

Part 2 Specific Implementation Status of Measures against a Declining Birthrate

Chapter 1 In Pursuit of a Society Where child-rearing is Supported and Young People Can Grow in Confidence

Section 1 Engaging the Whole Community to Support Children and Ensuring Educational Opportunities

1. Engaging the Whole Community to Support Children

(Child-support allowance system)

A cash benefit is paid to families with small children; the new child-support allowance system has been enforced since April 2012: 10,000 to 15,000 yen per child is paid monthly as child allowance to those who are rearing small children, and 5,000 yen per child is paid monthly to those whose income is higher than the income-tested, special-case benefit.

2. Supporting the Learning of Children

1) Supporting the learning of high school students

Concerning the Tuition-Free High School Education System, it has been unified; the system under which public high school tuition shall not be collected has been revised to a mechanism in which the government pays a tuition support funds for every high school student, as is done with private high school students, for students who enter after the 1st of April, 2014. At the same time, in regard the payment of tuition support funds, in order to secure the financial resources to support students in low-income households and to correct the gap of educational costs between public high schools and private high schools, the system has been revised to one in which an income limitation is set, as a qualification of the recipient (FY 2013 Law No. 90, “The Partial Revision to the Act on Free Tuition Fee at Public High Schools and High School Tuition Support Fund”).

Regarding educational costs other than tuition, and as a support for students in low-income households, a “High School Supplemental Scholarship (grants for scholarship)” has been newly created.

In addition, a “Support project for the learning of high school students on remote islands” has also been created for students living on remote islands without a high school.

2) Enhancement of Scholarship Loan

In FY 2013, the number of Scholarship Loan recipients was significantly increased by 88,000 from the previous year to a total of 1,443,000 persons, including 426,000 persons who received interest-free Scholarship Loan increased by 27,000 from the previous year (including 13,000 which were newly increased). Therefore, expanding order to expand the “reserved application” category, we are preparing to improve the “Interest-free Scholarship Loan system combined with an income-contingent repayment scheme” as introduced in FY 2012, to a flexible system in which a student only has to return the amount that they can afford to pay as determined by their annual income after graduation..

3) Improvement of the Educational Environment at Schools

The new Courses of Study aim to develop a zest for life in children and to provide them with a well-

balanced intellect, a strong sense of ethics and a healthy body by increasing the number of classes and improving contents of education. The new guidelines have been implemented across the board for elementary schools since April 2011, for middle schools since April 2012, and for high schools since April 2013.

Concerning the placement school staff, which serve as the basis of a school's educational environment, in FY 2011 and FY 2012, the staff quota for each school, which required that elementary 1st and 2nd grade classes have less than 35 pupils, has been increased. In FY 2013, the staff quota required for the improvement of school operations, like responding to bullying, and the enhancement of special needs education, has been increased to 800.

Section 2 Facilitating Employment and Self-reliance

1. Efforts to Facilitate the Employment and Self-reliance of Young People

1) Promoting Measures for Non-Regular Employment

In FY 2013, the "Stable Employment project of definite-term, short-hour temporary workers and others" was implemented in order to provide stable employment for irregular workers and to improve their treatment. This involved comprehensive countermeasures to support and improve their careers and their workplaces, such as opportunities for conversion to regular employment, the development of human resources, improved treatment and others.

Also, in response to the Japan Revitalization Strategy decided by the Cabinet in June 2013, in order to popularize and promote model cases of the "diversified regular workers" focusing on job duties, we will collect and disseminate successful cases. We set up an advisory council for spreading and expanding the "diversified regular workers" in September 2013 and will put together the Points to Remember Regarding Employment Management, which will prescribe the statement of working conditions, among other matters, as early as possible in FY 2014.

2) Employment Support for Young People

By actively promoting a range of measures including the promotion of giving regular employment to part-time workers, in FY 2013, the government also took aim at achieving a society where young people (on whose shoulders the future of our country lies) can work in a confident and convincing manner to demonstrate their will and abilities. This includes the following measures:

- (1) Comprehensive and continuous measures to support career formation from school up through the attainment of employment.
- (2) Employment support for previous graduates and new graduates.
- (3) Development of a diverse employment system to cope with multiple employment routes.
- (4) Promotion of skill development among young people,
- (5) Development of One Stop Service Centers (commonly called Job Cafés) for young people.

3) Supports pursuant to the Act on Promotion of Development and Support for Children and Young People

Based on the "Act on Promotion of Development and Support for Children and Young People" enforced in April 2010 (2009 Law No. 71), we have conducted a "Project to enhance a regional council system for youth support" (throughout 16 regions in FY 2013) so as to promote the establishment of Regional Councils for Youth Support.

In order to develop human resources who work to support children and youth who are facing difficulties, various training courses such as visiting support (outreach) training are in progress.

Section 3 Opportunities for Learning Matters Necessary for Social Life

1. Deepening the Understanding of the Importance of Life and the Roles of the Family

1) Education and Enlightenment on Pregnancy and the Role of the Home and the Family

Age-appropriate education designed to deepen the understanding of the roles of a household and family, and which focuses on the relevant subjects, is provided at elementary schools, middle schools and high schools.

The Courses of Study were revised in March 2008 for elementary and middle schools, and in March 2009 for high schools. These revisions include enhance the educational content, including an emphasis on practical and hands-on learning aimed to raise awareness of the roles of a household and a family.

2) Provision of Opportunities to be in Touch with Infants

We are promoting efforts to increase opportunities that allow junior high school and high school students to meet and interact with babies.

3) Promotion of Efforts in Schools, Homes and Communities

Education designed to deepen the understanding of childcare is provided in a coordinated manner in classes on relevant subjects, ethics, the Periods for Integrated Studies and special activities.

To help with efforts in households and communities, the government is providing support for education at home which is implemented by communities in a voluntary manner in order to enhance parents' understanding on the importance of both parents rearing children and the importance of life.

4) Promotion of Understanding through “Family Day,” “Family Week,” etc.

In order to promote the understanding of the entire community, make the most of their concerted efforts, and help them once again recognize the importance of passing our values onto our children, the government conducted an enlightenment project centered on the “Family Day” and the “Family Week.”

