

Chapter 5: Handling Children and Child-Rearing in Areas Affected by the Tohoku Earthquake

Section 1: The Situation of Children in the Tohoku Earthquake

The Tohoku Earthquake, which occurred on March 11th, 2011 has brought extensive damage. In the three prefectures, namely Iwate, Miyagi and Fukushima, the number of deceased persons is 13,154 as of April 11th: with the ages of 11,108 casualties have become clear through autopsies, and out of that number, people aged between 0 to 9 are 391 and those aged between 10 and 19 are 336.

In addition, as asked in each prefecture to accept an aid to social welfare facilities needed in the affected areas, the number of acceptable child related facilities is 7,148 people(as of current June 2, 2011). Regarding the children who lost their parent(s), it has been confirmed that the number of the earthquake-related orphans amounts to 198, (82 in Iwate pref., 98 in Miyagi pref., and 18 in Fukushima pref.).

Furthermore, the number of school children being taken in from schools in those three prefectures seriously affected by the Tohoku Earthquake (Iwate, Miyagi, and Fukushima prefectures) is 9,433. And its breakdown is 6,195 from elementary schools, 2,162 from junior high schools, 980 from senior high schools, 1 from secondary schools, and 95 from special needs schools (elementary level, junior high school level and senior high school level) Of these, the area that is specified in the security zone evacuation preparation area, a planned evacuation zone emergency including the number that have been found to be students in Fukushima Prefecture has become 8,109 people, breaking down by the type of school into: 5,279 from elementary schools, 1,857 from junior high schools, 881 from senior high schools, and 92 from special schools (elementary level, junior high school level and senior high school level) (as of current April 22nd, 2011).

In addition, 922 kindergartens, 633 day-care centers, 3,069 elementary schools, 1,579 junior high schools, 7 secondary schools, and 182 special needs schools experienced property damage (The number of kindergartens, elementary schools, junior high schools, secondary schools, special needs schools is as of current 7:00, April 28th, 2011, and the number of day-care centers is as of April 18th, 2011).

Section 2: Handling Children and Child-Rearing in Areas Affected by the Tohoku Earthquake

1. Regarding Welfare (Including mental healthcare)

1) Understanding the Current Situation and Providing Care for Children Affected by the Tohoku 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:

- Regarding the children who have lost their parents and or whose parents are missing, teams composed of people from child guidance centers from within as well as from outside of the affected prefectures, have been created to visit each of the evacuation centers. This is in order to understand the current situation, to consult with children, who have lost their parents, to interview children, and to discuss their nurturing and living situation with their relatives.
- Taking care of children who have lost their parents or whose parents are missing, with the situation addressed at child guidance centers, is being adjusted through the acceptance by relatives as much as possible. In addition, for children who

are not accepted by the relatives, prior to the adjustment for the consignment to family homes, such as foster care and child support, admission to orphanages as temporary living place if necessary is conducted.

- Prefectures are asked about dispatching staff involved in child welfare and working at child guidance centers, and shelters (nursery teachers, child counselors, child welfare officers, and child psychologists) in order to care for children affected by the disaster. In addition, the expenses incurred in the consultations with and in the aid for children affected by the Earthquake were recorded in the first supplementary budgets in fiscal year 2011
- Through the full state contribution by the utilization of emergency 'regional experts protecting the health of children comprehensive cooperation project' in fiscal year 2010, clinical psychologists were dispatched to the disaster area (Total number of actual dispatch for fiscal year 2010: 35 people to Miyagi prefecture, 83 people to Fukushima prefecture, 13 people to Ibaraki prefecture, and 85 to Sendai city).
- Steps to provide the necessary expenses for the 'School Counselor Utilization Project' in fiscal year 2011 to make it possible to provide emergency support measures of school counselors in all of the public elementary, middle and high schools in the affected areas. In addition, to enhance the care of children and students affected by the disaster, the 'emergency dispatching school counselor project' are planned in the first supplementary budget for fiscal year 2011.
- In the first supplementary budget, for the restoration the child welfare institutions affected by the Earthquake, the ratio of government subsidy was taken up and, for helping the child care institutions affected by the Earthquake to reopen, the government subsidy for the expenses to use restoration is planned.

2. Regarding Schools and Education

1) Support for Children's Learning

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

(1) Acceptance of children affected by the earthquake into schools

- When students ask schools within the region to accept them, we treat such cases as flexibly as possible and request immediate acceptance by each education board.
- Regarding specific considerations for smooth acceptance, dissemination through e-mail newsletters was widely carried out by Elementary and Secondary Education Bureaus through the communication and office websites of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, and Science. (The number of cases registered: 38,212 (as of current March 31th, 2011.))

(2) Provision on Textbooks

- Regarding the provision on textbooks for the students who were obliged to change their schools due to the Earthquake and who are under compulsory education, we flexibly manage their cases by providing them with textbooks even without certificates of textbook grant.

