

Chapter 4 Development of Social Environments for the Growth of Children and Young People

Section 1 Rebuilding of Relationships among Families, Schools, and Local Communities

1 Proactive support for guardians, etc.

(1) Support for education at home

- The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) is promoting efforts made by local governments to support education at home, by means such as providing counseling, and planning and providing learning opportunities for guardians while organizing support teams for education at home.

(2) Support for the diversification of fostering

- The Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (MHLW) is promoting, on the assumption of future adoption arrangements, family-based care for children requiring social protection and care, for children who have no guardian and those who have suffered abuse; for example, the foster parent system, including a system under which foster parents who are assumed to plan to adopt and foster such children on commission from child guidance centers.

2 Collaboration and cooperation between “schools working as teams” and local communities

(1) Establishment of systems in which schools and local communities collaborate and cooperate

- Based on the report from the meeting of the Central Council for Education (December 2015) and ‘the Plan for the Creation of “Next Generation Schools and Communities,”’ (in January 2016), MEXT is promoting “Community Cooperation Activities for Learning and Education” which give community wide support for the growth of children through widespread participation by community residents and parents. This activity includes various community activities such as after-school programs, Saturday and holiday educational activities, school support activities, patrolling school routes and support for education at home.

(2) Participation of guardians and local residents in school administration

- In order to further disseminate and raise awareness about community schools, MEXT is proceeding with measures, including survey research projects, promotion councils, and the dispatch of community school promoters.

(3) Promotion of school evaluation and information provision

- MEXT is promoting the creation and evaluation of schools that keep in close contact with local communities, by means such as formulating school evaluation guidelines so that each school and its operator can refer to them.

3 Creation of environments in which each local community as a whole raises children

(1) Promotion of the Comprehensive After-School Plan for Children

- MEXT and the MHLW jointly formulated the “Comprehensive After-School Plan for Children” in July 2014. Moreover, they have been promoting efforts focusing on an integrated style of After-School Children’s Clubs and After-School Classes for Children by thoroughly utilizing school facilities (surplus classrooms, classrooms that are temporarily not in use after schools, etc.).

(2) Support for activities of lower and upper secondary school students during after-school hours

- MEXT is supporting efforts made through collaboration and cooperation between local communities and schools through which a system has been established to conduct educational activities on Saturdays, thanks to the cooperation with human resources, companies, and other entities with various experiences and skills in local communities. It has been promoting learning assistance that is free of charge in principle (Chiiki Mirai Juku), in cooperation with local residents and through the utilization of ICT, for lower and upper secondary school students who have difficulty in learning at home or who have not developed study habits, and others in similar situations because of economic reasons or family circumstances.
- MHLW is promoting the establishment of children’s centers.

(3) Promotion of diverse activities carried out in local communities

(Environmental learning)

- The Ministry of the Environment (MOE) is promoting environmental education to develop human resources who will be responsible for a sustainable society, through activities such as the spreading of environmental education programs incorporating the concept of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)
- MEXT is promoting environmental education in schools and social education so that children can deepen their understanding and interest regarding environmental conservation in various opportunities in line with their developmental stages.

(Experiences of nature)

- MEXT is promoting dissemination and raising awareness for families and companies in order to spread an understanding of experience-based learning activities.
- The National Institution for Youth Education is providing opportunities and places for nature experience activities by leveraging the locational advantages and characteristics of its facilities.
- The Forestry Agency is promoting forest environmental education to deepen the understanding and interest in the relationships between forests, people's lives, and the environment through various experience-based learning activities in forests.
- The MOE is providing opportunities for children to learn the importance of the natural environment and other related matters by holding nature observation programs and other events in excellent natural areas such as national parks.

(Provision of opportunities for activities such as those that contribute to society and sports activities by the police)

- The police are promoting the assurance of various opportunities for activities and the creation of places for juveniles, by means such as conducting social participation activities, including activities that contribute to society and production experience activities for juveniles, along with sports activities such as judo and kendo classes for juveniles held at dojos run by the police.

