

## Chapter 2 Efforts to Deal with the Declining Birthrate

### Section 1 Past Efforts

#### (Angel Plan and New Angel Plan)

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

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

The 'Act on Advancement of Measures to Support Raising Next-Generation Children' (Act No.120 of 2003) was established in July 2003 (H15) for promoting intensive and planned initiative of 10 years for local public entities and businesses, from the viewpoint of supporting the families raising the next generation children in the society as a whole in response to the decline of childcare strength of the family and region. The act was aimed at formulating and implementing the respective action plan for local public entities and businesses to promote initiatives for supporting the next generation.

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

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

#### (New measures to Deal with the Declining Birthrate)

In 2005, the total fertility rate registered the record low of 1.26 in history.

In order to cope with the faster progress than expected in declining birthrate, and to improve, strengthen and shift the countermeasures against the declining birthrate, the "New measures to Deal with the Declining Birthrate" was decided at the council for the countermeasures to the declining birth rate in June, 2006.

The "New measures to Deal with the Declining Birthrate," in addition to the promotion of national movement designed to reconstruct family and community bonding and change the overall social awareness, list a range of support measures by age progression from pregnancy and childbirth to high school and university periods by focusing attention on the fact that needs for childcare support vary according to the child growth.

#### (Strategic Priority for 'Japan Supporting the Children and the Families')

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

Work-life Balance' and the 'Action policy for promoting Work-life Balance' were determined in December 2007 by the 'Council of Executives of Public and Private Sectors to Promote Work-life Balance' consisting of the related cabinet ministers, economic and labour circles, etc.

#### (Formulating of the Vision on Children and Childcare)

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

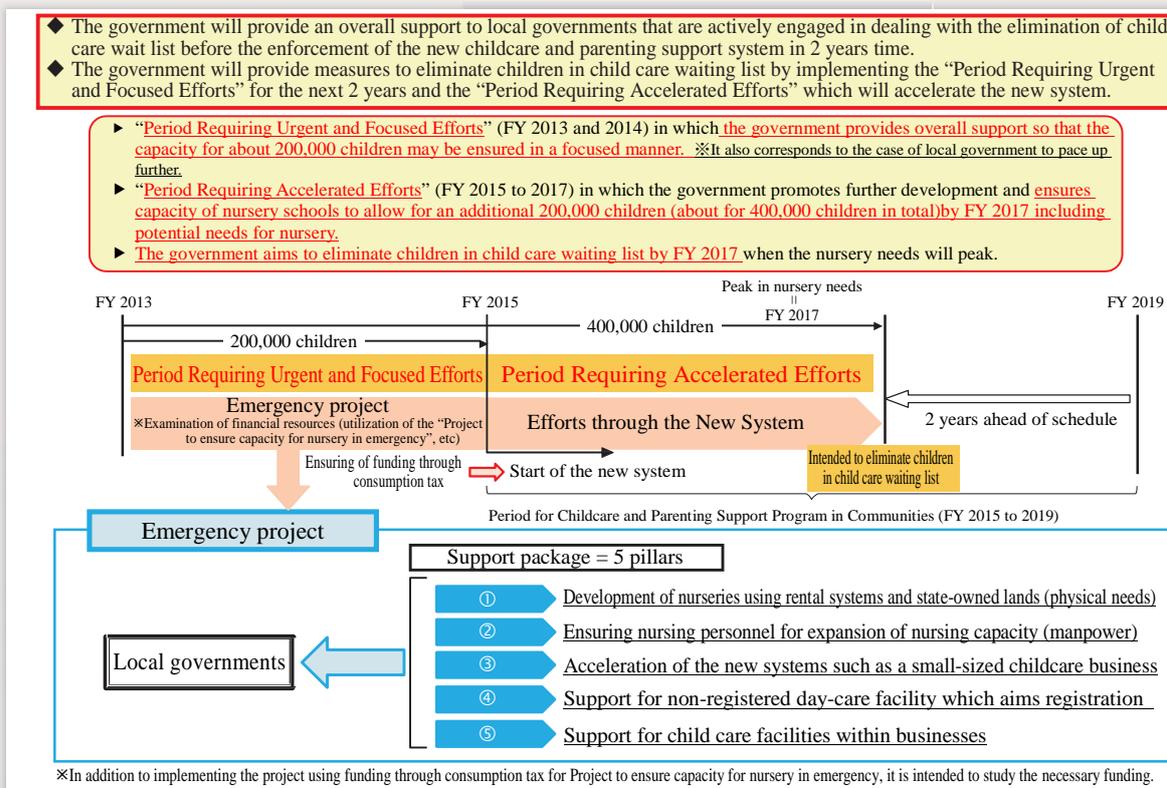
Afterwards, in October 2009 (H21) a 'children and child care vision (tentative) study working team' consisting of three upper political divisions (cabinet minister, state secretary, parliamentary secretary) was established. Through consultations and holding the council for the countermeasures to the declining birth rate on January 29<sup>th</sup>, 2010 (H22), 'Vision on Children and Childcare' (hereinafter referred to as the 'Vision') was approved by the Cabinet.