(3) Aid for School Attendance

a) Aid for school attendance of school children

- Each board of education is requested to help school children affected by the Earthquake to attend schools and at the same time, necessary expenses will be

provided in order to implement the required aid for their school attendance. And measures were taken for the “Temporary Special Subsidies to Support the School Attendance of School Children affected by the Earthquake” in the first supplementary budgets in FY 2011.

b) Teaching and Learning Support for Students

- We request each university, college, etc. to make consideration for students affected by the Earthquake in terms of approval of credits, academic degrees and graduation.
- Notifying each university the assumption that the tuition for the period of the beginning of the fiscal year 2011, the university has taken measures to ensure the Master of the period prescribed in the standards for the establishment of universities may safely be handled flexibly.
- Ensuring the opportunity for examination of students, ask each university to consider measures maximum flexibility.
- Regarding applicants and students of the specialized training colleges and miscellaneous schools that were damaged due to the earthquake, through prefectural school jurisdiction department to specialized training colleges and miscellaneous schools, each is requested to make a conscious admission procedure, for admission, promotion, graduation, and changing schools, for applicants and students of involvement in the region affected by the disaster.

c) Financial support to students

- According to the Japan Student Services Organization, is, accepting a Scholarship Loan(interest free) application at any time of the adoption of emergency (interest-free) from school and university students and from households where there were a sudden change due to the earthquake.
- Also, in the first fiscal 2011 supplementary budget, Scholarship Loan(interest free) and recorded emergency adoption (interest-free expansion), measures for the expansion of the tuition exemption for cases of requests for reduction, collection of tuition and enrollment fees (in the past, many universities and specialized training colleges across the country, carried out tuition waivers, scholarships, housing assistance, etc.)
- Regarding applicants and students of the specialized training colleges and miscellaneous schools that were damaged due to the Earthquake, through prefectural school jurisdiction department to specialized training colleges and miscellaneous schools , each is requested to extension or exempt the fee of entrance examination and the payment of the first fiscal year and exempt or reduce the tuition.

d) Employment Assistance for Students

- In the joint names of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and the Technology and Health, Labor and Welfare Ministry, both ministries request each major business group not to cancel employment. Moreover, understanding the status of prospective cancellation in conjunction with the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare is to be aimed at. Performing delicate job counseling because universities can high school is asked. In addition, in collaboration with the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, with the cooperation of the agencies, such as National Institute for Youth Education, when students were affected to a job in the metropolitan area free accommodation is to be provided.

(4) Increase of Teaching Staff

- We are striving to understand the situation of educational activities in the

affected areas, turning to a full-fledged restoration of school management, it must be necessary to ensure the faculty. First, based on the contents of the Board of Education requests that were affected, adding additional ration constant conduct unofficial announcement dated April 28, 2011.

(5) Restoration of School Facilities and Social Education Facilities

- Necessary budget has been appropriated in the first supplementary budgets in FY 2011 to cover the expenses for the restoration and reconstruction of facilities such as schools and social education facilities.

(6) Implementation of radiation monitoring in schools

- The measurement of air dose rates is to be carried out in playgrounds and schoolyards of elementary schools, middle schools, kindergartens, nurseries and special schools (except for the evacuation area within 20km) in Fukushima. The results will be publicized.

The views of the Nuclear Emergency Response Headquarters that take into account the advice of the Nuclear Safety Commission, preliminary ideas on the use of school facilities judgment are to be obtained, with notification in Fukushima Prefecture on April 19, 2011.

(7) Programs to help disaster-stricken area

- To promote the matching of needs and support the affected areas, and management established the "portal site support the Great East Japan Earthquake, children learning portal site" on the website of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science.
(URL: <http://manabishien.mext.go.jp/>)

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

We have asked each one of prefectures to provide proper services for expecting mothers and infants, regardless of whether there are changes to certificates of residence or not, with regard to the issuance of maternity passbook and medical checks.

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) 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.

5) Lump-Sum Birth Allowance

Regarding hospitals, clinics, and birth centers, we informed them to utilize direct payment systems for expecting mothers who request so, even when they are unable to show insurance cards due to the Tohoku Earthquake.

4. Other

1) Addressing the certification of child allowance

We have asked local governments to simplify the process of applying and give special consideration for delayed applications when the people affected by the Earthquake will apply for child allowance.

2) Addressing the handling of child-rearing allowance

Regarding the treatment of the child rearing allowance for victims of the Earthquake, the following was informed to each one of prefectures: <1> Special treatment, when deemed necessary in light of major disaster, for income constraints and omission of attached documents, as well as early payments when it is not confirmed whether the father or mother is alive or dead, <2> extension of redemption period of welfare loans for fatherless families and widows, <3> regarding short-stay businesses, flexible support for households affected by the disaster.

3) Support of user fees for the usage of the expert businesses by severely mentally and physically handicapped children affected by the disaster

Regarding the user fees for the usage of the expert business severely mentally and physically handicapped children affected by the disaster, there was a disseminated notification for the fees to be made an exemption on consideration of the circumstances of the disaster.

4) Special childcare allowance for victims of the Earthquake

Regarding the treatment of the special childcare allowance for victims of the Earthquake, we have spread information involving <1> The timing for payment of the special childcare allowance, <2> omission of attached documents when deemed necessary in light of major disaster, <3> mitigation of income constraints for people who approximately more than half of their houses and assets have been damaged, <4> administrative processes associated with the Earthquake.

5) 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. In addition, since pregnant women, woman resting after childbirth and newborn babies need health care especially, it is asking for establishment of proper facilities as evacuation shelters to local governments, in cooperation with medical institutions (It is also notifying that these support are subject to state liability

on the Disaster Relief Act.)

6) 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.