5) Survey and Research on Family Formation

In FY 2013, we conducted an “Attitude survey on child-rearing in families and regions.”

Results of the survey are made public through the home page and other media in order to familiarize and enlighten people. In addition, by providing information about it, we will support local governments, concerned bodies and others that are working on countermeasures to the falling birth rate.

2. Fostering Rich Human Qualities through Learning and Experience

1) Development of an Environment Where the Entire Community Engages in Children's Education

In order to improve the capability of the family and the community by being conscious of the roles and responsibilities of schools, households and communities in the raising of children, the government is promoting nationwide efforts to support education. These efforts involve the participation of community people, including the establishment of a school support community office, after-school Classes for children, and support for education at home.

2) Promotion of Consumer Education

In order to promote consumer education comprehensively and integrally, in December 2012 the [Act on Promotion of Consumer Education](#) (Act No.61 of 2012) was enforced, and The Consumer Education Promotion Council was also set up within the Consumer Affairs Agency, as a council (the Article 19 of the Act). Based upon said Act, on June 28th, 2013, “the Basic Policy on Promotion of Consumer Education” (the Basic Policy) was decided by the Cabinet (the Article 9 of the Act).

The “Issues to be addressed” set force in the Basic Policy have been discussed by three subcommittees

formed under the Consumer Education Promotion Council (the Consumer Citizenship Development Subcommittee, the Information Utilization Enhancement Subcommittee and the Regional Collaboration Promotion Subcommittee), and will sort out the results of the discussions in February 2015 , further promoting consumer education.

3) Hands-on Activities in Communities and Schools

(1) Promotion of hands-on activities in communities

Hands-on activities are conducted, including learning activities, sports and art activities, and after-school classes for children provide opportunities for social interaction and communication with other community members.

Also, along with promoting the initiation and spread of experiential activities among families, enterprises and others, the National Institution for Youth Education utilizes 28 national youth education facilities across the country, and provides the opportunities and places for experiential activities.

(2) Promotion of hands-on activities in schools

In order to prevent bullying in its early stages, we support unique and original experiential activities in farming villages and fishing villages, for the purpose of raising pupils and students in a sound and healthy manner through education.

4) Culture and Art Activities

We promote efforts to help children develop a rich sensitivity and imagination by providing them with opportunities to watch the performing arts as presented by cultural and artistic groups and artists. In addition, hands-on experience in workshops at elementary and middle schools are also promoted.

5) Place of Contact with Nature

Under the guidance and cooperation of conservation rangers and volunteers, opportunities were provided for children to learn environmental etiquette and to perform environmental restoration and conservation activities.

6) Hands-on Activities of Agriculture Forestry and Fisheries Industries, and Exchange Experiences between Cities and Countrysides

Since Educational activities nurture the desire to learn independence, compassion, and normative consciousness so as to help grow children strong, we are promoting the “Agricultural, Mountain and Fishing Villages Exchange Project for Children”, in which elementary school students can experience home-stay in Countrysides, learning about nature, farming, forestry and fishing.

7) Ensuring Recreation Places for Children (Parks, Beaches and Forests)

Parks in urban areas serve as playgrounds for children, so they are being provided with a variety of sports facilities and play areas where children may practice sports and have a good time.

Chapter 2 In Pursuit of a Society Where Hope for Pregnancy, Birth and child-rearing Can Be Realized

Section 1 Facilitating Confident Pregnancy and Birth

1. Ensuring Support System for Pregnancy and Birth, and a Perinatal Care System

1) Reducing Economic Burdens on Perinatal Care and Childbirth

In order to enhance health management for pregnant women and reduce their financial burden, in the second supplementary budget for FY 2008 and in the supplementary budget for FY 2010, the support for their perinatal care visits was expanded to further include nine visits which were not subject to municipal support, so that all pregnant women can receive necessary health checkups for pregnant women (about 14 visits) (as of December 2011, more than 14 visits are subject to a subsidy in all municipal governments). In the fourth supplementary budget for FY 2011, it was decided to continue the public subsidy established in FY 2012.

In 2012, the government decided to provide counseling support and to implement activities for the dissemination of knowledge and enlightenment on so-called “recurrent miscarriage,” which is the occurrence of two or more consecutive pregnancies that end in miscarriage; this is to be done by staffing a counselor at each infertility counseling center.

2) Development of a Perinatal Care System and Ensuring a System for Admission into Emergency Hospitals

(1) Enhancement of perinatal care system

To ensure that high quality medical care can be provided in an appropriate manner for high-risk expectant mothers and newborn babies, comprehensive perinatal medical centers and community perinatal medical centers, all of which play a key role in perinatal care, are being developed and the perinatal care system is being enhanced in coordination with child delivery facilities in local communities.

(2) Securing emergency perinatal care systems

It has been possible to improve the maternal mortality rate and neonatal mortality rate through the development of comprehensive perinatal medical centers, as well as through the establishment of community perinatal medical centers for emergency and perinatal care.

3) Obstetrical Medical Care Compensation System

Since January 2009, the “obstetrics medical care compensation system” has helped to improve environments where pregnant women can receive obstetric care with confident.

4) Dissemination and Enlightenment of the Maternity Mark

Dissemination of the sign is promoted in a variety of ways including the website, and also public transportation enterprises, workplaces and restaurants were requested to cooperate with these efforts.

5) Development of a Counseling Support System (Pregnancy and Childbirth, Artificial Abortion, etc.)

For women with troubles and worries about pregnancy and childbirth, artificial abortion, etcetera, counseling support using maternal and child health services such as home visits for guidance, as well as counseling support, is provided at the “Women’s Health Support Centers” (Women’s Health Support Centers: 42 municipal governments in FY 2011).

2. Efforts to Support Fertility Treatment

1) Infertility Counseling Center

In medical care centers that play a key role in communities, “Infertility Counseling Center Services” are implemented where (1) doctors provide medical counseling and (2) mental care counseling (in FY 2011: 60 municipal governments).