#### (Plan to Accelerate the Elimination of the Child Care Wait Lists)

Aimed at the elimination of children in wait list in an urgent manner, the "Plan to Accelerate the Elimination of the child Care Wait Lists" was formulated in April, 2013 and the government will provide an overall support to local governments that are actively engaged in dealing with the elimination of child care wait list before the enforcement of the new childcare and parenting support system which is scheduled for FY 2015.

This plan defines FY 2013 and FY 2014 as the "Period Requiring Urgent and Focused Efforts" and plans to ensure the capacity for about 200,000 children in two years and FY 2015 when the new childcare and parenting support system is planned to be started to FY 2017 as the "Period Requiring Accelerated Efforts" to expand the capacity of nursery schools to allow for an additional 200,000 children by FY 2017 when the nursery needs will peak including potential needs for nursery with a view to eliminating children in child care waiting list.

**Fig. 1-2-1 Plan to Accelerate the Elimination of the child Care Wait Lists**



Source: Data of the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare.

## Section 2 Overview of the “New Childcare and Parenting System” [Special issue]

The “Three Bills related to Child and Childcare” submitted by the government to the Ordinary Diet Session (180<sup>th</sup> Diet) in March 2012 were enacted after passing Diet deliberations and promulgated on August 22. The new child and childcare support system (hereinafter referred to as the “new system”) based on the three bills related to child and childcare including the “Child and Childcare Support Act”, “Act to Amend a Part of the Act on the Promotion of a Comprehensive Provision of Education and Daycare for Preschool Children” and the “Act on the Development of Related Acts Derived from the Enforcement of the Act to Amend a Part of the Act on the Promotion of a Comprehensive Provision of Education and Daycare for Preschool Children” is implemented as part of The Comprehensive Reform of Social Security and Tax by using a part of revenues to derive from the rise in the consumption tax and is scheduled to be implemented officially from FY 2015 when the consumption tax is raised to 10% at the earliest.

The past history up to the enactment of the new system and its overview are as follows:

### 1. Background for Considering a New Parenting Support System

Currently, the number of children is decreasing in our country due to the declining birth rate. The environment surrounding parenting and childcare is very difficult and it is not only a few households that feel uneasy and isolated in rearing children due to the nuclearization of the family and fewer social connection in communities. Even if a household wants to leave a child in the care of a day care center, it happens that the desired day care center is full and many children are on waiting list. In the end, the environment for balancing work and raising children is not necessarily satisfactory and in light of such a situation, many people cannot turn into reality their hopes and dreams to bear and raise children.

Primarily, infant education and childcare play an important role in building the base for lifelong character formation. Thus, it is important that every young child is provided with quality pre-school education in a comprehensive manner in accordance with the community needs.

In order to deal with this challenge and enable people to achieve their hopes to bear and raise children and create a better society for children, it is necessary for the government and communities in a concerted effort to build a new system to support children and households.

## **2. Past history of Considering a New Parenting Support System and Submission of a Bill**

In view of the situation, the government decided to hold review meeting made up of relevant Ministers and establish under it a working group made up of senior vice-ministers and parliamentary secretaries of the relevant Ministries at the Council on Measures for the Declining Birthrate in January 2010. Since September of the same year, three working teams consisting of the “basic system,” “integration of kindergarten and daycare ” and “child guidelines” (provisional names) were formed with the participation of experts, child care and kindergarten stakeholders, local governments, representatives of business operators, representatives of workers and parenting parties to promote review of the system in a specific manner.

After a total of 35 discussion sessions at the working teams, the “Summary of the Basic System Regarding the New Child and Childcare System” was wrapped up and published in February 2012, and in March of the same year, the “Summary of the Basic System Regarding the New Child and Childcare System” and others were decided at the Council on Measures for the Declining Birthrate.

Based on them, the government submitted the three bills consisting of the “Bill for Child and Childcare Support Act,” “Bill for General Child’s Garden Act,” and “Bill for the Act for the Development of Relevant Acts as a result of the Enforcement of the Child and Childcare Support Act and General Child’s Garden Act” with the bills for The Comprehensive Reform of Social Security and Tax to the FY 2012 Ordinary Diet (180<sup>th</sup> Diet) on March 30, 2012 together with the fundamental tax reform bills.

## **3. Amendment and Enactment of the Bill in Diet Debate**

The deliberations on the three bills submitted to the Diet began in May 2012 at the House of the Representatives.