(Expansion of opportunities to participate in sports)

- MEXT is supporting efforts to promote health through sports for those who have no interest in sports or health promotion and those who feel the necessity of health promotion but yet cannot take action. Moreover, MEXT is working on formulating guidelines concerning exercise and sports corresponding to life stages, based on findings such as those from sports medicine and science.

(Encouragement for cultural activities)

- MEXT is promoting experience-based learning cultural and artistic activities for children, by means such as providing opportunities for children to feel familiar with the performing arts and supporting efforts aiming to provide opportunities for children to experience and learn traditional culture and contemporary ways of life.

(Promotion of *hanaiku* (“flower education”) activities)

- The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) is promoting “flower education” activities for children to develop feelings of kindness and beauty through contact with flowers and greenery, such as creation of flower beds and flower arrangements.

(Promotion of symbiosis and convection between cities and agricultural, forestry, and fishing villages)

- MAFF, MEXT, and MIC are supporting efforts related to overnight stays in agricultural, forestry, and fishing villages by children.

(4) Development of opportunities for experience-based learning and interactive activities, etc.

(Youth education facilities)

- The National Institution for Youth Education is providing opportunities for various experience-based learning activities through national youth education facilities.

(City parks)

- The Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport (MLIT) is promoting the development of city parks

which serve as bases for various activities, such as contact with nature, sports and recreation, and cultural and artistic activities.

(Places for sports activities)

- MEXT is enhancing environment for sports in regions, such as comprehensive community sports clubs.

(Natural parks)

- The MOE is promoting the development of safe and comfortable park use facilities in national parks and other natural parks, for example, sidewalks, playgrounds, and resting places.

(Development of waterfront areas)

- The MLIT, MEXT, and the MOE are implementing the “‘Children’s Waterfront’ Rediscovery Project’ to promote environmental learning and experience-based learning nature activities in waterfront areas (“‘Children’s Waterfront’”) such as along rivers in surrounding local communities.

(Management of Recreation Forests)

- Recreation Forests, suitable for natural observation, field sports or recreation, designated within National Forests by the Forestry Agency, are managed in partnership with those concerned in local communities.

(Creation of places for learning and interaction in disaster-affected areas)

- MEXT is supporting the creation of safe and secure places for children who have been affected by disasters to stay during times such as after school and on week-ends, and learning and interactive activities by utilizing schools and community centers.

4 Community building which makes it so that crimes that victimize children and young people hardly occur

(1) Community building which makes it so that crimes that victimize children and young people hardly occur

(Support to ensure children’s safety on school roads and the surrounding areas)

- The police are supporting the activities of Children’s #110 Emergency Houses, where children can ask for help, in addition to strengthening patrol activities taking into account school roads and commute times.

(Promotion of the improvement of security facilities for public facilities, such as roads and parks, and apartment houses)

- The National Police Agency (NPA) is further promoting the improvement and management of public facilities and other facilities taking into account crime prevention, based on the Outline for the Promotion of Safe and Secure Community Building.
- The Public-private Joint Conference on Development and Dissemination of Building Components with High-performance in Crime Prevention, which comprises of the NPA, the MLIT, METI, and private entities dealing with building components, is making efforts to develop and disseminate anti-crime building components with a certain level of performance in crime prevention.

(Promotion of responses to disasters at child welfare institutions, kindergartens, and other facilities)

- The MLIT is concentrating on the development of facilities for saving life from sediment disasters in order to protect facilities used by persons requiring special care such as child welfare institutions and kindergartens.

(2) Development of an environment where children can go out and play outside peacefully

(Promotion of barrier-free measures based on the idea of universal design)

- The MLIT is further promoting barrier-free design, by means such as disseminating and raising awareness of a unified mark showing consideration for baby stroller usage (stroller sign).

(Traffic safety measures on school roads)

- MEXT, the MLIT, and the NPA are promoting efforts to ensure traffic safety on school roads.

