

Chapter 1 Key Challenges

Section 1 Further Improvement of Measures against Falling Birthrate

(1) Smooth implementation of the children and childrearing system**Qualitative and quantitative improvement in child education, nursing and childrearing according to regional situations**

To ensure a smooth transition from the children and childrearing system, which is based on the three acts on children and childrearing enacted in 2012, to the 2014-new system, we supported municipalities' urgent childcare projects, and implemented the new system from 2015 as scheduled.

Improvement of various childcare supports according to regional needs**1) Support project for users**

We have been providing childrearing families and expectant and nursing mothers with necessary advice, information, and counseling (user support), so that they can utilize the educational and nursing facilities, regional children and childrearing support projects, and health, medical and welfare institutes. Along with the start of Comprehensive Support System for Children and Child-rearing, we have initiated "user support projects," including the construction of a coordination and collaboration system connected among relevant institutes (linked to regions). (In 2014 this was implemented as an urgent childcare assistance project.)

2) Installation promotion of regional childrearing support bases

To reduce burdens and anxiety of childrearing families, we promoted "a project for regional childrearing support bases" to provide mothers and children with places where they can freely gather to talk about anxiety about childrearing and get advice and assistance.

Also, we have been supporting kindergartens, which play a role of a regional child education center according to the regional situations and parents' requests, so that they can provide childrearing support, counseling and information on childrearing, and encourage pre-kindergarten children to attend kindergarten. The rate of kindergartens that have been carrying out such activity is about 87% as of 2011.

3) Temporary nursing and education by kindergartens**(1) Promotion of temporary nursing**

Kindergartens have been carrying out temporary nursing in response to people's various working styles and urgent requests from non-working mothers.

(2) Promotion of extended-childcare hours at kindergartens

We have been supporting kindergartens, which provide extended-childcare hours before and after the normal nursing hours (4 hours in general) or during long holidays in response to the regional situations or parents' request.

4) 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 childcare 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). The night-time childcare and specified childcare have become to be met by the facility-type care benefit.

5) 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.

(2) Reduce Wait-listed Children

Aiming at reducing wait-listed children, the “Acceleration Plan for Reducing Wait-listed Children” was formulated in April, 2013, and the government will provide an overall support to local governments that are actively engaged in dealing with reducing wait-listed children before the enforcement of the Comprehensive Support System for Children and Child-rearing which is scheduled in April, 2015.

This plan defines FY 2013 and FY 2014 as the “Period Requiring Urgent and Focused Efforts” and plans to ensure capacity for about 200,000 children in the two years between FY 2013, when the Comprehensive Support System for Children and Child-rearing is planned to be started, and FY 2014. From now on, in the period from FY 2015 to FY 2017, which is regarded as “the Period Requiring Accelerated Efforts,” the plan is supposed to expand the capacity of nursery centers allowing for an additional 200,000 children including the potential needs for nurseries to reduce wait-listed children.

Promotion of nursing teacher securing plan

To implement “the wait-listed children elimination accelerated plan,” we formulated “the nursing teacher securing plan” in January 2015, which includes making a nursing teacher employment examination twice a year; improving their treatment by equivalent to 3%; preventing their early retirement; supporting qualified nursing teachers to return to work; and training nursing teachers.

(3) Breaking “the barrier of primary-school first-grade children”

Promotion of comprehensive after-school children plan

To break “the barrier of primary-school first-grade children” and develop human resources who will assume the next generation, “the comprehensive after-school children plan” was formulated on July 31, 2014 in cooperation with MEXT and MHLW, so that every child can spend after-school hours experiencing various activities safely and at ease. Based on the plan, children's after-school clubs for about 300,000 children will be refurbished by the end of FY 2019, and all primary school districts (about 20,000) will operate the children's after-school clubs and after-school classrooms collectively or coordinately, 10,000 places or more of which will be operated in an integrated form.