Thereafter, following the deliberations at the House of the Representatives and the “Confirmation Note on The Comprehensive Reform of Social Security and Tax” wrapped up at the working-level meetings on The Comprehensive Reform of Social Security and Tax (the part corresponding to the social insurance) by the Liberal Democratic Party, Komeito, and Democratic Party on June 15 2012, the amendment bills for the “Bill for Child and Childcare Support Act,” “Bill for General Child’s Garden Act,” and “Bill for the Act for the Development of Relevant Laws as a result of the Enforcement of the Child and Childcare Support Act and General Child’s Garden Act” were presented by members of the House of the Representatives and the “Bill for the Act to Amend a Part of the Act on the Promotion of a Comprehensive Provision of Education and Daycare for Preschool Children” was also presented as a new bill sponsored by lawmakers.

These three bills were approved by the House of the Representatives on June 26 of the same year and approved and enacted by the House of Councilors on August 10 of the same year. Finally, on August 22 of the same year, the Child and Childcare Support Act,” “Act to Amend a Part of the Act on the Promotion of a Comprehensive Provision of Education and Daycare for Preschool Children” and the “Act on the Development of Related Acts Derived from the Enforcement of the Act to Amend a Part of the Act on the Promotion of a Comprehensive Provision of Education and Daycare for Preschool Children” were promulgated.

## 4. Main Points of the New System

The main points of the new system are the following three points.

The first point is the creation of the “Facility-Based Benefits” which are commonly provided to the certified child’s gardens, kindergartens and day care centers and the “Community-Based Child Care Benefits” which are provided to small-sized day care and family type day care and others.

In the past, fiscal measures for the kindergartens and day care centers have been taken separately, the former as school education system and the latter as welfare system. In the new system, however, the “Facility-Based Benefits” which are commonly provided to the certified child’s gardens, kindergartens and day care centers has been created and the financial support has been integrated.

In addition, the “Community-Based Child Care Benefits” has been created to provide financial support to the four types of operations consisting of the “small-sized day care” which takes care of 6 to 19 children, the “family type day care (day care mother)” which takes care of upto 5 children, the “home-visit day care” which takes care of children at their home and the “workplace day care” which takes care of employee’s children as well as community’s children.

The creation of the “Community-Based Child Care Benefits” aimed at providing financial support to a variety of types of day care allows a quantitative expansion of day care in urban areas where it is difficult to secure place for the installation of new facilities, in communities where it is difficult to maintain facilities due to the dwindling number of children and in communities where it is difficult for users to get access because of the distance to the facilities.

Furthermore, along with the creation of the benefits, the new system improves the certification system for day care centers and when a day care center is compliant with the objective certification standards and meets the necessary requirements, it is given authorization in principle except cases where there are disqualifying factors and when it is necessary to meet the demand and supply balance. Thus, the new system with heightened transparency tries to deal with the increase in the demand for day care especially in the urban areas of large cities in a flexible manner. The local governments will provide benefits to certified facilities and businesses by “checking” the facilities including the establishment of their capacity and other. The second point is the improvement of the certified child’s garden system. A certified child’s garden is a facility with a combined function of both a day care center and kindergarten and regardless of the employment situation of the parents, accommodates children according to their needs and provides preschool education and day care in their infancy in an integrated manner. In addition, the child’s garden is expected to play a role of providing child and childcare support in communities by providing counseling on anxiety of childcare and serving as a meeting place for parents and children. The certified child’s garden system was created in 2006. While it is highly appreciated by the users, the problem of overlapping administration concerning certification and instruction/supervision based on the two different systems consisting of kindergartens based on the School Education Act and day care centers based on the Child Welfare Act has been indicated.

The present reformed system defines the “kindergarten and childcare coordination-based certified child’s garden” which is a type of the certified child’s gardens as a certified facility which has legal status of both school and child welfare facility and integrates authorization and instruction/supervision in order to eliminate the problem of double administration and promote the establishment of the facilities. In terms of financial measures, all the four types including the “kindergarten type,” “day care type,” “community discretion type” are also subject to the “Facility-Based Benefits.”

The third point is the enhancement of child and childcare support in communities. The municipal governments develop activity plans aimed to enhance a variety of childcare services in accordance with the needs of the communities not only for households with children requiring day care, but also for all households. Based on the plans, the local governments define legally in the new system as the “Community Child and Childcare Support Program” all those programs which are carried out by them, such as user support aimed at providing information and counseling to allow parents to use smoothly support programs for education, day care and childcare in the communities, community childcare support centers to provide counseling on childcare and facilitate communication between parents and children, temporary custody, after school children’s clubs and strengthen their financial support for further expansion of the services.

Based on these efforts, the new system will provide high quality infantile preschool education and day care in a comprehensive manner and enhance child and childcare support in communities in order to achieve a society where child-rearing is easy.