2) Reduction in the Economic Burdens of Fertility Treatment

Considering the high cost for *in vitro* fertilization and microsemination, a part of the cost for these treatments has been subsidized since FY 2004 as part of several measures to support the next generation by reducing their financial burden.

Since 2007, the benefit amount has been increased (up to 100,000 yen per treatment, twice a year, for up to five years) and the income restriction has been relaxed (up to 7.3 million yen in the combined income of a married couple). Since FY 2009, the benefit amount has been further increased up to 150,000 yen per treatment, and since FY 2011, the number of first year treatments has been increased to three per year (for a total of five years, not to exceed ten treatments in total) (payment of benefits in FY 2010: 96,458).

Section 2 Facilitating Early Childhood Education and Childcare for Everybody

1. Reducing Wait-listed Children and Improvement in Early Childhood Education and Childcare

1) Reduce wait-listed children

Refer to Section 1, Chapter 2.

2) Provision of a Variety of Childcare Services

In order to satisfy a variety of childcare needs, we continue to promote the extension childcare project, the night-time childcare project, and the childcare businesses for children with diseases and convalescent children. Meanwhile, in the Comprehensive Support System for Children and Child-rearing, the extension childcare businesses and the childcare project for children with diseases and convalescent children have become part of the “community child care support project.” Also, the “family-style day-care” and the “childcare within institution” are to become part of a regional childcare benefit under a municipal-authorized project (municipal-level childcare services).

3) Promotion of the Dissemination of Family-style Day-care

In order to cope with the increase in daycare demand, necessary subsidies are provided for municipal governments which provide family-style day-care services, for example, a daycare mother who provides daycare for a small number of preschool children at her home in coordination with nursery centers, etc. The budget for FY 2012 allows for 10,000 children. In addition, a “group-type, small-scale childcare services” which is provided by a plurality of family-style day-care providers at the same place has been implemented since FY 2011.

4) Improvement in Quality of Early Childhood Education and Childcare

The “Kindergarten School Assessment Guideline” was revised in November 2011 in order to promote school assessments according to the characteristics of the kindergartens, including third-party assessments.

With respect to nursery centers, a third-party assessment is promoted so as to provide services from the children’s perspective.

5) The Comprehensive Support System for Children and Child-rearing

This children and child-rearing support system was established according to Three Bills Relevant to Children and Child-rearing that were enacted in FY 2012 in the ordinary session of the Diet. We are working on the new system under the policy that it will fully be implemented in FY 2015.

2. After-School Measures

1) Promotion of the “Program for After-School Children (After-school Children’s Clubs, After-school Classes for children)”

In FY 2012, 10,098 After-School Classes for Children and 21,085 After-School Children’s Clubs were implemented.

2) Enhancement of After-school Children’s Clubs

We will increase club capacities for children so as to respond to the potential needs of people who wish to work, allowing the children who want to use the after-school children’s clubs to benefit from this project.

Section 3 Protecting Children’s Health and Safety, and Facilitating Reliable Medical Treatment

1. Ensuring Medical Treatment System for Children

1) Enhancement of Medical Treatment for Children

In the successive revisions of medical treatment fees in recent years, a focused evaluation on the costs of medical care for children has been conducted and, in the revision of medical treatment fees in FY 2012, in addition to the evaluation of the intensive care unit (ICU) for the general public and the newborn intensive care unit (NICU) both of which are currently available, new measures have been taken to evaluate a pediatric intensive care unit (PICU) which is specifically for children.

2) Research Project for the Treatment of Specific, Pediatric Chronic Diseases

In order to establish and disseminate treatment and contribute to the reduction of medical costs for patients’ families, the research project for the treatment of specific pediatric chronic diseases is being implemented and will help subsidize a part of the medical costs borne by the patient.

2. Protection of Children’s Health and Safety

1) Immunization

According to the revision of the “Immunization Act” (FY 1948 Law No. 68), in March 2013, three infectious diseases ---haemophilus influenza type B infection, pneumococcal infection and HPV infection---have all been added to the target of National Immunization Program. Furthermore, there are several improvements regarding immunization in this revision; developing a national plan for immunization and regal reporting system of adverse events, and establishing the Immunization and Vaccine Committee of the Health Science Council and other measures.

2) Enhancement of Mental Health Care

In order to deal with a variety of mental problems among children, mental health care and the developmental disorder of abused children, a project was undertaken for three years to serve as a model project for building a support system in coordination with medical care institutions and health and welfare organizations centered around key hospitals in prefectures. Since FY 2011, in light of the outcome of the present project, the project has been officially underway as the “network project for children’s mental

health treatment.”

3) Dissemination of Scientific Knowledge on Gender, and Provision of Appropriate Education According to Developmental Stages

The government conducted seminars and others events aimed at the dissemination of information and the training of community leaders so that guidance on gender is properly provided in schools.

4) Dissemination and Promotion of “Dietary Education”

In March 2011, the new basic plan to be implemented over five years, from FY 2011 to FY 2015, was decided and as of December 2013, a part of it has been revised.

5) Child Injury Prevention

(1) The Project for Child Injury Prevention

Since December 2009, we have been carrying out “The Project for Child Injury Prevention” to prevent children from unexpected accidents.

(2) Promotion of safety measures at playgrounds

With respect to playground equipment in urban parks, the “guidelines for securing the safety of playground equipment in urban parks” was revised in August 2008 and efforts are being made to keep facility administrators informed of the measures.

In order to keep the specific, special buildings that are used by many people in safe condition and properly maintained, owners of the buildings are encouraged to prepare maintenance plans and submit reports regularly.

6) Protection of Citizens from Becoming Victims of Crimes and Other Measures

(1) Promotion of efforts to protect children from becoming the victims of crimes and other measures

We are working on supporting patrol activities by anticrime volunteer or “Kodomo 110 ban no i.e. (*Child shelter*)”, and broadcasting and sharing information timely about suspicious persons. In addition, we are promoting damage preventing enlightenment in cooperation with school and other organizations, sending school supporters and others.

Also, in FY 2013, by developing a mechanism of using school safety volunteers and others effectively so that children can receive an education without worry, we will enhance a system of assuring children’s safety with the whole community.

