

Chapter 4 Aiming for a Society that is Harmonious for Work and Life for both Men and Women (Realization of Work-Life Balance)

Section 1 Review of Working Styles

1. Developing an Environment with Suppression of Long Working Hours, Adoption of Telework, Revision of the Styles of Work and Others

1) Promotion of Initiatives Based on the Charter for Work-Life Balance and the Action Policy for Promoting Work-Life Balance

In the ‘Subcommittee to Collaboratively Promote and Evaluate Work-life Balance’, established under the ‘Council of Executives of Public and Private Sectors to Promote Work-life Balance’ consisting of representatives from economic and labor circles, local governments, experts, related ministers, the review and evaluation of efforts to promote work-life balance based on the ‘Charter’ and the ‘Action Policy’, is being performed along with the cooperation between the relative parties.

2) Promotion of Suppressing Long Working Hours and Taking Annual Paid Leave

Based on the ‘Guidelines for Improvement of Working Time Arrangements’, to accelerate labour-management voluntary efforts aimed at improving Working Time Arrangements, the government has been promoting work-life balance.

3) Support and Assistance for the Small and Medium Enterprises Addressing Improvement of Working Time Arrangements

Based on the ‘charter’ and the ‘action plan’, the government has been promoting efforts by the enterprises to suppress long working hours and take annual paid leave.

4) Securing Choices for the Diverse Styles of Working Corresponding to the Life-style

Based on the part time employment act, the administrative guidances for the business owners are implemented and the treatment for the normal worker is secured through the subsidy supply for the business owners taking initiative for the balanced treatment of the part-time worker. In addition, support for the instruction of short-time regular employees system is encouraged by providing information on the outline of the system and its content through the operation of the navigation site for supporting the introduction of short-time regular employees system.

5) Promoting Teleworking

The Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, and the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport which are relevant to teleworking have been promoting efforts for the development of environment, dissemination of knowledge and enlightenment for further expanding teleworking in a coordinated manner. The Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare has been operating the teleworking consultation center to answer questions related to labor management issue when teleworking system is introduced and implemented.

6) Improvement of Work Environment for Women in Agricultural Management

Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries is disseminating and enlightening ‘family management agreements’ in order to reduce the workload of women during pregnancy and parenting and facilitate women’s participation in agricultural, forestry and fishery management and community activities.

2. Promotion of Men’s Involvement in Parenting

1) Promoting take-up of Childcare Leave for Men (Mom & Dad Child Care Leave Plus)

In the Childcare and Family Care Leave Act amendment, which came into effect in June 2010, the “Mom & Dad Child Care Leave Plus” was incorporated to encourage male workers to take child care leave.

2) Awareness and Popularization for childcare by Men

Together with the enforcement of the Childcare and Family Care Leave Act amended in June 2010, to increase the number of ‘Ikumen’, men who are actively participating in parenting, the ‘Ikumen Project’ (<http://ikumen-project.jp/>) was started since FY 2010.

3) Consciousness for the Household Work and Childcare by Men

Through the relevant subjects such as special activities in junior high schools and the civics and home economics in high schools, the school education is going to provide guidance about the mutual cooperation and understanding, the equality of rights between men and women as the members in the working life and social participation, the significance of building a home with mutual cooperation between men and women by playing the role as a member of the family, etc.

Section 2 Realization of Working Environment that Enables the Coexistence of Work and Family-Care

1. Spread and Establishment of Coexistent Support Systems other than Childcare Leave, along with the Support of Work Continuation, Aiming to Support Re-Employment of Women Raising Children

1) Establishment of Coexistent Support Systems of Shortened Working Hours and Parental Leave

Of the revised ChildCare and Family Care Leave Act enforced in June 2009, the employers with less than 100 employees were granted postponement in the application of the obligation to establish a short working hour system, obligation to offer exemption from overtime work and establishment of day off for nursing care, but as from July 1, 2012, the act was fully enforced.

2) Development of the Work Environment with Easy to Use Dual Support System

The government continues to assist employers in the performing maintenance of employment environment for workers to take care of children or other family members, with support grant.

3) Preventing of Disadvantageous Treatment on Grounds of Obtaining Childcare Leave and others

The government has been supervising quickly and strictly for cases where there is suspicion of violating the law, responding appropriately to the consultation from workers pertaining to dismissal or other disadvantageous treatment on the grounds of pregnancy, childbirth, and the take-up of maternity leave before and after childbirth and childcare leave and notifying for preventing from violating the law.