## 5. Implementing Bodies of the New System

The new system provides that the municipal governments which are basic local governments serve as the implementing bodies to gain an understanding of the demand for infant education and day care as well as childcare support, develop the activity plan (“Municipal Child and Childcare Support Program in Communities”) for ensuring systems are in place to provide assistance for parenting and childcare support to match the demand and provide benefits such as the “Facility-Based Benefits” and implement the “Municipal Child and Childcare Support Program” according to the plan. The new system also provides that the prefectural governments also elaborate the “Prefectural Child and Childcare Support Program” to help the municipal governments implement their programs in coordination with the central government.

**Fig. 1-2-2 Intent and main points of the three acts related to child and childcare**

◆ Intent of the acts

Following the agreement between Liberal Democratic Party, Komeito, and Democratic Party, the support for infantile preschool education and day care as well as child and childcare in communities will be promoted in a comprehensive manner, based on the basic understanding that parents are primarily responsible for rearing their children.

◆ Main points

- Creation of “Facility-Based Benefits” which are commonly provided to the certified child’s gardens, kindergartens and day care centers and the “Community-Based Child Care Benefits” which are provided to small-sized day care and others.



\* The “Facility-Based Benefits” serve not only for the elimination of children’s wait list, but also for ensuring day care services in communities with a decreasing trend in the number of children.

- Improvement of the certified child’s garden system (improvement of kindergarten and childcare coordination-based certified child’s garden and others)

- Integration of certification and instruction/supervision and legal definition as school and child welfare facility.
- It is not compulsory for existing kindergartens and day care facilities to move to the new system and the system will be promoted politically.
- Implementing bodies of the certified child’s gardens are the central government, local governments, educational corporations and social welfare corporations only.
- The certified child’s gardens are financially incorporated into the “Facility-Based Benefits” in an integrated manner.



- Enhancement of the “Community Child and Childcare Support Program” tailored to the needs of the communities including child and childcare support in communities, user support, community childcare support centers, after school children’s clubs and others.

Source: Cabinet Office

## 6. Procedures to Use Facilities and Operations, and the Role of Local Governments

In the new system, in order to make use of certified child’s gardens, kindergartens, day care centers which are subject to the “Facility-Based Benefits” and of small day care facilities and others which are subject to the “Community-Based Child Care Benefits,” the parents have to declare to local governments that they are qualified for receiving benefits and make application for certification of qualification by category according to the age of children (three years old and more or less) and the needs for day care.

Upon receiving applications, the local governments determine whether the children of the parents who made applications are qualified or not and when they determine that the children need day care, in addition to the above certification, they also certify the amount of day care needed (amount of day care qualified for the Facility-Based Benefits). Incidentally, the local governments determine the needs of day care and issue a certification card for the children for whom applications were made regardless of their accommodation arrangement.

The parents who have been given certification choose a facility/operator and make a contract under the guidance of the local governments. As the local governments are responsible for providing day care at day care centers under the new system as well, and are also responsible for securing day care services at places

other than day care centers (certified child's gardens, small day care facilities, etc.), for the time being, they will take care of a range of arrangements for children certified as "eligible to received day care" including facility use adjustment, introduction of available facilities and operators, request for their use for the children to facilities and operators and others. Incidentally, when a parent uses a private day care center, the parent and the local government make contract.

## 7. Cost Burden

The new system forms a part of The Comprehensive Reform of Social Security and Tax. So far, the consumption tax revenues corresponding to the government have been allocated to the three expenditures for the elderly (basic pension, elderly medical care and nursery care) and now they will be expanded to the four expenditures of social security including the childcare field (pension, medical care, nursery care and measures against the declining birthrate) by securing financial resources.

Specifically, of 2.7 trillion yen which will be allocated to the enhancement of social security due to the rise in the consumption tax rate to 10% to be implemented in October 2015, about 0.7 trillion will be allocated to the new system to enhance both the quality and quantity of day care and others.

In addition, there is described in the "Confirmation Note on The Comprehensive Reform of Social Security and Tax" as well as in the additional resolution to the three acts related to child and childcare that about 1 trillion yen will be required to enhance both the quality and quantity of infantile education, day care and childcare support and a maximum effort will be made to secure another 0.3 trillion yen apart from 0.7 trillion yen secured by the rise in the consumption tax.

## 8. Development of the Promotion Systems of the Government

In the new system, the Cabinet Office holds jurisdiction over matters involving child and childcare support act from the planning to the execution in an integrated manner and the Cabinet Office also holds jurisdiction over the certified child's garden system. To this end, the "Child and Childcare Office" was established at the Cabinet Office to develop an integrated implementation system of the new system. In the meantime, from the perspective of consistency between the school education act and the child welfare act, the new system will be implemented in coordination with the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology and the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare.

## 9. Establishment of Childcare and Parenting Conferences

In the new system, as a mechanism for experts, local governments, people engaged in parenting, parenting supporters and others to participate and get involved in the policy process of parenting support and others, the "Council on Child and Childcare" has been established in the Cabinet Office and the "basic guidelines" which stipulate the meaning of child and childcare support as well as activity programs to be prepared by the municipal and prefectural governments in addition to a variety of standards are being reviewed one by one.