(2) Promotion of “safe and secure urban planning”

As part of “safe and secure urban planning,” we make efforts on the creation of a community where children are not likely to become victims of crimes by gaining control of, and improving, dangerous places such as neighborhoods and schools where crimes against children are feared to occur, including school community roads, parks, underpasses, and empty houses and by promoting the installation of street lights and security cameras.

(3) Promotion of efforts to protect children from harmful environments on the internet

In order to protect children from becoming victims of internet crimes we are cooperating with authorities and other concerned entities. We are also requesting mobile phone providers to further explain the use of filters and other safety measures to parents and guardians and to enlightening them about potential online activities, through orientation sessions for enrollment and other information sessions. In addition, we are promoting efforts of online etiquette education for children.

7) Ascertain Chemicals that Affect Children’s Health and Their Living Environment

We have been conducting a “The Japan Environment and Children’s Study (JECS)” since FY 2010.

Section 4 Helping Children in Single-Parent Families

1. Promoting Support for Single-Parent Families

1) Support for child-rearing and Livelihood

In the Act for the Welfare of Fatherless Families and Widows, local governments are required to take special consideration for single-parent families when selecting a child to attend a nursery center; in addition, the revised Act, requires special consideration for the usage of after-school children's clubs, and local governments are newly required to take special consideration for all single-parent families.

In addition, daily life-support services for fatherless families, etc. have been implemented, and they consist of dispatching a home helper when it is temporarily difficult for the single-parents to take her child to a nursery or daycare due to illness, or when she may be attending school to learn new skills.

2) Support for Finding Employment

In order to help mothers of fatherless families, etc. to achieve economic independence through better working condition and higher wages, we are offering support projects on The employment and self-help support centers for fatherless families, etc., which can provide consistent job support and information.

3) Economic support

In addition to the provision of child rearing allowance, loans are provided through the Welfare Loan Fund for Fatherless Families, etc. and Widows so as to provide for the daily needs and schooling expenses of children. The goal is to contribute to the stability of life in fatherless households and to the promotion of self-reliance. Furthermore, in the revised Act, a newly created welfare funding loan is available to motherless families.

4) Ensuring Child Support

In the amendment to the Civil Code (Law 89, Meiji 29 and final amendment made by law 74, 2011) as promulgated in June 2011, the sharing of child support and parent-child visitation were clearly specified as specific examples of the “necessary matters concerning child custody” that should be specified for divorce by consent.

Section 5 Helping Children with Special Needs to Grow Up Healthy and Strong

1. Efforts to Support Children with Disabilities

1) Efforts concerning Disability Policy Reform

In regard to people with disabilities, the government adopted the Basic Programme for Persons with Disabilities (Third) at Cabinet in September 2013. The Programme includes constructing inclusive education system and improvement of care for children with disabilities.

As for the way to eliminate discrimination against people with disabilities, the “Subcommittee on Eliminating Discrimination under the Committee for the Policy on Person with Disabilities” summarized their opinion in September 2012. Based on the opinion, the “Act for Eliminating Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities” was submitted to the Diet in April 2013, and adopted in a unanimous vote. Except for some portions of some additional clauses, the Act will be effective in April 2016.

2) Strengthening of Consistent Support According to Life Stages

With respect to children with disabilities, efforts are pursued to discover their disabilities as soon as

possible through health check-ups, etcetera. Based on the Child Welfare Act, child welfare facilities which provide treatment and specific consultation are to be improved and reinforced in their functions so as to enhance their treatment capacity.

3) Childcare for Children with Disabilities

Child-development support and nursery-center-visit supports that provide support for disabled children, including training on the necessary actions for daily life and training to help them adapt to group living are provided. In addition, daytime temporary support aimed to take care of children temporarily so that their families can take a rest is provided in the same manner as before.

4) Enhancement of Support for Children with Developmental Disorders

Concerning the support of children with developmental disorders, and according to the “Developmental Disorder Support Act” (FY 2004 Law No.167), which was enacted in April 2005, in order to promote consistent support responding to each of the life stages (from infancy to adulthood) of people with developmental disorders, we are working on promoting relevant, intersecting-systems measures on health, medicine, welfare, education, work and other matters.

5) Promotion of Special Needs Education

The theme of the building of an inclusive education system which is the way of the special needs education based on the principles of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities was subjected to expert investigation and deliberation at the ‘Special Committee of the Future Directions of Special Needs Education’ of the Central Council for Education and the deliberation results were summarized in July 2012 as “Promotion of Special Needs Education to Build an Inclusive Educational System Directed at Forming a Cohesive Society”(Report by Subcommittee on Primary and Secondary Education). The report makes a range of recommendations including the way of special education system for building an inclusive education system for the creation of a cohesive society, the way of counseling for school enrollment and determination of school, on the reasonable accommodation to enable children with disabilities to receive education in a sufficient manner and preparation of basic environment for special needs, the development of diverse places of learning and promotion of coordination among schools, the improvement of expertise of teachers for enhancing special needs education and so on.

Based on the report, in August 2013, the Order for Enforcement of the School Education Act was revised. One of the details of the revision was to change the past scheme where children and students with disabilities had to attend special needs education schools into a new scheme where Boards of Education in municipalities determine what schools students should attend from a comprehensive viewpoint including the status of their disability.

2. Protection from Child Abuse and the Enhancement of Social Care

2-1 Efforts for Preventing the Occurrence of Child Abuse, Early Detection and Early Response, and Facilitating Self-Support

As for how to respond to child abuse, the system has been enhanced by revisions of the “Law Concerning to Preventing Child Abuse” enforced in November 2000 (FY 2000 Law No.82, hereinafter referred to as “Child Abuse Prevention Act”) and by the establishment of a system to stop custody according to the accumulated revisions of the “Child Welfare Act” (FY 1947 Law No.164) and law revision of a part of civil law (FY 1948 Law No.61). However, since there seemed to be no end to significant child abuse cases and about 100 deaths occur due to child abuse every year, the prevention of child abuse is a significant issue that must be addressed by the entire society.