4) Promoting Health Management during Pregnancy and after childbirth

The “Navi for the creation of Women-friendly workplace that provides support for pregnancy and childbirth” which is a site to provide information for working women on maternity health management is available on PC and mobile phone to make the general public know about the system.

5) Supporting Continuing Employment by Securing Equal Employment Opportunity for Men and Women

In addition to disseminating knowledge and providing enlightenment as well as instructions to ensure full

compliance with equal opportunity and treatment between men and women in employment in accordance with the Equal Employment opportunity Act for Men and Women, assistance is given to female workers who have disputes with their employers by helping them settle the conflicts in a smooth and quick manner.

2. Promoting Further Initiatives Using ‘Visualization’ of the Initiatives in the Companies and others

1) Conscious Reformation of the Business Managers

In order to provide information on know-how and good examples for businesses, mail magazines are to persons in charge of balancing work and life of the businesses to help promotion of their efforts within their companies.

2) Promotion of Formulation and Publishing of the General Action Plan (Act for Measures to Support the Development of the Next Generation)

Since April 1 2011, the application of the compulsory formulation and report of the General Action Plan has been extended from companies with 301 permanent employees and more to companies with 101 permanent employees and more. As of the end of March 2013, the notification rate of companies with 101 employees to 300 employees is 97.7%.

3) Promotion of the Initiative and Common Knowledge of the Next Generation Certification Mark (Kurumin)

The recognition of the tax measures for certified companies founded in June 2011 is being promoted, thereby promoting the acquisition of the certification.

4) Promotion of Efforts for the Balancing of Work and Childcare by Companies

In order to give a boost the creation of a workplace environment where people can balance work and life, companies which adopts various working styles including female workers are given recognition and they are presented as leading examples to encourage other companies to follow suit.

To increase opportunities for success for women, the “Diversity Management Selection 100” has been introduced since FY 2012.

5) Dealing with Tendering Procedure and others

From 2010, the cabinet office has introduced the structure to add point to the companies which positively carry out initiatives for work-life balance etc., when carrying out tendering according to the general competitive tendering comprehensive evaluation bidding system for the survey related to work-life balance or gender equality.

Chapter 5: Handling Children and Child-Rearing in Areas Affected by the Great East Japan Earthquake

Section 1 The Situation of Children in the Great East Japan Earthquake

The Great East Japan Earthquake, which occurred on March 11, 2011, has brought extensive damage.

Regarding the children who lost their parent(s), it has been confirmed that the number of the earthquake-related orphans amounts to 241, (94 in Iwate pref., 126 in Miyagi pref., and 21 in Fukushima pref.). Moreover, the number of earthquake-related bereaved children has been also confirmed to be 1,483 (487 in Iwate pref., 857 in Miyagi pref., and 139 in Fukushima pref.), as of March 1, 2013.

941 kindergartens, 1,613 nurseries (including unauthorized ones), 3,269 elementary schools, 1,700 junior high schools, 7 secondary schools, and 186 special needs schools experienced property damage.

Section 2 Handling Children and Child-Rearing in Areas Affected by the Great East Japan Earthquake

1. Regarding Welfare (Including mental healthcare)

1) Understanding the Current Situation and Providing Care for Children Affected by the Great East Japan Earthquake

In order to understand the current situation of children affected by the Earthquake and provide care for them, we have been supporting those children as follows:

- Expenses required to providing consultation and assistance to disaster-stricken children were budgeted in the supplementary budget for FY 2012 (the budget will be implemented in FY 2013 on an ongoing basis).
- The percentage of national subsidy for repair and development works of facilities such as child welfare facilities damaged by the earthquake was increased and a variety of subsidies were provided to support the restoration of child care support business.
- In order to facilitate sound development both in mind and body and provide refreshment for children in the areas struck by the Great East Japan Earthquake, the “Refreshment Camp” was held at national youth education facilities sponsored by National Institution for Youth Education. A total of 12,655 children participated between July 2011 and March 2013. The results of the questionnaire surveys to the participants show a remarkable improvement in the status of the mind and body of the children after their participation in the camp. Incidentally, part of the project was implemented jointly with the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology and a plurality of private companies provided financial assistance to the project.
- In May 2012, the “Mental health survey of children at the time of the disaster” was conducted to schools struck by the Great East Japan Earthquake and in addition, symposiums were held in August and November on the mental health care of children who were psychologically wounded by the earthquake using a part of the survey results as a theme for discussion.

