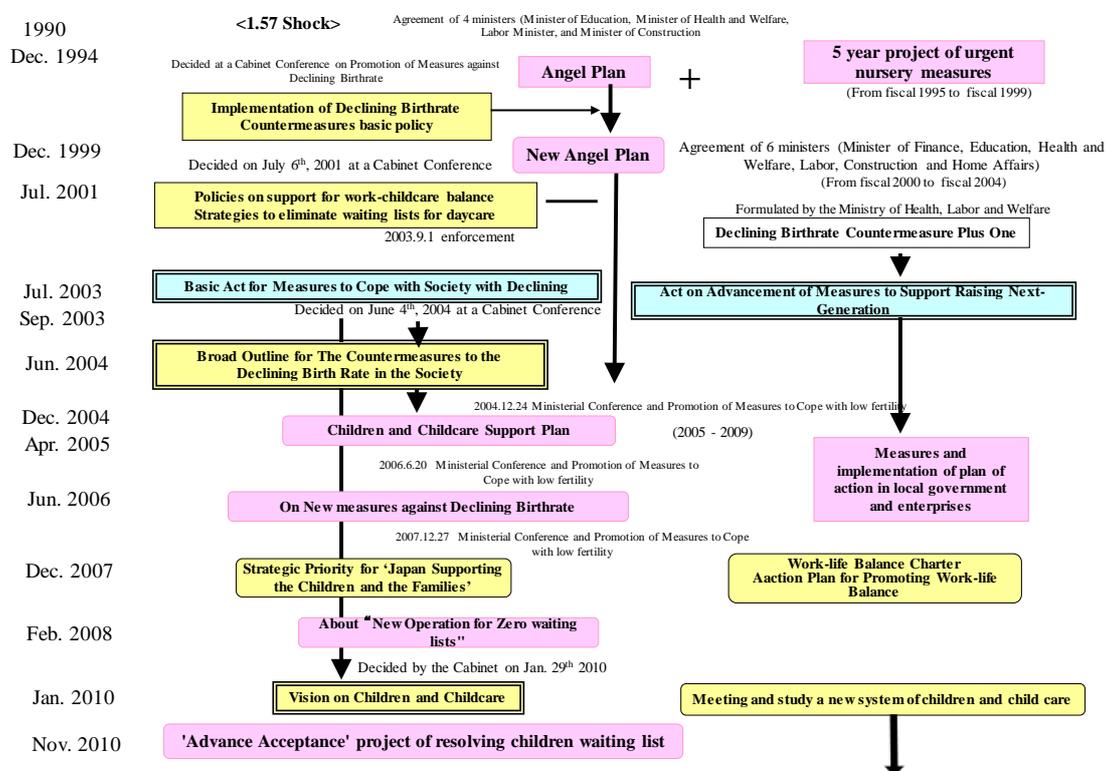
Chapter 1 Towards the establishment of the ‘New System for Children and Childcare’

Section 1 Background of the ‘Vision on Children and Childcare’

(Angel Plan and New Angel Plan)

‘1.57 shock’ of 1990 led to the review of counter measures to be taken, such as support for maintain a balance between working and parenting, in order to create an environment in which it is easier to raise children. The government formulated the ‘Angel Plan’ for the ‘basic direction of policies for supporting the child care in the future’ (December 1994 (H6), with the consent of 4 ministries – Education, Public Welfare, Labour and Construction) and the ‘new angel plan’ for the ‘basic implementation plan for the countermeasures to the declining birth rate which should be promoted on priority’ (December 1999 (H11) with the consent of 6 ministries - Finance, Education, Public Welfare, Labour, Construction, Home affairs).

Figure 1-1-1: Progress of countermeasures against declining birthrate



(Act on Advancement of Measures to Support Raising Next-Generation Children)

The ‘Act on Advancement of Measures to Support Raising Next-Generation Children’ was established in July 2003 (H15) for promoting intensive and planned initiative of 10 years for local public entities and businesses, from the viewpoint of supporting the families raising the next generation children in the society as a whole in response to the decline of childcare strength of the family and region. The same act was aimed at formulating and implementing the respective action plan for local public entities and main businesses to promote initiatives for supporting the next generation.