2-2 Enhancing the Quality and Quantity of Social Care

In January 2011, the “review committee on the social care measures for foster homes” was held to discuss

the short-term, mid-term, and long-term measures in a focused manner. In July of the same year, the “challenges of social care and its future” was summarized at the Expert Committee on Social Care of Children Subcommittee under the Social Security Council. Following this report, a range of measures were promoted, including the promotion of family care, the promotion of foster care and foster parents, the improvement in the quality of management of foster homes, support for the rebuilding of parental relation, support for improving the independence of children, the protection of children’s rights, and more.

3. Promotion of Support for Children with Special Needs such as the Children of Foreign Residents

1) Supporting School Enrollment for the Children of Foreign Residents

All children of foreign residents, if their parents so wish, may enroll in public elementary and middle schools free of charge; various measures are provided to support their school enrollment.

2) Support for Children Who Were Orphaned as a Result of Suicide

Local governments make use of the emergency fund for measures for the prevention of suicides in communities, and they make efforts such as holding meetings for supporting children who were orphaned as the result of a suicide.

4. Efforts to Improve the Poverty Rate of Children

1) Countermeasures to the Poverty of Children

For countermeasure to the poverty of children, in June 2013, the Law concerning the promotion of countermeasures to the poverty of children was enacted, and it was enforced on 17th January 2014. In the Law, in order to comprehensively promote countermeasures to the poverty of children, Article 8 stipulates a broad outline that decides basic policies that will be discussed later.

Chapter 3 Pursuing Communities with child-rearing Capabilities by Building a Diversity of Networks

Section 1 Enhancement of Centers and Networks for Parenting Support

1. Development of Centers of Child Care Support in Communities and the Enhancement of Their Functions

1) Visit to All Families with a baby (Hello My Baby Project)

“Visit to All Families with a baby (Hello My Baby Project)” consists of visiting every household with infants to provide families with information on childcare support, helping them to understand their child-rearing environment, and providing them with support, such as counseling on anxieties and worries about child-rearing. The “Home-visiting childcare support services” consists of paying a visit to households with special needs, offering support for child-rearing, and providing counseling on child-rearing, guidance and advice for increasing their child-rearing capacity.

2) Promoting the Establishment of Community child care support centers

We will develop a community childcare support centers project for the smooth enforcement of the Comprehensive Support System for children and child-rearing by creating an “ordinary type” program, which offers the community child care support centers project in empty spaces located in public facilities, in vacant shops, public halls, nursery centers and others, and a “cooperative type” program, which offers basic projects in child welfare facility and others, and involves working together with people who are raising children.

3) Promoting the Dissemination of Family Support Centers

The establishment of family support centers is being promoted, so child-rearing workers and housewives with infants or elementary school children can help each other by temporarily taking care of each other’s children, and dropping them off and picking them up after school.

4) Temporary Custody and Day-care in Kindergartens

(1) Promotion of temporary custody

Temporary custody services are implemented to deal with the needs for temporary daycare facilities in response to the diverse working styles of parents and the demand for temporary custody when stay-at-home mothers happen to have an emergency.

(2) Promotion of custodial daycare at kindergartens

Support is provided for those kindergartens that provide “custodial daycare” for those who need services outside of their usual educational hours (up to 4 hours is standard) and during long vacation periods, etc.

5) Utilization of Vacant Shops, Redundant Classrooms, and Kindergartens

(1) Utilization of vacant shops

Since it is important to activate shopping streets for the revitalization of communities, and for economic and community formation, there are currently cases where child-rearing and childcare support are provided, and where the interaction of parents and children within communities are promoted using vacant shops so as to help with the revitalization of shopping streets.

(2) Utilization of surplus classrooms at elementary and middle schools as well as kindergartens

An effective use of surplus classrooms is encouraged through measures such as allowing for significant flexibility in procedures of disposing public property in diverting public school facilities, which were built with government subsidies provided, to other purposes and preparing pamphlet to show some examples of their use.

6) Childcare Support Coordinators

Coordinating functions and services for childcare support, which consist of getting a full picture of a range of activities and services to support childcare in communities including temporary custody and the establishment of community childcare support centers, are stipulated as the responsibility of municipal governments in the Child Welfare Act.

2. Promoting the Utilization of Community Members, Support by Private Bodies and Generational Exchange

1) Support of Community Childcare Activities Such as NPO Activities

Efforts to provide learning opportunities and counseling to parents are made through a range of activities, including the quality training of childcare facility personnel within communities, such as mothers with child-rearing experience, so as to strengthen household educational support by introducing community personnel to experts so that all parents can comfortably provide a quality family education.

2) Utilization of Human Resources, such as Retired or Elderly Community Members, and Generational Exchange

In the Silver Human Resources Centers which provide employment opportunities and social participation to elderly people, a range of childcare services are provided from child-rearing support such as taking care of infants to picking up and dropping at nursery centers, provision of learning and life guidance for school children after school and on Saturdays and Sundays, among others.

3) Childcare Support with Company Involvement

Efforts such as the “Childcare support program with company involvement (passport project, etc.)” and the “Childcare support program through cooperation and collaboration between companies and NPOs” have promoted events and learning venues for parents and children.

Section 2 Fostering Communities Where Children Can Grow in a Safe and Secure Manner

1. Ensuring Home and Living Environments are appropriate for Raising Children

1) Support for Housing Acquisition through Loans and Taxation

Japan Housing Finance Agency has reduced interest rates of “Flat 35S” for acquiring houses with high quality in term of durability and variability etc. through Securitization Support Business. In addition, tax breaks such as housing mortgage loan tax credits are provided.

2) Promoting a Supply of Good Quality Rental Houses for Family Use

Various policies promote an adequate supply of public rental housing and a smooth transition into private rental housing for those living in child-rearing households, and this should be done in an integrated manner so as to provide quality rental housing for families.

3) Ensuring Residential Stability by Effectively Utilizing the Stock of Public Rental Houses

As for public housing, the operating entity can make its own decisions when selecting eligible persons who are raising children, and may loosen the criteria for income levels so as to improve eligibility for living in these houses.