2. Regarding School and Education

1) Support for Children’s Learning

In order to help children learn, we take the following into consideration:

(1) Aid for School Attendance

A) Aid for school attendance of school children

- In addition to implementing support for school attendance of disaster-stricken children and students, for three years from 2012, necessary support for school attendance will be made available.

B) Teaching and learning support for students

C) Economic support for students

- Japan Student Services Organization provides university Scholarship loan to students of disaster stricken families (students provided with loans are 1.339 million, of which 8,000 are students of the disaster stricken families)
- Budget for the expansion of tuition payment exemption to disaster-stricken students was created in the budget for FY 2012.

D) Employment Assistance for Students

In the joint names of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and the Technology and Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare, both ministries request each major business group not to cancel employment.

(2) Measures to Increase Teaching Staff

- A total of 1,080 teachers (of which 986 correspond to teachers of compulsory education schools and 94 to high schools) were added in FY 2011 and 1,031 teachers (of which 970 correspond to compulsory education schools and 61 to high schools) in FY 2012 as a result of the Great East Japan Earthquake.

(3) Restoration of school facilities and social education facilities

- Expenses required for restoration of school facilities and social education facilities were allowed for the budget for FY 2012 and carry-over budget of 2011.

(4) Implementation of Radiation Monitoring in Schools and Efforts to Reduce Dose of Radiation Received by Children and Students

- The measurement of air dose rates is to be carried out in playgrounds and schoolyards of elementary schools, junior high schools, kindergartens, nurseries and special schools (except for the evacuation area within 20km) Fukushima.
- A part of expenses for acquiring equipment to make an advance inspection of foodstuff to use for school lunches at children's welfare facilities was subsidized by the government. Monitoring services aimed at making continued inspection of foodstuff after serving of school lunches at children's welfare facilities were implemented.

(5) Programs to help disaster-stricken area

To promote the matching of needs and support of the affected areas, the "portal site support the Great East Japan Earthquake, children learning portal site" was opened and operated on the website of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, and Science. (April 2011 – May 2012).

3. Regarding Expecting Mothers and Infants

1) Acceptance System for Expecting Mothers

Regarding the acceptance system for expecting mothers in the affected areas, we have established inquiry counters and we have asked that each one of prefectures take proper actions when there are requests from affected local governments and medical organizations.

2) Medical Checks for Expecting Mothers and Infants and Victims of the Earthquake

When the health check-up records of a expecting mother have been lost and it is necessary to check her again for infection and the like, the government takes care of all the costs as an emergency measure.

3) Support for Municipal Public Health Services for Mothers and Children

We have asked local governments to support municipal public health services for babies and young children that are living in temporary houses, etc.

4) Measures for Dismissal due to Maternity Leave and Childcare Leave

Regarding the consultations on dismissals for the reasons of attaining maternity leave (before and after giving birth), childcare leave and/or gender, we have paid close attention to these issues at the equal employment divisions in the damaged areas and we have provided instructions in order to prevent these problems.

4. Others

1) Addressing the Handling of Child-Rearing Allowance and Others

With respect to the treatment of child-rearing allowance and others, respective prefectural governments were notified of the preferential measures on income limitation, exemption of attachment, and early payment through clarification of procedures when the whereabouts of father or mother are unknown, etc.

2) Addressing Special Childcare Allowance for Victims of the Earthquake

With respect to the handling of the special child allowances for the victims of the earthquake, payment periods and others were made public

3) Establishing a Safe Living Environment and Designing Evacuation Sites that are Friendly to Women and Childrearing

In addition to promoting the establishment of a safe living environment and designing evacuation sites that are friendly to women and childrearing, the government is promoting the reflection of women's participation and wishes in the management of evacuation sites.

4) Securing Housing

We ask local governments to give high priority to babies and young children who have been evacuated due to the Earthquake in terms of securing housing.

5) Handling of the Nuclear Disaster

Health concern and burdens of life due to the nuclear hazard are seen in people. As it is necessary to deal with the situation, a wide range of policies including leading efforts to give cheer to children were wrapped up as the "Nuclear Disaster Victims' Support Package."

Column: Childcare and Parenting Support Activities in the Disaster Area

The Great East Japan Earthquake occurred on March 11, 2011 caused an unprecedented damage. In the areas struck by the Great East Japan Earthquake, local governments, NPO, volunteer groups and others are engaged in providing continued support to children and families with children.