(The Basic Act for Measures to Cope with Society with Declining Birthrate , the Broad Outline for The Countermeasures to the Declining Birth Rate in the Society, and the Children and Childcare Support Plan)

The ‘Basic Act for Measures to Cope with Society with Declining Birthrate’ was established in July 2003, according to the legislation by House members (effective from September of the same year). Based on the same act, the ‘Broad Outline for the Countermeasures to the Declining Birth Rate in the Society’ (hereafter referred to as the ‘broad outline’) was approved by the Cabinet in June 2004 (H16). The ‘Basic implementation plan based on the broad outline for the countermeasures to the declining birth rate in the society’ (Children and Childcare Support Plan) was formulated in December of the same year for addressing the effective promotion of policies incorporated in the broad outline and the goals and policy details to be taken in the 5 years from 2005 (H17) to 2009 (H21) were raised.

(Strategic Priority for ‘Japan Supporting the Children and the Families’)

The ‘Japan Supporting the Children and the Families’ strategic priority was summarized in December 2007 (H19) by the council for the countermeasures to the declining birth rate. It is absolutely imperative to tackle a structure which comprehensively supports the ‘building the comprehensive framework for supporting the next generation’ (‘supporting employment of the parent and childcare both’ and ‘child care in the family’) simultaneously supporting achieving the balance between work and life by revising styles of working (work life balance), for resolving the alternative structure of the employment and the marriage delivery-childcare.

For achieving the balance between work and life by revising the styles of working, the ‘work and life balance (work-life balance) charter’ and ‘action plan for promoting work-life balance’ were determined in December 2007 by the work-life balance promotion public-private top conference consisting of the related cabinet ministers, business and labour circles, etc.

(Background of formulating of the Vision on Children and Childcare)

The ‘Draft Outline of the new policies for declining birthrate society measures’ (determined by the Council of countermeasures of the declining birthrate society in December 2008) was accepted, and in June 2009 the proposal of the ‘project team which considerate countermeasures of the declining birthrate from scratch’ (Declining birthrate Countermeasures ‘by All’) was compiled.

Afterwards, in October 2009 (H21) a ‘children and childcare vision (tentative) study working team’ consisting of three upper political divisions (cabinet minister, state secretary, parliamentary secretary) was established, performing hearings of the experts, businesses and local governments involved in the childcare support and collecting public opinions through consultations and holding a Declining Birthrate Society Countermeasures Conference on January 29th, 2010 (H22), ‘Vision on Children and Childcare’ (hereinafter referred to as the ‘Vision’) was approved by the Cabinet.

In formulating the ‘Vision’, the evaluation of the previous efforts were being studied, based on intentional research regarding low fertility measures from the perspective of the users of the policies, and the degree of achievement of numerical targets raised in the children and childcare support plan.

<p>[From the ‘User Intentions Survey’ (2009)]</p> <p>○ Achievements of ‘the ideal society’ <The items with lowly evaluated.></p> <p style="text-align: right;">* The numbers are the total of ‘Not at all’ and ‘Disagree’</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A society enabling youths to start work with enthusiasm and become independent economically. (71.5%) • A society with developed work enforcement that enable all candidates to obtain childcare leave etc. (71.3%) • A society that reduces the share of persons compelled to retire during childcare periods and enables persons to be smoothly re-employed after the first stage of childcare. (65.5%) • A society that (labour) productivity increase and long working hours of men and women in the child-rearing period is corrected by reviewing ways of working, and training and taking advantage of a variety of human resources. (65.0%) <p>○ Review of governmental measures < The items with lowly evaluated. ></p> <p style="text-align: right;">* The numbers are the total of ‘Not at all’ and ‘Disagree’</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Efforts to disseminate father program for promoting male participation in child care and so forth. (59.2%) • Environmental improvement efforts toward realization of a good work-life balance such as in reducing. (54.8%) • Efforts to improve support systems of pregnancy and childbirth, and prenatal care systems. (52.9%) • Efforts to promote work environment improvements enabling people to continue work with a sense of security even after pregnancy and childbirth. (50.4%) <p>[From the ‘Women Caring Children for Countermeasures for the Declining Birthrate Society Survey’ (2009)]</p> <p>○ Important Measures for Children and Childcare</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhancement of economic support (72.3%) • Enhancement of enterprises for caring children including day care centers. (38.1%) • Leave for childbirth and childcare, and shorter working hours. (35.1%) • Supporting re-employment for those who wish to work after childbirth, and child rearing (32.9%) • Supporting businesses which take initiative for implementation of both the work and childcare. (30.3%)

Note: ‘The society we should aim for’ and ‘Efforts of the country’ is listed in the Children and Childcare Support Plan.