4) Promoting the Integrated Development of Public Rental Housing and Parental

Support Facilities

The government is directly involved in providing support for programs such as those that integrate the rebuilding of large scale public housing with social welfare facilities, childcare facilities and other services are built on site, and for leading efforts to contribute to the stable acquisition of housing for child-rearing families.

5) Promotion of Urban Residences

Increasing the housing supply in urban areas and city centers is promoted so as to support child-rearing households who live in these areas because of their work.

2. Promotion of Barrier Free child-rearing Providing Safe and Secure Life

1) Promotion of Barrier-Free child-rearing

(1) Promotion of barrier-free policy incorporating the universal design philosophy

A “barrier-free environment” is promoted in the “Basic Policy on the Promotion of Smooth Transitions into New Housing” which sets the development target for 2020.

(2) Promotion of barrier-free buildings

Barrier-free access is promoted in buildings used by the general public.

(3) Promotion of barrier-free access to public transportation

We offer support measures for the installment of barrier-free facilities in traveler terminals and passenger ships, such as the introduction of low-floors in busses, busses with lifts, welfare taxis and others.

(4) Promotion of a barrier-free environment in urban parks, river spaces and others

The development of a barrier-free environment is being further promoted by obliging a grounds keepers to comply with facilitation standards requiring a smooth traveling surface when creating, expanding or reconstructing specified park facilities like garden paths, open spaces, parking lots, lavatories and others.

2) Improvement of Road Traffic Environment

Based on the results of the emergency joint inspection implemented in FY 2012, schools, education boards, road administrators, and the police are collaborating on promoting measures to ensure traffic safety in school roads.

3) Promotion of Traffic Safety Education

In cooperation and coordination with households and other relevant organizations and groups, education on age-appropriate traffic safety is provided to infants, pupils and students in elementary, middle and high schools.

4) Promotion of Manufacturing from a Child’s Perspective (Promotion of Kids Design)

For the “Kids Design Award”, the Prime Minister’s Prize was created anew in FY 2013, and a total of 383 applications were received from enterprises, local governments, research institutes and others; of these, 211 applicants won awards.

Chapter 4 In Pursuit of a Harmonized Society Where Work and Life Are in Harmony for both Men and Women (Realization of the Balance between Work and Life)

Section 1 Review of the Ways of Working

1. Development of an Environment for Reviewing the Ways of Working, Including a Reduction in Long-Working Hours, Utilization of Teleworking and Other Options

1) Promotion of Efforts based upon the “Work-Life Balance Charter” and “Action Guidelines for the Promotion of Balance between Work and Life”

The “Task force for the promotion and evaluation of the work-life balance” established under the “Public and Private Sector Summit Council for the Promotion of a Balanced Work and Life” which is made up of representative business leaders, labor unions, local governments, experts and related Ministers checks and evaluates the status of efforts to promote the balance of work and life based on the “Charter” and the “Action Guidelines.” This is done in a coordinated manner involving related persons and organizations.

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

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

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

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

4) Ensuring Options for a Diversity of Work Styles to Accommodate Life Styles

We are promoting efforts to improve the management of part-time workers, in compliance with the Part-time Employment Act, and through administrative guidelines, advisory support, expert advice, the utilization of grants, and others measures.

5) Promoting Teleworking

The “Declaration to be the World’s Most Advanced IT Nation” decided on 14th June 2013, was created “Government will collaborate with industry to support employment models for teleworking from home that allow workers to spend at least one full workday per week at home targeting women engaged in child raising, who find it difficult to continue working, as well as men participating in childcare, and caregivers. The target is full development and widespread adoption of such models by 2016 to encourage greater social participation by women, secure labor during a time of low birth rates and an aging population, support greater participation by men in childcare, and achieve balance between work and care giving” We will promote the use of teleworking more than ever before.

6) Promoting the Creation of Women-friendly Work Environments at Farm Management Bodies and other Organizations

We are working to educate farm organizations and other entities about the importance of “Women-friendly Work Environments,” so as to aggressively utilize the abilities of women through the promotion and inclusion of a family management agreement that defines the roles and responsibilities of each family

member.

2. Promotion of Men's Involvement in child-rearing

1) Encouraging the taking of Childcare Leave (Mom & Dad Childcare Leave Plus)

In the revised Childcare and Family Care Leave Act enforced in June 2010, "Mom & Dad Childcare Leave Plus" was incorporated to encourage male workers to take leave so as to assist with childcare.

2) Awareness-Raising and Enlightenment on Father's Childcare

In line with the enforcement of the revised Childcare and Family Care Leave Act, enforced in June 2010, the "Ikumen Project" (<http://ikumen-project.jp/>) is designed to assist men who are proactively involved in childcare.

3) Consciousness Formation on Men's Involvement in House Work and Childcare

Through the relevant subjects such as special activities in middle schools and civics and home economics in high schools, students are taught about the importance of mutual understanding and cooperation between men and women. They learn that men and women should be equal in the workplace and in society, and that it is important for a man and a woman to form a family. They also learn about other related matters.

Section 2 Realization of a Workplace Environment Where Work and Home are Balanced

1. Dissemination and Establishment of Childcare Leave and Other Systems for the Balancing of Work and Childcare, Support for Continued Employment, and Support for Child-rearing Women to Get Re-employed

1) Establishing Systems for the Balancing of Work and Childcare, including Childcare Leave and Shorter Work Hours

The "Report of Section on Unemployment insurance", summarized in the section on unemployment insurance of the Labor policy council on 26th December, 2013, stated that "In order to further promote childcare leave for both men and women, the childcare benefit will be raised to 67% of the rate for the childcare leave benefit within the first 6 months in which childcare leave begins." In addition, the "Bill to revise a part of the Unemployment insurance law", in which this content is incorporated, was enacted in the 186th ordinary session on 28th March, 2014, and enforced on 1st April, 2014.

2) Improvement of a Workplace Environment Where Systems to Balance Work and Family Life are Readily Available

In order to support business operators who develop a working environment where everyone can work comfortably while taking care of children or nursing a family member, subsidies are provided for helping balance work and family life.