○ Childcare and Parenting Support at Temporary Housing ~ Situation of the Use of the “Miyasato Fureaikan (Miyasato Exchange and Communication Center), an Emergency Temporary Housing at Narahamachi ~

Owing to the accident at the Tokyo Electric Power Company's Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant, a part of the inhabitants of Narahamachi, a town in Futaba district, Fukushima prefecture moved to a total of 250 emergency temporary housing built in its sister town of Aizumisatomachi, Fukushima prefecture.

From the beginning, there was a support center to provide assistance to elderly people. There was no facility, however, for children and a corner of the center was provided for their use partly.

Under such a situation where the evacuated children of Narahamachi in the temporary housing had no place to play in and learn at, a foreign company with offices in Tokyo offered “to provide a place of recreation to improve the environment of temporary accommodation if only a little.” After having completed necessary procedures, the construction work was started and the place under the name of “Miyasato Fureaikan” was inaugurated on June 22, 2012 with the participation of the representatives of the foreign company in Tokyo, mayors of both Narahamachi and Aizumisatomachi, chairman of the local council, school superintendent and other related people.

The “Miyasato Fureaikan” is aimed at enhancing a range of activities including childcare and parenting support, lifelong learning, exchange of elderly people, community activities and others and at providing a place of recreation for people and children evacuated to Aizumisatomachi. The name of the place actually derives from the aims it pursues. The house is built of logs and is adjacent to the support center located nearly in the center of the temporary housing site providing an easy access to people living there.

The place is open from 9:00 in the morning to 5:00 in the evening on Monday through Friday and used as the place to provide “temporary childcare” for preschool infant/toddler, as the “Childcare Park” where education of babies, toddlers and young children is shared among parents and families, and as “Children’s House” for kindergarten, elementary and junior high school children, and the place is also open from 5:00 in the evening to 9:00 at night on weekday as well as on Saturdays to hold events and meetings.

The “Miyasato Fureaikan” has so far hosted a variety of venues and events including academic support for students of junior high and high schools by private companies, briefing session on fossils and dinosaurs, mobile aquarium, insect collection and others provided by related organizations including the “Museum of People and Nature” of Hyogo prefecture and around 40 children participated in a kids caravan.

The place is staffed by people who were working in the children’s homes certified by the municipality of Naraha-town and they are in daily contact with children. Children gather and play at the “Miyasato Fureaikan” in the afternoon after school before going home in the temporary housing site. It is said that this fact contributes to relieve burden of parents. The “Miyasato Fureaikan” is also used by elderly people and plays an important part in



Miyasato Fureaikan



Kids Caravan in Aizumisato

strengthening the sense of community within the temporary housing community through exchange. There are cases, however, where mothers and children live alone in the temporary accommodation facilities, while their fathers live on their own away from their families in other places because of their jobs and actually more people are leaving the site for reasons of work with the inevitable consequence that the number of children within the temporary housing site is in a decrease. Under the circumstances, it felt warm to hear that the staff of the place would give warm welcome to any children who visit the place.

○ “ComKom”, a Facility to Help Children Nurture their Dreams (Educational and Cultural Complex)

The facility is located on the right hand side just outside of the east exit of JR Fukushima station. The name derives from the combination of the “com” for community and communication and children’s dream (KOdomo-no yuMe). The “Com Kom” was inaugurated in July, 2005 as an education and culture complex with the aim to provide a place of rich encounters for children and to serve as a place where people of all generations interact with each other to pass on culture and perform creative activities.



The “ComKom” which is located near the station can be used by all kinds of people from children to adults. The place provides many facilities for enjoyment of all visitors who are welcomed by “Momorin,” the tourist character of Fukushima city.

Although the place was closed for some time for repair work after the earthquake, the number of its visitors recorded 2 million on March 20, 2012.

Owing to the accident at the Tokyo Electric Power Company’s Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station, it continues to be difficult for children to find an open space outdoors where they can play at ease and the number of overweight children is increasing as a result. Under the circumstances, indoor playing facilities for children are urgently required.

Following the evacuation instructions of the government, about 10,000 people of Fukushima city live an evacuation life within the city and about 7,000 people moved out of the city in a voluntary. Children under the age of 10 by age group number is the most among people who evacuated voluntarily (as of February, 2013).