In addition, the Child and Childcare Support Act provides that municipal and prefectural governments make efforts to establish a council and other council organizations for the implementation of the new system. With respect to the establishment of the council and other council organizations by the municipal and prefectural governments, initially the bill submitted by the government specified as "they may be established," but the expression was amended through Diet deliberations as "the governments will make efforts to establish them." It is desirable that council and other council organizations is established to encourage many interested parties to take part in the formulation of the child and childcare support policies at municipal and prefectural level.

## 10. Future Schedules

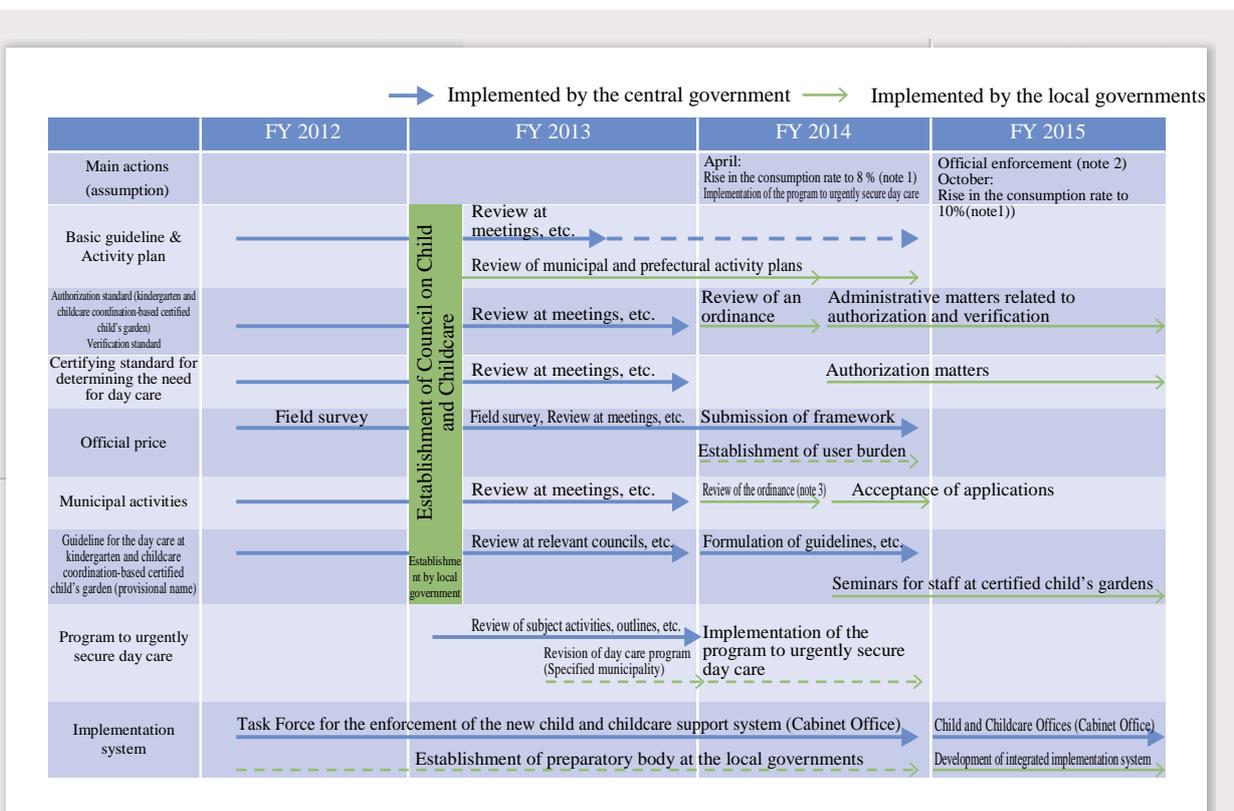
As stated earlier, the new system is scheduled to be implemented officially from April 2015 when the consumption tax is raised to 10% at the earliest.

Before its official enforcement, a review in FY 2013 has been started at the “Council on Child and Childcare” with regard to basic guidelines, certification standards for the kindergarten and childcare coordination-based certified child’s garden, verification standards for facilities and operations that are subject to the “Facility-Based Benefits” and the “Community-Based Child Care Benefits.” In light of the review results, municipal governments will develop activity plans and establish ordinances and regulations to perform a range of work from 2014 fall including certification of the needs of day care, recruitment of children for admission to certified child’s gardens and kindergartens, enrollment procedure for daycare and others.

Incidentally, from FY 2014 when the rise in the consumption tax is expected, the “program to urgently secure day care” will be developed in those municipalities with many children on waiting list for a smooth enforcement of the new system.

Fig. 1-2-3

Flow chart as currently envisaged before its official enforcement (to be enforced in FY 2015)



(Note 1) The rise in the consumption tax is subject to the improvement in economic situations.