3) Preventing disadvantageous treatment due to pregnancy or child birth, and obtaining leave for perinatal, infant and childcare leave

Local governments are fully instructed to deal with consultations from workers in a careful manner on matters related to their dismissal or to their being disadvantaged as a result of pregnancy, childbirth, use of maternity leave or childcare leave, and other reasons. Governments are encouraged to take proper measures against cases where violations of the law are suspected and to prevent their reoccurrence.

4) Promotion of Health Management during Pregnancy and After Childbirth

The “Navi for the creation of a Women-friendly workplace that provides support for pregnancy and childbirth” is a site that provides information for working women about maternity health care management, and it is available on PC and mobile phone so as to better inform the general public about the system.

5) Supporting the re-employment of women who are child-rearing

We are offering comprehensive and consistent support for reemployment by providing detailed job-hunting assistance by an assigned person, hiring information, and information about childcare related services collaborated by local governments as well as by providing an environment in which women feel comfortable bringing their children, and helping women who wish to work while child-rearing. Such action is being undertaken in 177 Public Employment Security Offices for Mothers (as of January 2014).

6) Supporting Continued Employment by Ensuring the Equal Employment Opportunity Act for Men and Women

As the enforcement regulations of the revised Equal Employment Opportunity Act will be enforced in July 2014, we are publicizing it as much as we can. In addition, we are further promoting the voluntary and aggressive efforts (positive action) of enterprises in order to lessen the existing gap between male and female workers.

2. Promoting Further Efforts by Visualizing the Efforts of Companies and Other Stakeholders

1) Awareness-raising of Company Owners and Administrators

By working together with business groups, we are working to promote the balancing of work and private life, through efforts such as holding a seminar for managers of SMEs to share case examples. In order to provide information about “know-how” and best practices that will be required by enterprises to promote these efforts, we distribute a mail magazine to the people in charge of coordinating working life and private life so that every company can promote these efforts inside the company.

2) Promoting the Formulation and Publication of a General Employer Action Plan (The Act for Measures to Support the Development of the Next-Generation Children)

Since April 1, 2011, the application of the compulsory formulation and report of the General Employer Action Plan has been extended from affecting companies with 301 permanent employees or more to affecting companies with 101 permanent employees or more. As of the end of March 2014, the notification rate for companies with 101 employees to those with 300 employees is 98.4%. Also, on 10th December 2013, a Subcommittee of the Equal Employment of Labor Policy Council, decided to include a ten-year extension of the expiry of the “Act for Measures to Support the Development of the Next-Generation Children” (FY 2003 Law No.120). They also created a new certification (special certification) system, and made representation to the Minister of Health, Labor and Welfare. The revision of the bill based on this proposal was submitted to the 186th ordinary diet session, and enacted on 16th April 2014.

3) Promotion and Dissemination of Efforts for Next Generation Certification Mark Kurumin

Along with aggressively introducing the efforts of accredited companies and the advantages of being authorized in regard to the tax incentives received by accredited companies as established in June 2011, we will strongly encourage other companies to gain authorization because the tax incentive was extended to one year in FY 2014 as a result of tax reform.

4) Promoting Efforts for the Balancing of Work and Child-rearing by Companies

In order to reform company work styles and to promote the balance of work and child-rearing, an award will be given to companies that aim at improving business by aggressively promoting male employees to be involved in caring for their children, so these companies can become role models for other companies. The “*Ikumen* Business Award” began in FY 2013. Also, in order to promote efforts toward diversity and to get the most out of everyone’s talents companies are encouraged to hold seminars for managerial workers, and

to promote “Nadeshiko brand” selection, which recognizes the companies that are superior in the promotion of women. Award recipients are selected and publicized as attractive brands for investors who value the “improvement of mid-term and long-term corporate values.”

5) Handling of the “Bid-Tender Procedures” and Others

Since FY 2012, the Cabinet Office has introduced a system in which companies that are actively involved in efforts to provide a balance between work and life, and efforts toward equal opportunity and equal treatment between men and women in the workplace will receive preferential treatment in “open bid-tenders” based on an inclusive evaluation system.

Chapter 5 Handling Childcare and child-rearing in the Disaster Areas of the Great East Japan Earthquake

Section 1 Status of Children in the Great East Japan Earthquake

The Great East Japan Earthquake that occurred on March 11, 2011 has caused unprecedented damage. 241 children lost both of their parents and became orphans (94 in Iwate prefecture, 126 in Miyagi prefecture and 21 in Fukushima prefecture), while 1,514 children lost one of their parents (488 in Iwate prefecture, 871 in Miyagi prefecture and 155 in Fukushima prefecture) in the earthquake (as of March 1, 2014).

Property damages caused by the earthquake had affected 941 kindergartens, 3,269 elementary schools, 1,700 junior high schools, 7 secondary education schools and 186 schools for special needs education (as of September 14, 2012).

Section 2 Handling Childcare and Parenting in the Disaster Areas of the Great East Japan Earthquake

1. How to handle childcare issues resulting from the Great East Japan Earthquake

1) Compiling a “Package of policies for the health and life support for disaster victims”

Under the Minister for Reconstruction, a task force involving the chiefs of concerned Offices, Ministries and Bureaus was established (November 13, 2013) in order to comprehensively understand the status and concrete issues at disaster sites. In addition, the existing measures of each Office and Ministries were reviewed in a cross-sectional way, and FY 2014 budget policies and directionalities of operational improvements for the future were compiled in a package. (December 13, 2013)

We will take a variety of support measures to help children who have been influenced by the disaster in various ways, though they will play a role in the future of Japan. The FY 2014 government budget will enhance the eligibility of these children to receive advice and support for physical problems besides conventional mental health care, so as to strengthen support and to create an environment in which children can live safely in temporary housing. In addition, these problems will be approached from an educational aspect, so as to support their learning, promote opportunities for learning and interaction with residents in their communities, and provide counselors to the schools.