The “ComKom” which provides information on radiation dose within the site is popular as a place where repeating visitors can enjoy at ease.

Many playgrounds are available for physical exercise there. In the first place, there is the challenge wall (climbing wall) with a height of 7 meters on the 1st floor. Not a many challenge walls are available in other facilities. While a bit of courage is required to climb the wall, one is astonished at children’s challenging spirit and parents cannot help but just stand there in a nail-biting manner.



On the 3rd floor, the “Nobi Nobi Hiroba” (free recreational park) is available where small children who cannot climb the wall can play with their parents.

The 4th floor is the most popular. Visitors experience a world of different dimension once they go through a maze, where a variety of experiences such as a virtual voyage, an apparatus capable of producing thunder and tornadoes , etc., and there is also a planetarium.

It is said that the “ComKom” is planning to extend its opening hours this spring with the intention to encourage children to visit the place not only with their parents but also with their grandparents. It is expected that the promotion of intergenerational exchange will play an

important role in widening communication among people living an evacuation life within the city and people who have moved elsewhere in a voluntary manner.

Cheerful and healthy children who dare to climb a steep wall give power to us all and secure the “Human Bonds of Fukushima.”

Column: Learning through Contact Experience of Junior High School Students with Babies

2012 marked the sixth year of the “Contact Experience of Junior high school Students with Babies” which is jointly held by the municipal government of Toyoda-city and junior high schools within the city.

Junior high school students learn the joy of parenting, the preciousness of life and the importance of family bonding through the experience of getting in touch with children.

This contact experience is implemented to provide an opportunity for school children to think of the role of parents and to serve as a preparation for becoming parents in the future. The opportunities for junior high school students to get in touch with babies are very rare nationwide and are very precious for them.

This project which is jointly held by the municipality and schools is aimed at promoting the improvement of child care environment in communities. As many community people participate in the event as volunteers, it is intended to develop a base to allow all people in the community to take part in childcare through intergenerational exchange.

Characteristics of the project include:

- That the event is a part of the school’s classes as an on-site learning program where all the third-grade students participate.
- That an excellent effect is obtained because each of the students has a hands-on experience.
- That the participation of roughly a similar number of community volunteers such as maternal and child health services staff, parents, university students (social workers, elderly people clubs and others, depending on schools) and others to that of babies contributes to the promotion of the improvement in the child care environment in communities.

Although the specific content of the event is determined in consultation with each school, it includes teaching on growth of infants, development of a body, umbilical cord, preciousness of life as well as other activities such as instructions on the points to bear in mind on the day, the proper way to hug a baby, watching videos, preparation of personal history and others. On the day of the event, students have a hands-on experience with babies, including hugging, piggybacking, playing and others. In addition, students write a letter of gratitude to babies’ mothers at its termination to deepen interaction.

During the event, words of admiration and exclamations for the babies were heard among students everywhere in the venue. Not only mothers, but also fathers participated and there were also many couples as parents. Although all the students had a hands-on experience with hugging and piggybacking, some of them felt embarrassed because their babies started to cry, while there were others who were good at baby-sitting by allowing their babies to fell asleep.

Students said that they felt hopeless because their babies started to cry, they felt scared because they nearly dropped them because of their weight, they thought it was not bad to have a baby, but thought at the same time that it was a great task to raise a baby, and others. In the meantime, there was a mother who said that she had no junior high school student around and thought it was a good opportunity added that she could envisage her child to become like them in 15 years.

This kind of experience helps not only junior high school students but also parents to understand and become aware of the weight and importance of life and of becoming parents.

Because of the increase in the number of nuclear families, not a few parents have the experience of holding their babies in their hands and changing diapers for the first time in life when their first babies are born.

Under the circumstances, the lack of knowledge and experience of childcare may increase their sense of insecurity and anxiety and lead to child abuse. Although contact experience with babies just like the initiative of the municipal government of Toyoda-city will be expected to spread among more communities, it is important to foster facilitators to serve as bridge between families and schools so that families will be able to cooperate peacefully in the project. The “Heartful Mama” presided by Ms. Terada, professor of the Tokyo Seitoku College has been engaged for many years in the dissemination of the contact experience



Learning through Contact Experience of Junior high school Students with Babies

with babies and has started an initiative in collaboration with the Shinagawa Ward Office to foster such facilitators to serve as bridge. It is expected that this kind of projects will spread across more communities in the future.