

Chapter 4 Building Foundations of Independence toward Social Participation

1 Measures Concerning Education and Fostering of Children with Disabilities

To maximize the ability and potential of children with disabilities, careful education is needed according to individual needs to foster their strength to participate in society. In special needs schools and special needs classes in primary and middle schools, special textbooks for special curriculums are used for small-group teaching in suitable facilities and with equipment by teachers with special knowledge and experience by considering disabilities. In the regular classes, in addition to special support services in resource rooms (*1), homogeneous grouping based on students' abilities and small-group teaching are carried out according to individual educational needs.

Because in recent years, school children's disabilities have become severe/multiple, and children with developmental disorders in regular classes need educational support, it is considered that in kindergartens, primary, middle and high schools, all school children, who need special support, must be provided with education to overcome learning and daily life difficulties. Conventional schools for the blind and the deaf have been transformed into special needs schools to accept children with multiple disabilities, and are required, by the request from kindergartens, primary, middle and high schools, to give advice and support about education of children with disabilities, and to play a functional role as a center of special needs education in the region by utilizing their accumulated special knowledge and techniques.

[Main measures]

- (1) The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) encourages the publication of enlarged textbooks by setting standard specifications so that as many students with low vision as possible can use the textbooks. In FY 2015, enlarged versions that correspond to the standard specifications and MEXT-authorized textbooks based on the Revised Course of Study for primary and middle schools have been published for all the textbooks of FY 2015. Furthermore, MEXT supplies the digital data of textbooks to volunteer groups that make enlarged textbooks individualized for each of the students who cannot use even the enlarged textbooks published by textbook publishers. For students with developmental disorders who have difficulty recognizing characters, graphic forms, etc. by using MEXT-authorized textbooks, volunteer groups are creating voice-based learning materials such as Multimedia DAISY that read aloud the characters of textbooks while highlighting the characters that are being read. MEXT is also promoting these learning materials by conducting necessary survey and research.
- (2) Since it is important to nurture the ability of students with disabilities to utilize information and to promote the use of information and communication technology (ICT), etc. as a supplementary means for compensating for disabilities and providing support in learning, the "Project for Developing Innovative Education System" that started in FY 2014 is conducting experimental study utilizing the cutting-edge ICT such as cloud services through school-to-school and school-to-home collaboration including schools for special needs education.

- (3) The National Institute of Special Needs Education (NISE) has been conducting practical, comprehensive research into education of children with disabilities, and based on the results, implementing training programs, educational counselling programs, and information dissemination activities.
- (4) The Central Council for Education's "Special Committee of the Future Directions of Special Needs Education" deliberated the way to improve special needs education to suit ideas of inclusive education system in the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and published "Promotion of Special Needs Education to Build an Inclusive Education System Directed at Forming a Cohesive Society" (Report by Subdivision on Primary and Secondary Education) in July 2012. In August 2013, the Order for Enforcement of the School Education Act was revised based on the report. One of the details of the revision was to change the past scheme where all children and students with disabilities had to attend schools for special needs education into a new scheme where Boards of Education in municipalities determine what schools students should attend from a comprehensive viewpoint; the relevant circumstances including the degree of their disability, necessary educational support and the educational situation in their regions.

Japan ratified the CRPD in January 2014 and decided to promote special needs education toward the construction of an inclusive education system. Unlike in primary and middle schools, the special support services in resource rooms have not been established in high schools. A collaborative meeting started to discuss the establishment of such systems in November 2015, and published the final report in March 2016.
- (5) Considering the necessity of cooperation among the institutions of education, medicine, welfare, health and labor to support children with developmental disorders, MEXT and MHLW jointly hold "a developmental disorder support debrief meeting" every year.
- (6) In tandem with measures and projects for children with disabilities and for job assistance implemented by the MHLW, MEXT takes measures including financial assistance, cooperation with related organizations, peripatetic consultation for schools by expert teams, and the improvement and implementation of training of teachers, in order to develop support systems for young students with disabilities including developmental disorders enrolled in all types of schools such as kindergartens, elementary schools, middle schools, high schools and schools for special needs education. Also, as for the expenses incurred in the placement of "Special Needs Education Assistant" who support children with disabilities enrolled in public kindergartens and elementary/middle/high schools, the expenses of the local governments are taken into consideration in the local tax allocation system.
- (7) To promote special needs education for children with disabilities including those with developmental disorder, MEXT has been developing programs for