2) Formulation of “the basic policies promoting the measures to support the victims’ lives”

Based on the law*, in October 2013, "the basic policies on promoting the measures to support the victims' lives" was approved by the Cabinet and submitted to the Diet, which included extensive diversity of approaches for the victims including children.

* FY 2012 Law No.48; for promoting the measures to protect and support the lives of the residents including children affected by the accident at Fukushima Daiichi NPP

3) Efforts to create a “New Tohoku”

In the model project to create a “New Tohoku” (FY 2013), we support efforts to strengthen the relationship of volunteers within their communities so as to expand “the activities to create kids’ play space” in many different regions as part of a sustainable effort. We are also making efforts to encourage play leaders to

obtain professional skills, such as “mental health care” counseling abilities, etc.

2. Welfare (Including Mental Health Care)

1) Understanding the Current Status and Care of Disaster-Stricken Children

The following measures have been taken to better understand the current status and care of disaster-stricken children:

- For mental health care for children, we support efforts, such as traveling counselors, child psychiatrists and others, and we support training for people involved with childcare support, such as nursery teachers.
- In FY 2014, based on the discussion of the “Task force to support the health and livelihood of disaster victims” created under the Recovery Ministry, a “Comprehensive support project of countermeasures to support the health and livelihood of devastated children” has been accounted for in the special budget for reconstruction in the aftermath of the Great East Japan Earthquake, so as to respond to new issues, the ongoing evacuation, and conventional efforts.
- We raised the ratio of the government subsidy to facilitate development related to the recovery of devastated child welfare facilities. We also give a subsidy for miscellaneous expenses required for resuming the operations, and for helping devastated entities that are affiliated with child-rearing support to recover.
- We support the reduction or exemption of child-care fees and the fees associated with childcare facilities affected by the Great East Japan Earthquake.
- In order to facilitate the sound development of mind and body and to provide refreshment for children who are living in areas affected by the Great East Japan Earthquake, a “Refreshment Camp” was held at the national youth education facilities, and was sponsored by the National Institution for Youth Education. A total of 22,705 children participated between July 2011 and March 2014. The results of the questionnaire surveys given to the participants show a remarkable improvement in the status of the minds and bodies of the children who participated in the camp. Incidentally, part of the project was implemented jointly with the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology; a plurality of private companies provided financial assistance to the project.
- In May 2012, we conducted a “Survey on the mental health care of children in an emergency disaster,” for the schools located in areas devastated by the Great East Japan Earthquake. In August 2013, a report containing expert analysis was publicized, and using part of the survey results as material for discussion, a symposium was convened under the theme of caring for children who were mentally traumatized by the disaster.

3. School and Education

1) Supporting Children’s Learning

The following measures have been implemented to support children’s learning:

(1) Supporting school attendance

A) Supporting school enrollment

- In addition to implementing support for the school enrollment of disaster-stricken children and students, for three years since 2012, additional necessary supports for school enrollment will be made available.

B) Academic support for students

C) Financial support for students

- The Japan Student Services Organization provides Scholarship Loan to the students of disaster stricken families (1,443 thousands students were provided with Scholarship Loan, 10,000 of whom were disaster stricken families in FY 2013)
- A budget for the expansion of tuition payment exemptions to disaster-stricken students was created in the budget for FY 2012.

(2) Measures to Increase Teaching Staff

- To increase the quota of school staff necessary for responding to the Great East Japan Earthquake, and upon the request of each prefectural government, about 1,000 people have been added since FY 2011, and a total of 1,042 people were added in FY 2013 (compulsory education schools: 975, high school: 67).

(3) Restoration of school facilities and social education facilities

- Required expenses for the recovery of school facilities and social education facilities were included in the FY 2013 budget.

(4) Conduct radiation monitoring in schools and other organizations

- Air dose rates of radiation are on the grounds of elementary schools, middle schools, kindergartens and nursery centers in Fukushima prefecture are measured and published (except for the evacuation areas within 20km of the accident).
- In FY 2013, in addition to implementing projects that conduct tests after school lunch in eleven prefectures, including Fukushima, we offer support to pay for labor costs or for the cost of correcting equipment used to test food, and for radiation testing equipment.
- We have implemented a project that pays part of the costs for conducting the advance testing of used in school lunches, and for lunches served in child welfare facilities and other organizations. We have also implemented a monitoring project that conducts the testing of entire school lunch menus, and of food served in child welfare facilities, after providing the meal.

4. Pregnant Women and Infants

1) Admission Mechanism for Pregnant Women

The government requested that local governments set up a consultation service for the admission of pregnant women living in disaster areas so as to provide an adequate response when a request of their admission is made by local governments or by medical care institutions affected by the earthquake.

2) Handling Pregnant Women and Infants, and Providing Health Examinations to Disaster Victims

Should the health check-up records of a pregnant woman be lost and should she require necessary medical checkups, the government agrees to pay all costs as an emergency care measure.

3) Municipal Support of Maternal and Child Healthcare Programs

Local governments have been requested to provide support for infants residing in temporary housing through municipal maternal and child healthcare programs.

5. Other Measures

1) Handling the Child-Rearing Allowance and Other Supports

With respect to the payment of a child-rearing allowance and other supports, the respective prefectural governments were notified of the preferential measures on income limitation, attachment exemption, and early payments through clarification about procedures that are necessary when the whereabouts of the parents are unknown, and other such challenges.

2) Handling the Design of Evacuation Centers Focused on Women and Childcare and Ensuring the Development of a Safe Living Environment

In addition to promoting the design of evacuation centers focused on women and childcare, and in order to ensure the development of a safe living environment, promoting the participation of women who are living in evacuation centers and accepting their advice is highly encouraged. Also, based upon disaster experiences of the past including the Great East Japan Earthquake in March 2011, with regard to measures and responses necessary from the perspective of gender equality, the Cabinet Office issued the Guidelines for Disaster Planning Response and Reconstruction from a Gender Equal Perspective, which serve as guidelines when local governments take measures during the stages of prevention, emergency measures, restoration and reconstruction, in May 2013.

3) Ensuring Residential Facilities

Local governments have been requested to preferentially secure accommodations for evacuated infants.