(Safety inspections for playground equipment in parks)

- The MLIT is working to ensure thorough awareness of the Guideline for Safety of Playground Equipment in City Parks in order to ensure the safety of playground equipment and promote the creation of safe and

pleasant playgrounds.

(Prevention of unforeseen accidents involving children)

- The Consumer Affairs Agency is implementing projects to protect children from accidents, in light of the current situation where unforeseen accidents rank high as a cause of child death.

(Development of bicycle use environment)

- The MLIT and the NPA revised a part of "Guideline for Creating a Safe and Pleasant Environment for Bicycle Use" in July, 2016 in order to ensure a safe bicycle passage space based on roadway traffic as early as possible. Moreover, in December of the same year, the Bicycles Practical Use Promotion Act was promulgated. The MLIT and the NPA are promoting the efforts to create a safe and pleasant environment for bicycle use.

Section 2 Enhancement of Child-rearing, etc.

(Comprehensive promotion of measures to deal with the declining birth-rate)

- The government, based on outlines and other plans pursuant to the "Basic Act for Measures to Cope with Society with Declining Birth-rate" Article 7 (Act No. 133 of 2003), is promoting comprehensive measures to deal with the declining birth-rate, by means such as further improving child-rearing support measures and developing an environment where hopes for marriage and childbirth can be realized. In addition, the Comprehensive Support System for Children and Child-rearing, pursuant to 3 child- and child-rearing-related acts, came into effect in April 2015.

(Enrichment of Childcare)

- With the increase of the number of children on waiting lists for admission to day-care centres, increase in childcare facilities becomes an urgent issue. The Government is pursuing efforts based on "Acceleration Plan for Reducing Wait-listed Children" aiming at reducing the number of children on waiting lists for admission. As a response to this, at the ordinary session of the Diet in 2016, in order to improve the support system for children and child-rearing, the Child and Child Care Support Act (Act No. 65 of 2012) was amended, including an increase in the upper limit for contributions collected from general employers, in addition to establishing projects to provide subsidies and assistance to operators of facilities and other related services intended for childcare services in the workplace.
- The Government is implementing comprehensive of measures securing childcare teachers securement, such as improvement in dealing with children, in order to secure them responding to improvement in childcare facilities. In the budget for FY 2017, as a part of further "quality improvement", childcare teachers' salaries is increased an amount equal to 2% of the wage (about 6,000yen per month), moreover, as for employees having skill and experience, additional increase in this amount is up to approximately 40,000 yen.
- In June 2007, as the women's employment rate was expected to rise and the desire to use childcare was expected to increase, "Child-rearing security plan" was published and the budget of 3 years for 0.22 million childcare facilities necessary to reduce the number of children on waiting-list is secured to 2 year up to end of 2019. In the 3 years up to the end of 2020 at the latest, it is decided to reduce the number of children on waiting list nationwide. Further, in the five years until the end of 2022, it is planned to establish a childcare facilities for about 0.32 million children so that it is possible to cope with the female employment rate of 80%.

(Support for child-rearing in local communities)

- MEXT is promoting support for education at home, by means such as providing child-rearing courses and learning opportunities for guardians.
- The MHLW is intended to improve "Regional child-rearing support bases" where child-rearing parents casually gather and consult and exchange thoughts in familiar places and promoting "Family Support Centres". Moreover, the MHLW is promoting "User Support Services".

(Dissemination and promotion of the certified *kodomo-en* system)

- The Cabinet Office, MEXT, and the MHLW shall continue to spread certified *kodomo-ens*, in line with

communities’ needs and operators’ requests, because the facilities can flexibly respond to various needs from guardians and local communities; for example, they are available to use regardless of the employment situation of parents.

(Support for child-rearing in kindergartens)

- MEXT is promoting the implementation of child-rearing support, by means such as providing child-rearing consultations, information, opportunities for kindergarten attendance by pre-kindergarten children with their parents, and opportunities for interactions between guardians. The MEXT is providing support for financial measures and other measures to promote childcare held before and after regular education time.