(Note 2) The timing for the official enforcement will be reviewed following the actual rise in the consumption tax.

(Note 3) In relation to the community child and childcare support project, it will be necessary to establish the standards for the afternoon children’s healthy development program by ordinance.

Source: Cabinet Office

## Section 3 Emergency Measures to Overcome the Declining Birthrate Crisis

In order for people of younger generations to form families, turn into reality their hopes and dreams to bear and raise children and create a better society for children, the government felt the need to solve problems related to marriage, pregnancy, child delivery and childcare focused on the families and promote efforts to support childcare with the cooperation of the whole community. To this end, in March 2013, under the Minister specially appointed by the Cabinet Office (measures against declining birthrate), the “taskforce to overcome the declining birthrate crisis” (hereinafter, the “taskforce”) was established. The taskforce discussed measures to eliminate factors which prevent the people from turning into reality their hope to form families and the ways to support child-rearing efforts in households and communities among other themes, and on May 28 of the same year, the “Proposal to Overcome the Declining Birthrate Crisis” was prepared and on June 7 of the same year, the “Emergency Measures to Overcome the Declining Birthrate Crisis” was approved at the Council on Measures for Society with Decreasing Birthrate.

The content of the “Emergency Measures to Overcome the Declining Birthrate Crisis” is as follows:

### Emergency Measures to Overcome the Declining Birthrate Crisis

June 7, 2013

Approved by the Council on Measures for Society with Decreasing Birthrate

#### I. Introduction

1. Japan is faced with a 'declining birthrate crisis' that could rock the very foundation of our society and economy.
  - The declining birthrate is a problem associated with our philosophy and values of marriage, pregnancy, child delivery and others and it is needless to say that our free choice is given priority and respected. On the other hand, the change in the structure of population due to the declining birthrate has a profound bearing on the socio-economic system of our country and results in the increase in social security costs such as pension, medical care, nursing care in a direct manner, which leads to serious concern over economic growth. As such, it is necessary to consider taking measures from the perspective of social issues.
2. It is necessary to take on the “Emergency Measures to Overcome the Declining Birthrate Crisis” in an urgent manner and step up measures against the declining birthrate from “a new perspective.”
  - Many young people hope to form a family and want to have more than two children still today. Not only the number of late marriage increases, but also the percentage of people who do not marry in their lifetime is on a rise, however. In addition, the total fertility rate stands at 1.41 (2012) and the people’s hopes and dreams about marriage, pregnancy, and child delivery are not realized. In order to turn into reality the people's hopes and dreams, all people concerned with the government at the top have to address the issue of the declining birthrate in a concerted manner.
  - On the other hand, the government has been engaged with the issue so far, but it cannot be said that the decrease in number of children has been stopped.
    - The “third baby boom” by the “Baby Boom Generation Juniors” has not been materialized and the declining trend in the “number of childbirth” is continuing.
    - The “total fertility rate has increased from 1.26 (2005) to 1.41 (2012), but it is still low in comparison with other developed countries and that it is unclear whether this increasing trend will continue.
    - With the increase in number of late marriage, the percentage of people who do not marry in their lifetime is increasing.
  - It is thought possible to reverse the declining birth rate and put a halt to the declining trend in the number of childbirth the based on the change of personal values and the selection by implementing

comprehensive policies and enhanced manner like in France and Sweden.

- In doing this, it is critical that we study the results of the past efforts and consider the situations of the communities. It is also important to raise the awareness of the people of the importance of taking measures against the declining birthrate. In order to overcome the declining birthrate crisis and step up measures against the declining birthrate from “a new perspective”, it is strongly required to implement the “Emergency Measures to Overcome the Declining Birthrate Crisis.”

## **II. Basic Policy**

- The past efforts to deal with the issue of the declining birthrate have been focused on “childcare support” and “working style reform” and as a result, the “Three Laws related to Children and Childcare” were enacted and the “Work-Life Balance Charter” formulated. It is necessary, however, to provide further measures to eliminate childcare waiting lists and restrict long working hours. In the meantime, it is currently true that measures for “marriage, pregnancy, and child delivery support” which are important to help the people’s hopes come true and which are considered to have a profound bearing on the birth rate have not been sufficient.

[Pillar of the emergency measures - Promotion through the “three arrows”]

- To this end, it is proposed to promote the “Emergency Measures to Overcome the Declining Birthrate Crisis” on the basis of the following:
  - Further strengthen the (1) “childcare support” and (2) “working style reform”
  - Set forth the (3) “marriage, pregnancy, and child delivery support” as a new pillar of the measures and promote the overall measures by having these as the “three arrows.”

[Aims of the measures - Step up of support from “a new perspective”]

- It is intended to implement following comprehensive policies in an enhanced manner through the promotion of these measures as a package:
  - (1) “Continuous and contiguous support” for “marriage, pregnancy, child delivery and childcare.”
  - (2) Support tailored for “the first child, second child and the children after the third child.”