educational counselling & support systems; supporting career education & employment; supporting school children with developmental disorders; improving teachers expertise; developing and disseminating educational aid equipment.

- (8) Under the children and childrearing support system newly established in FY 2015, MHLW 1) arranges supporters to assist education and counselling in daycare centers, kindergartens and certified child centers that accept children with disabilities who need special support, and 2) arranges one childminder per two children who need special support in newly established regional-type daycare business that accepts children with disabilities.
- (9) The after-school day care program (clubs for after school care) providing a suitable playing and living place for children of dual career families, accepts as many children as possible, including those with a physical disability certificate and other children with equivalent disabilities. The number of after school care clubs is increasing year by year. MHLW grants necessary expenses for such clubs to arrange staff with special knowledge of support when a club accepts at least one child with disabilities care. In addition, since FY 2015, MHLW has been granting extra expenses for such clubs by using financial resources of the consumption tax to arrange additional one staff member with special knowledge of care when the club accepts five or more children with disabilities, so that the clubs can be utilized properly by children with disabilities.
- (10) The providers of commuting care service for children with disabilities have been providing training based on the Child Welfare Act. MHLW has strengthened the functions of the regional child development support centers, based on the report, “the review meeting on how to support children with disabilities” summarized in July 2014; and revised to increase the FY 2015 disability welfare service compensation for the relevant organizations. In April 2015, MHLW issued “guidelines for after-school day service” that stipulate basic matters of support service to improve the quality of day service. Thus, the systems for child support service have been improved, so that children with disabilities can receive proper support in immediate surroundings.
- (11) In the public special needs schools and special needs classes in primary and middle schools, there are children with various types of disorders, abilities and aptitudes, for whom special consideration is paid under the “Act on Standards for Class Formation and Fixed Number of School Personnel of Public Compulsory Education Schools” (hereinafter referred to as “Act on Standards for Public Compulsory Education Schools”)
Because the number of students in public special needs schools are increasing and the degree of disabilities becoming severe/multiple, more vice-principals, school nurses, and education and career counselling teachers have been arranged in large schools. To respond to the needs for special support service, such as a resource room program in public primary and middle schools, and to improve the functions of special needs schools, MEXT secured the budget to

allocate 6,326 teachers in FY 2016, an increase of 50 teachers compared to FY 2015.

- (12) In order to improve the quality of teachers and school staff engaged in special needs education, NISE is providing training. In addition to this, the National Center for Teachers' Development is also incorporating program relating to special needs education in school management training to foster managerial staff members who will play an active role as core groups in each region. Furthermore, Prefectural Boards of Education is also incorporating program relating to special needs education in training for newly hired teaching staff and training for those with 10 years of experience. Also, the Open University of Japan provides programs to acquire certificates for teachers of special needs schools, mainly for current teachers. Also it is decided that the training for teacher's license renewal shall include "knowledge of neuroscience and psychology about children's development (including that for special needs education)" as one of the mandated matters.
- (13) To promote employment of persons with disabilities, the related-organizations of education, welfare, medicine, and labor need to cooperate to take proper measures. Therefore, MEXT, together with MHLW, encourages municipal Boards of Education to provide for disabled students with employment support seminars, on-the-job training, and smooth transfer to employment in cooperation with welfare-related organizations. Some special needs high schools and high schools are, in cooperation with welfare- and labor-related organizations, working on study of how to improve career education/employment.
- (14) To avoid giving up their opportunity for higher education due to their disabilities it is important to ensure opportunities for persons with disabilities to study. Therefore, accommodation (i.e. printing examination papers using braille, enlarged characters, or raised line drawing kit, extending examination time or allowing the use of a scribe) is provided at the National Center Test for University Admissions and individual entrance examinations for each university. In the FY 2016 National Center Test for University Admissions (performed in January 2016), question sheets of enlarged characters of font-size 22 pt. were added to current font-size 14 pt. by considering applicants for admission to a university.
- (15) The MEXT guidelines indicate that careful consideration should be paid in planning and designing for school facilities according to the degree of disabilities of school children, so that they can enjoy school life without difficulty. Also MEXT prepared "the guidelines for making school facilities barrier-free," which show fundamental planning and designing ideas and summarize case examples. Also, "Ideal State of Disaster-Resilient School Facilities –Tsunami protection measures and enhancement of disaster prevention function as evacuation shelter" shows the necessity of making school facilities barrier-free for people to utilize as shelters at the time of