(Child allowance system)

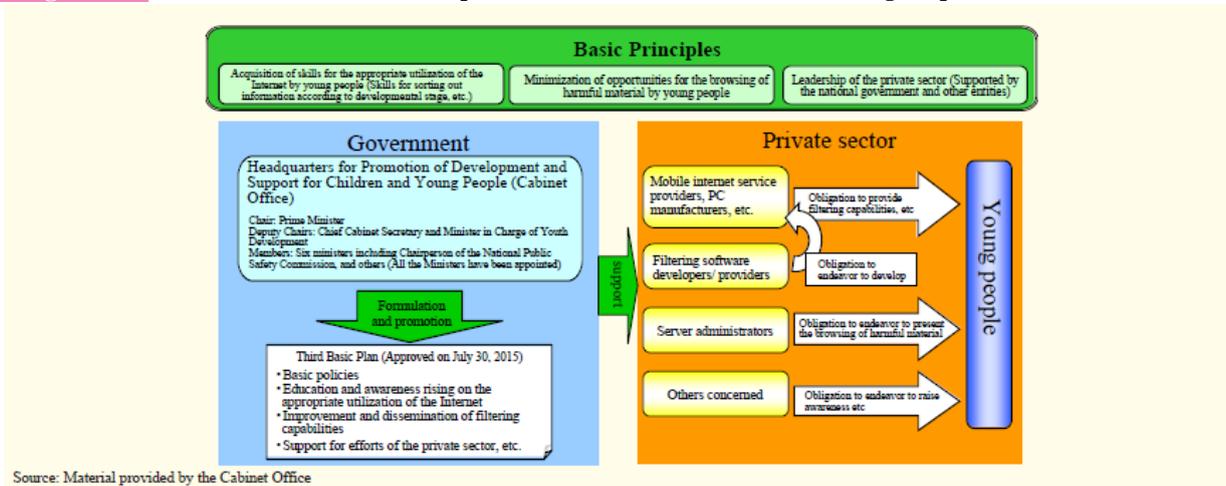
- For the purpose of contributing to stable family lives as well as the sound growth of children who will lead the next generation’s society, child allowances are paid to those who care for children before the completion of lower secondary school.

Section 3 Measures to Counter the Harmful Environments Surrounding Children and Young People

1 Appropriate enforcement of the “Act on Development of an Environment that Provides Safe and Secure Internet Use for Young People”

- Pursuant to the “Act on Development of an Environment that Provides Safe and Secure Internet Use for Young People” (Act No. 79 of 2008), (hereinafter, refer to as “Act on Development of Internet Environment for Young People”, “the Basic Plan on Development of Internet Environment for Young People (Third Basic Plan) was approved by the Headquarters for Promotion of Development and Support for Children and Young People in July 2015(Figure 26).

Figure 26 Overview of the Act on Development of Internet Environment for Young People



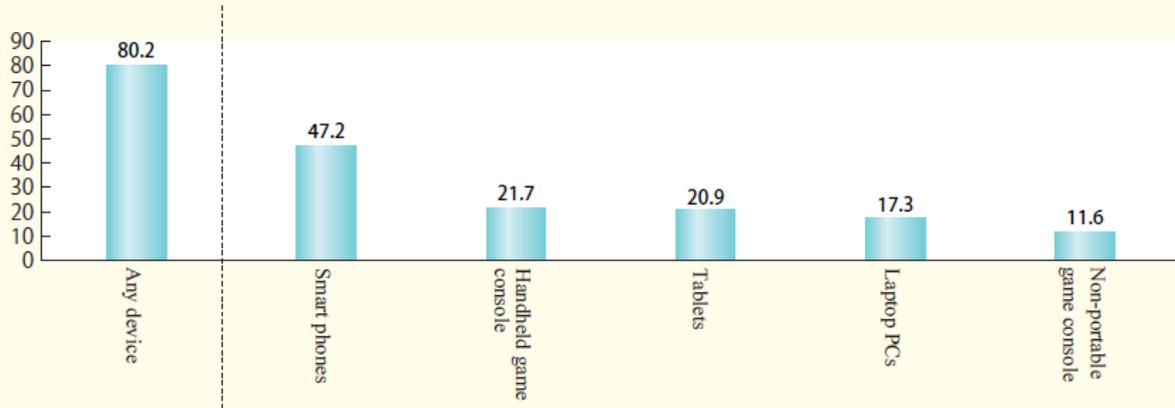
Source: Material provided by the Cabinet Office