[Keys for the measures to be successful]

- In doing this, it is critical to create an environment where not only parties interested, but also households, communities and workplaces will actively provide support and to this end the following measures will be taken:
  - (1) Transmission of information to all the people and steady implementation of the measures by the government.
  - (2) Social support for the efforts of communities and workplace.
  - (3) Promotion of the participation of a wide range of age group people including children and people of senior generation such as “grandparents”

### **III. Pillar of the emergency measures - Promotion through the “three arrows”**

#### **1. Strengthening of the “childcare support”**

##### **(1) Smooth enforcement of the “New Childcare and Parenting support System”**

- The enactment of the “Three Acts related to Children and Childcare” in 2012 marked a big turning point for the “childcare support” in our country. With a view to putting into practice this epoch-making new system in a steady and smooth manner, the “Council on Children and Childcare” was established in April 2013. The system is aimed to enhance the quality and quantity of support for infant education, parenting and childcare in communities and develop a mechanism designed to promote childcare support in a comprehensive manner matching the situations of the communities.

##### **(2) Promotion of the “Plan for Accelerating the Elimination of Childcare Waiting Lists”**

- The issue of “children waiting to get in day care facilities” centered around urban areas needs to be addressed in an urgent manner in the “childcare support.” The government will provide an overall support to local governments that are actively engaged in dealing with the elimination of child care wait list before the enforcement of the new childcare and parenting support system from FY 2013. With this measure, the government will ensure capacity for about 200,000 children in the “Period Requiring Urgent and Focused Efforts” (FY 2013 and 2014) and ensure further capacity to allow for an additional 200,000 children (about for 400,000 children in total) including potential needs for nursery in the “Period Requiring Accelerated Efforts” (FY 2015 to 2017). In doing so fast, a diversity of bodies including corporation will be involved in creating facilities.

##### **(3) Support for households with many children**

- From the perspective of reducing the burden for child-rearing, it is important that a variety of supports are provided to households with more than 3 children in addition to the preferential measures aimed at the reduction of the burden of the parents currently in force.

##### **(4) “Childcare Support Network” in communities and workplaces**

- In addition to promoting childcare support in communities and workplaces, the government will promote the “creation of networks for childcare support” based on sports, culture and art to encourage social interaction among parents and among parents of different age groups, “childcare support activities in coordination of businesses, NPOs and others,” and the “passport project for childcare support” in which businesses and stores participate. It is also promoted to help communities secure day care centers and help businesses provide nursery services (including universities, hospitals and others).
- With the implementation of consistent support for disabled children according to their life stage, the expansion of foster parents and foster homes, etc., for children who need social care, such as the strengthening of counseling and support system for child abuse and the promotion of a family-type care by reducing the size of children’s nursing homes as well as the promotion of self-assistance, the government will specially develop an environment where children with special needs can grow in a healthy manner.

#### **2. Strengthening of the “work style reform”**

##### **(1) Support for making compatible childcare and work**

- In order for people to fulfill work responsibilities while rearing children, it is necessary to strongly promote review of work styles such as flexible working styles by restricting long working hours, making use of telework, etc. In addition, it is necessary to ensure full compliance of the current Child Care and Family Care Leave Act and urge companies to develop an environment to enable men and women who so wish to take childcare leave and work shorter hours until their children become three years old. It is also important to develop an environment where non-regular workers such as part-time workers can take childcare leave.

## (2) Promotion of support for small and medium companies to make compatible childcare and work

- It is difficult for small and medium companies to make compatible childcare and work and thus, it is important to consider their situations in promoting the efforts to balance childcare and work. Under the circumstance, it is an option to develop the “Plan for Returning to Work after Childcare Leave” (provisional name) and provide subsidies for securing replacement workers. Furthermore, good examples of support for balancing childcare and work by small and medium companies will be disseminated to encourage efforts matching the respective situations.

## (3) Promotion of the “appointment of women” by businesses

- From the perspective of the development of an environment to enable women to play an active role in work while rearing children, the government will encourage companies to disclose information on the appointment of women for executives and managerial posts and the status of their appointment. All the listed companies are being requested to have one woman on their board.

## (4) Dissemination of role model

- As the presence of role model (employee who serves as a goal in career formation) and of a mentor (employee who provides counseling and support to female employee) close to one is a big support for women’s career formation, the presence of role model and mentors in companies is disseminated and the expansion of opportunities for education and training for female workers is expanded.

## (5) Review of men’s work styles

- As it is also necessary to review men’s work styles and change their mentality about it, in such as the period of child rearing, in addition to the compatibility of work and childcare, policies on work-life balance including the restriction of long working hours and a variety of flexible working practices will be promoted.