disasters. These guidelines and examples are distributed to local governments and awareness-raising are carried out through training opportunities. Further, national subsidies are provided to install elevators or slopes for making the facilities barrier-free. When private special needs schools and special needs classes in primary and middle schools improve facilities for proper education for disabilities, national subsidies are provided as well.

2 Measures to Promote Employment of Persons with Disabilities

Since the work motivation of persons with disabilities has been raising, it is necessary to further improve employment measures so that they can participate in society through work and live vividly and independently.

To create society where all people can live without being discriminated and respect their personality and individuality mutually, as stated in the basic principle of the Policy for Persons with Disabilities, social participation is important through work. Under this concept, employment measures for persons with disabilities are being promoted.

[Main measures]

- (1) The employment situation of persons with disabilities as of June 1, 2015 made further progress; the number of workers with disabilities has been continuously increased for these 12 years and recorded the highest of 453,133.5 in 2015. The actual number of employees reached 366,353. The percentage of employees with disabilities at private companies was 1.88%. Meanwhile, the percentage of companies that met the legal employment rate was 47.2%, still less than half. The number of employees with disabilities increased compared with that reported in the previous year for all sizes of companies.
The percentage of employees with disabilities (legal employment rate 2.3%) and the number of employees with disabilities at national agencies were 2.45% and 7,371.5 persons respectively.
- (2) Based on the fact that the legal employment rate had been raised in April 2013, “Meetings of Personnel Management Section Chiefs by Regions on the Promotion of Employment of Persons with Disabilities in Public Service Departments” were held in FY 2015 in four regional groups, with a view to promoting the employment of persons with disabilities by national governmental agencies.
- (3) “Trial Employment” is program for persons with intellectual disabilities. After working at each government office, ministry, or in local governments for 1 to 3 years as part-time personnel and gained work experience, they try to find jobs at ordinary companies through entities including Public Employment Security Offices.
- (4) In “The Month of Employment Support for Persons with Disabilities,” MHLW, in order to heighten public understanding, commended companies, groups who remarkably contributed to promoting employment and its stability, and employees with disabilities who achieved excellent results as professionals. In

FY 2015, 24 companies, one person who contributed to employment of persons with disabilities, and 25 workers with disabilities were awarded.