(1) Ascertainment of actual condition

- The Cabinet Office is conducting the Fact-finding Survey on Internet Use Environment of Young People targeting young people and their guardians, which aims to obtain fundamental data on the development of the Internet use environment of young people, in addition to reviewing the status of the implementation of the Act on Development of Internet Environment for Young People. (Figure 27, Figure 28, Figure 29, Figure 30)

Figure 27 Rate of Internet use by young people (FY 2016)

◆ Approximately 80% of young people use the Internet with any Internet-associated device, and the usage of such devices has diversified. (%)



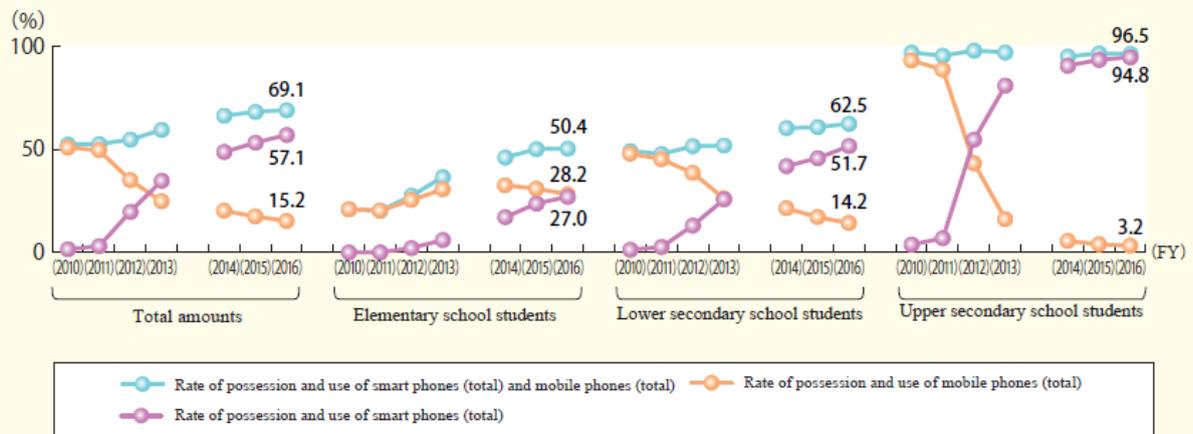
Source: "Fact-finding Survey on Internet Use Environment of Young People," Cabinet Office

Note: 1. The survey targets are young people aged 10 to 17. (The same shall apply hereinafter up to "Figure 29").

2. "Any device" means any smart phone, so-called cheap smart phone, smart phones with limited functions and smart phones for kids, a smart phone for which a mobile phone contract is expired, mobile phones, mobile phones with limited functions and mobile phones for kids, laptop PC, desktop PC, tablet, learning tablet, tablet for children's entertainment, portable music player, handheld game console, non-portable game console or TV connected to the Internet.

Figure 28 Status of possession and use of smart phones and mobile phones by young people

◆ The percentage of young people who use either a smart phone or a mobile phone has increased year by year, and more than 90% of upper secondary school students now use a smart phone.