## **3. Marriage, pregnancy and child delivery support**

### (1) Nationwide support for marriage, pregnancy and child delivery

- To enable all young people who wish to get married, the government makes continuous efforts to help them become self-reliant, get regular employment and have a successful career for securing financial stability and studies measures to financially support newly married households. In addition, in order to promote efforts in communities and workplaces, nationwide information sharing on marriage, pregnancy and child delivery is promoted and examples of progressive efforts are honored.
- Opportunities for students of junior high schools and high schools to get in contact with infants are provided and youth activities in communities are promoted.

### (2) Provision of information and, dissemination and enlightenment on marriage

- It is important to provide appropriate information as well as conduct dissemination of knowledge and enlightenment on marriage, pregnancy and others at a proper moment. To this end, from the perspective of providing a variety of information to both young men and women, the “research team to study the ways to appropriate information as well as conduct dissemination and enlightenment” which will carry out a professional review on the content, timing and methods of information to be provided will be established to review specific policies and measures.

### (3) Establishment of ‘counseling and support centers’

- In order to enhance function at the counseling and support centers in communities, enhancement of counseling support through telephone and e-mails (use of a uniform number across the country, establishment of hours easy to access, etc.) at the “Women’s Health Support Center” and others will be promoted to develop an environment to provide easier access for users. In addition, a name easy to understand and remember will be provided for the uniform number across the country of the counseling support centers facilitating easier access for users.

#### (4) Strengthening of “postnatal care”

- It has been pointed out that worries about childcare brought about by distress and isolation have bearing on the reproductive behavior from the second child and child abuse issue. For this reason, it is necessary to contact mothers and children after they have been discharged from hospitals as soon as possible to provide them with necessary support. Specifically, a variety of measures are provided including the strengthening of the “early postnatal care (until 3 to 4 months after child delivery) that is aimed at enhancing functions of telephone counseling at an early stage, implementation of the “postnatal respite care project” which provides rest (daytime stay or stay for a night) at the postnatal care centers, and introduction of the “postnatal partner project” as a model project which deals with the consultation on child care making use of midwives who are currently not active and utilizing active “grandparents” of senior generations to provide support to mothers such as a talking partner and a partner to go out with, and further measures will be studied based on the outcome.

#### (5) Development of community medical care system (obstetric and pediatric health care)

- Following the discussion of the National Council on Social Security System Reform, efforts will be made to secure medical health care service and doctors in communities in order to develop obstetric and pediatric health care system in communities.

#### (6) Support for fertility treatment

- The government will study the ways to support fertility treatment and provide support in accordance with the results.

### **4. Fostering of nationwide recognition and support for community plans**

#### (1) Transmission of information to people and steady implementation of policies by the government

- In order to overcome the declining birthrate crisis Japan is faced with and create a society which provides an easy access to marriage, pregnancy, child delivery and childcare, it is important to strengthen the transmission of information so as to deepen the understanding in communities and workplaces in addition to the importance of supporting people in the generation of marriage, pregnancy and child delivery in days to come and people currently in the middle of child-rearing. Specially, it is important to spread the recognition of the situation and the needs to take measures to cope with the “declining birthrate crisis” among employers and heads of local governments and help them actively promote measures against the declining birthrate crisis.
- In doing this, it is important to show specific policy goals and time-schedules in a clear manner and carry them out steadily with the understanding of the people.

#### (2) Promotion of the “plan to overcome the declining birthrate crisis in communities”

- In dealing with the declining birthrate, it is important to take measures tailored to the situations of the communities. To this end, it is recommended that local governments publicly solicit innovative and ingenious “plans to overcome the declining birthrate crisis in communities” and choose those which can serve as model efforts and support their implementation in a focused manner. It is also important to share information on results and challenges across the country and promote and accelerate efforts to deal with the declining birthrate at community level.

### **5. Efforts in terms of systems and financial resources**

#### (1) Securing of revenues for ‘the New Child and Childcare Support System’ and others

- In order to enforce the “New Child and Childcare Support System” in April 2015 (planned) smoothly, it is necessary to secure revenues for enhancing the quality and quantity of infant education, day care and childcare support in the order of 1 trillion yen including the fiscal revenues to derive from the rise in the consumption tax (about 0.7 trillion yen).
- In addition, to ensure a smooth enforcement of the “New Child and Childcare Support System” and

promote the elimination of childcare wait list, the “Project to Ensure Emergency Day Care” will be implemented in FY 2014.

- To develop an environment where young people can be employed by companies, ensure their financial stability in communities, and to build a society to allow marriage and child-rearing, it is necessary to provide financial assistance for a variety of efforts such as “marriage, pregnancy and child delivery support” and “childcare support” including the use of Relief Child Fund.
- (2) Review on the extension and strengthening of the “Act for Measures to Support the Development of the Next Generation”
- It is necessary to review on the extension and strengthening of the “Act for Measures to Support the Development of the Next Generation” which will expire in FY 2014 from the perspective of promoting the efforts to “overcome the declining birthrate crisis” in a concerted manner among the government and the private sector.