- (5) Special taxation measures have been taken for private companies that employ persons with disabilities. In the FY 2016 tax reform, the applicable period of additional depreciation for machinery and others was extended by two years, which is applied only to equipment in companies where persons with disabilities are working.
- (6) In responses to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the “Act on Partial Revision of the Act for Employment Promotion of Persons with Disabilities” was enacted in June 2013 to implement measures to prohibit discrimination of persons with disabilities in the field of employment and add the number of persons with mental disabilities to the basis of calculation of statutory employment rates. Based on this Act, the “Study Group on How Guidelines for Discrimination Prohibition and Reasonable Accommodation Should Be Based on the Revised Act for Employment Promotion of Persons with Disabilities” summarized a report. Then, in September 2013, the Labor Policy Council’s Subcommittee on Employment of Persons with Disabilities discussed based on this report, and summarized and promulgated in March 2015 the “Guidelines for employers to treat properly, on matters set forth in the provisions relating to the prohibition of discrimination against people with disabilities” and the “Guidelines for employers on measures to ensure equal opportunities or treatment for people with disabilities on employment, and eliminate the barriers so that people with disabilities can use their abilities effectively.” In June of FY 2015, the Subcommittee publicized Q&A and case studies, and held briefing sessions for companies and employment support organizations in all local governments’ labor bureaus, thus carrying out enlightenment on the guidelines.
- (7) To promote and encourage employment support for persons with disabilities, the government decided to strengthen the link among the organizations of employment, welfare, education and medicine, and has been promoting the team support along with the Hello Work and related organizations, increase of understanding of general employment and employment support, employment/livelihood support center program, trial employment subsidy program, support by job-coaching, etc.
- (8) The Employment and Life Support Center for People with Disabilities offers employment and life supports for persons with disabilities in their surrounding areas (328 places as of April 2016) to promote their independence in working life, in cooperation with the welfare- and education-related organizations. According to the Center’s operation results, half of companies’ consultations account for stabilization support of employees with disabilities, as the numbers of successful employment cases and employees increase, thus the rate of stability support has been increased. The Center, in cooperation with the related-organizations, advises to employers about the characters of disabilities,

symptoms, abilities, etc. of employees with disabilities, grasps their troubles and problems, and hears opinions from their employers, bosses, and coworkers through regular visits or phone-calls by the staff of the Center, so as to prevent problems beforehand.

In FY 2015, the Center supported many persons with disabilities through job-coaching, and arranged in 20 places around the country “chief personnel for supporting the employment stability” who have rich knowledge and experience of employment stability support, thus enhanced Center’s employment stability support function. Especially, for cases of difficult employment stability, the Center helps by itself or assists other areas’ support personnel who face difficult cases.

Following FY 2014, in FY 2015 the Center increased personnel who are in charge of employment stability support to enhance the support system for persons with mental disorders who need careful support for employment stability.

Further, since FY 2015, the Center has approved to build multiple healthcare centers, instead one, in large areas around the country.

- (9) The government has been carrying out “Welfare to Work” support to help the employment of persons with disabilities so that they can go on to regular work. Since FY 2015, the period of “Welfare to Work” support has been extended to improve employment stability. Three years later, based on the results, the Act on Comprehensive Support for Persons with Disabilities will be discussed to take necessary measures. On March 1, 2016, the Cabinet decided “a bill on the Act for Comprehensive Support for Daily and Social Life of Persons with Disabilities and a bill on Partial Revision of the Child Welfare Act” to improve the welfare service and support for commuting children with disabilities, and submitted to the 190th Diet, so that “employment stability support” is included to respond to daily and work life issues for persons with disabilities.
- (10) The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries and MHLW have jointly been promoting the “Project for Collaboration between Agriculture and Welfare” to support the efforts on opening and improving the welfare farms for persons with disabilities and others. Both Ministries are positively dispatching information on excellent cases and support measures and making efforts to increase wages of persons with disabilities through collaboration between agriculture and welfare.
- (11) For persons with disabilities whose disabilities are too severe to receive vocational training, human resources development schools for persons with disabilities provide vocational training. As of April 1, 2016, there are 19 schools, including 13 national and 6 local governmental schools.
- (12) The National Skills Competition for Persons with Disabilities (the Abilympics) has been held since 1972. The aim of Abilympics is to promote the development of the vocational abilities of persons with disabilities, for persons with disabilities to confidently and proudly participate in society as skilled

workers, and widen and deepen public understanding and awareness of persons with disabilities to promote the employment of persons with disabilities.