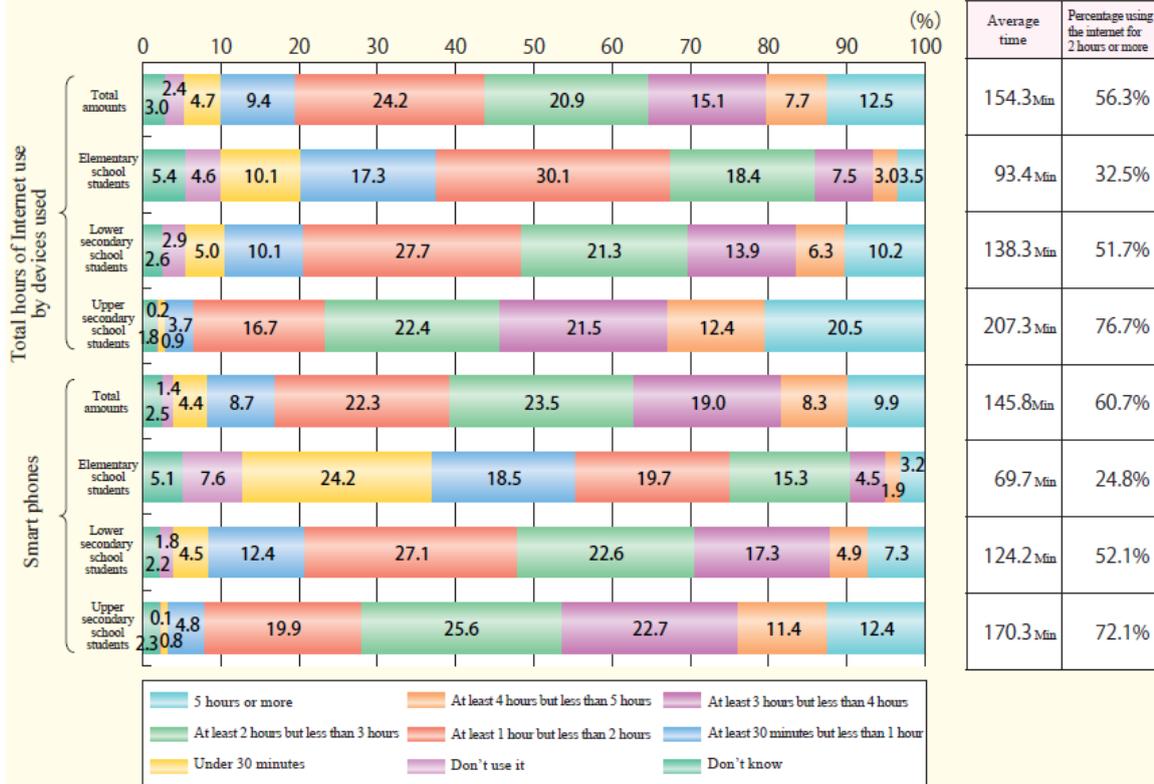


Source: "Fact-finding Survey on Internet Use Environment of Young People," Cabinet Office

Note: In the surveys from FY 2010 to FY 2013, a question about the possession of smart phones and mobile phones allowed only one answer from among multiple choices. As for the surveys for FY 2014 to FY 2016, however, the question about "use" of "smart phones (4 types)" and "mobile phones (2 types)" allowed multiple answers. As the survey method changed in FY 2014, the survey results cannot be directly compared with those for FY 2013 or before.

Figure 29 Hours of Internet use by young people (per weekday) (FY 2016)

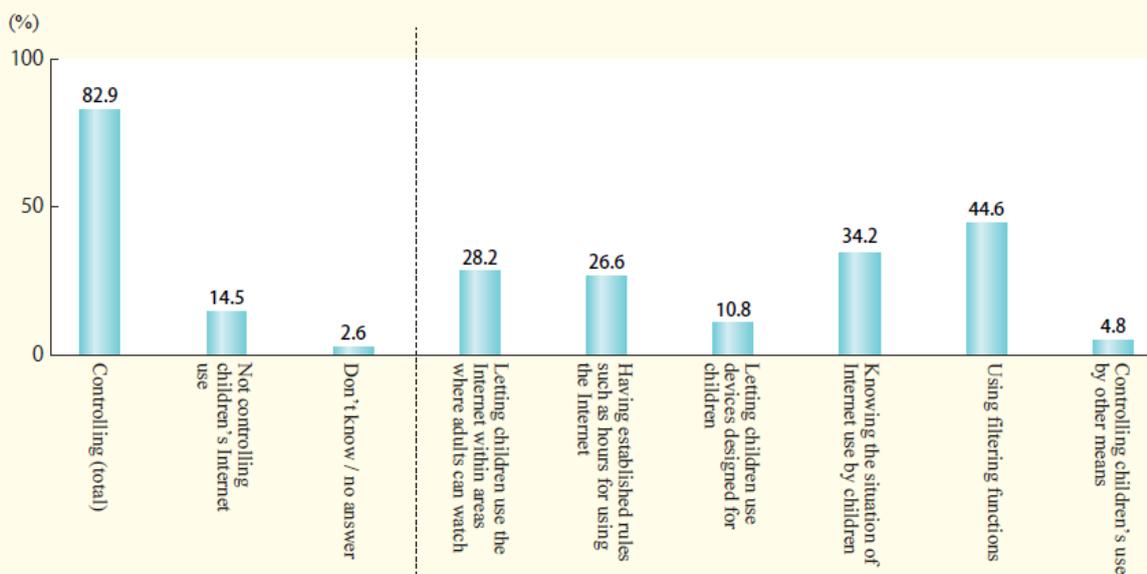
◆ The number of hours of per weekday that young people use the Internet is approximately 2 hours and 34 minutes on average. About 70% of the upper secondary school students use the Internet through a smart phone for 2 hours or longer.



Source: "Fact-finding Survey on Internet Use Environment of Young People" Cabinet Office

Figure 30 Efforts made by guardians for young people who use the Internet on smart phones (FY 2016)

◆ Among guardians of young people using the Internet through a smart phone, more than 80% are making some efforts concerning Internet use by young people.
 ◆ Among the efforts being implemented, "Using filtering functions" accounts for over 40%.



Source: "Fact-finding Survey on Internet Use Environment of Young People," Cabinet Office
 Note: The survey targets are guardians of young people aged 10 to 17.

(2) Raising awareness for children and their guardians

- The Cabinet Office is working on awareness-raising activities, by means such as preparing, publishing and distributing leaflets to promote the dissemination of filtering for Internet use and the proper use of the Internet. From February 2017 to May 2017, the Cabinet Office and relevant ministries made efforts including awareness-raising activities intensively developed under a project called the “Spring Safety Net and Simultaneous Action for New School Term 2017” in the spring, particularly around the time of graduation, advancement to higher levels of education, and enrolment when many young people start using smart phones.
- The police are promoting public announcements and awareness-raising to protect children from the damage caused by crimes attributed to the use of online dating sites and community sites and the influence of illegal and harmful material on the Internet.
- MIC is implementing the nationwide “e-Net Caravan”, which holds courses nationwide for raising awareness for the safe and secure use of the Internet for children, mainly targeting children and their guardians and teachers.
- The human rights bodies of the MOJ are carrying out various activities for human rights awareness-raising, under the slogan “Eliminate Human Rights Violations on the Internet,” as one of the priority targets of activities for human rights awareness-raising.
- MEXT is holding the “National Forum” on use of Internet in order to promote effective efforts made by guardians, school officials, local governments, and business operators.

(3) Dissemination and raising awareness of filtering

- The police are making efforts to disseminate filtering to protect children from harmful material and promote voluntary measures taken by providers, in addition to promoting investigations of illegal material.
- MIC is promoting the review of filtering services by mobile Internet service providers, and making efforts to improve the understanding of the concerned people at school and guardians regarding filtering.
- MEXT has organized the “Internet Morality Caravan”, which conducts learning-based participatory symposiums concerning filtering and rules for using the Internet targeting guardians and others throughout Japan.
- METI is promoting the improvement of the Internet literacy of all those concerned and effective and voluntary measures taken by young people and their guardians, through conducting “Internet safety classes” and other opportunities.

(4) Investigation of malicious and illegal acts, etc.

- The NPA operates Internet Hotline Center Japan, which receives reports concerning material including illegal material and notifies the police or requests the deletion of the information by parties such as providers and website managers. The Center also requests that corresponding similar institutions in foreign countries work toward the deletion of child pornography material stored on web servers in those countries.
- The police are proceeding with investigations, while making efforts to ascertain illegal and harmful material circulating on the Internet, by means such as cyber patrols and private Cyber Patrol Monitors, commissioned by prefectural police.
- The human rights bodies of the MOJ give advice about how to make requests for the disclosure of the originator’s information and requests for the deletion of material concerned to providers and others concerned, if they receive consultations on material violating human rights. The bodies seek a remedy, in cases where it is difficult for victims to recover on their own from the damage caused by such material, by means such as requesting that providers and others concerned delete the material concerned.

(5) Promotion of voluntary efforts made by relevant organization

- The Safe Internet Development Promotion Council, established by bodies including private companies, various entities, and Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs), is implementing activities such as the improvement of literacy and dissemination of filtering in each area of Japan, by utilizing various media, including the Internet.

2 Responses to Internet Addiction

- MEXT is holding learning-based, participatory symposiums for guardians and the “Safe Internet Workshop for Young People”, in which young people study the effective utilization of the Internet and share their outcomes, along with other activities, for the sake of promoting measures against the harmful environments surrounding young people.
- MEXT is implementing measures against Internet addiction through providing experiences of nature and overnight stay programs for young people who are addicted to the Internet, by utilizing youth education facilities.

3 Regulation of sex-related special businesses

- The police are proactively proceeding with investigations into illegal sex-related special businesses in the business prohibited areas such as around schools and illegal adult entertainment businesses including those where persons under 18 years old are made to entertain guests.

4 Prohibition of sales of alcohol and tobacco to minors

(1) Investigation and Punishment

- In order to improve the environment so that minors cannot easily obtain alcohol or tobacco, the police are making approaches to the concerned industries to take voluntary measures, such as measures for thorough age verification, in addition to thorough guidance and investigations.

(2) Prevention of drinking

- The Liaison Council of Relevant Ministries for Social Regulations regarding Alcohol (Cabinet Office, NPA, Japan Fair Trade Commission (JFTC), MIC, MEXT, MHLW, and NTA) has designated April as Minors' Drinking Prevention Month and is conducting nationwide activities for public announcements and awareness-raising, through coordination between the constituent entities.
- The Cabinet Office has compiled a “Basic Plan for Promotion of the Measures against Alcohol-related Harm”, which is the basic plan to promote measures against Alcohol-related Harm in a comprehensive and systematic manner, in accordance with the “Basic Act on Measures against Alcohol-related Harm” (Act No. 109, 2013). The Cabinet approved the basic plan on May 31, 2016.

(3) Prevention of smoking

- The Ministry of Finance (MOF), with a view to prevent minors from smoking, has set the following conditions when issuing Tobacco Retail License. When vending machines are installed, they shall be vending machines that distinguish adults from minors; when cigarettes are sold on the Internet, the age of anyone who wants to buy cigarettes shall be verified using an official identification in advance.

Section 4 Promotion of a Reasonable Work-life Balance

(1) Promoting measures based on the “Charter for Work-Life Balance” and other policies

- The Cabinet Office and relevant Ministries and Agencies are making efforts through cooperation between the public and private sectors to achieve a reasonable balance between work and life, based on the “Charter for Work-Life Balance” and other policies.

(2) Support for a balance between childcare and work

- The MHLW is supporting the development of workplace environment where support systems for a balance between childcare and work can be used with peace of mind, including measures such as taking childcare and family care leave and shortening the prescribed working hours, in addition to ensuring thorough awareness of the “Act on the Welfare of Workers Who Take Care of Children or Other Family Members Including Child Care and Family Care Leave (Child Care and Family Care Leave Act)” (Act No. 76 of 1991).