Enhancement of After-school Children's Clubs

We have changed the criterion of enrollment eligibility for “The after-school children's clubs” from “school children around less than 10 years old” to “all school children” since April 2015. To decide the number of teachers and its qualification, we formulated “The standard about the equipment and the operation of child sound upbringing business after school” (Ordinance of MHLW No.63 of 2014), and “the after-school children's club operation guidelines” (March 2015) to enhance the quality of the clubs as children's living places.

Section 2 Improvement of Environment Where the Young Realize their Hope for Marriage and Childbirth

(1) Stable economic basis

(Stable employment of young people)

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.

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” and put together the Points to Remember Regarding Employment Management, which prescribed the statement of working conditions, among other matters, in July, 2014.

(Promotion of economic support for young generation by older generation)

Enforcement of tax-free system for lump-sum gifts for marriage, childrearing and education

Because one of the main reasons why young people hesitate to marry and give birth is anxiety about the economic future, the tax-free system for lump-sum gifts, which are transferred early from parents or grandparents to their children or grandchildren to support their marriage and childrearing, was established under the FY 2015 Tax System Reform (applied from April 2015).

To promote the transfer of financial assets between the generations and to support the childrearing generation, the tax-free system for lump-sum gifts given by grandparents to grandchildren as an educational fund to support the childrearing generation, has been enforced since April 2013. As a result of the FY 2015 tax system revision, the applicable period of this system was extended to March 31, 2019, the applicable range of tax-free educational fees was expanded, and the procedures were simplified.

(Mitigation of economic burden on young people and low income earners)

Some local governments, according to the regional situation, give the childrearing generation “priority tenanting” in public housings upon tenant selection.

Section 3 Improving an Environment Where Married Couple can Have Three or More Children and Giving Consideration to Households with Many Children

(1) Mitigation of burdens of childrearing, nursing, education and housing

(Mitigation of various burdens on households with many children)

To mitigate a burden on households with many children, we have been providing them with child allowances and educational and nursing aids under certain conditions.

Preferential measures for households with many children or the third and subsequent children to use nursing schools

We are appealing to the local governments to give households with many children or the third and subsequent children a preferential use of nursing schools.

Housing policy as preferential measures to households with many children

Some local governments, according to their regional situation, give the childrearing generation “priority tenanting” in public housings upon tenant selection.

Section 4 Reforming the Way of Working of Men and Women

(1) Reforming men’s consciousness and behavior

(Correction of long working hours)

Promotion of Suppressing Long Working Hours and Taking Annual Paid Leave

Under the “Headquarters to Promote the Reduction of Long Working Hours” established in September 2014 in MHLW, we have been appealing to companies to review the way of working, including reduction of working hours and acquisition of annual paid holidays. The Prefectural Labor Standards Bureau also established the “Headquarters to promote the working style reform” to appeal to company executives to create a climate for change in working style in local regions.

(Executives’ and managers’ consciousness reform including a review of employees performance evaluation system)

Awareness-raising of Company Executives and Administrators

To promote employees’ work-life balance, it is essential for executives and managers to reform consciousness and behaviors. So, we held seminars in cooperation with economic organizations to enlighten executives and managers about the importance of reviewing the working styles and work-life balance, and spread the know-hows and good models toward their concrete efforts.

To penetrate and fix the practice of work-life balance into companies, we surveyed and studied the good models addressed by executives and managers, prepared “a list of key points and good models toward the penetration and fix of work-life balance in companies,” and posted it on the portal site of work-life balance.

(Promotion of men’s childcare leave just after childbirth)

Encouraging men to take Childcare Leave

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.

While spreading these systems, we have been supporting the efforts for improving an environment where men and women can work while raising children.

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” is designed to assist “Ikumen” who are men proactively involved in childcare.

Promotion of men's involvement in housework and childrearing

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.

(2) Promotion of “work-life balance” and “women’s participation and advancement in workplace”

(Improvement of environment toward work-life balance)

Promotion of Efforts Based upon the “Work-Life Balance Charter”

The “Task force for the promotion and evaluation of work-life balance” established under the “Public and Private Sector Summit Council for the Promotion of work-life balance” 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.

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.

Prohibiting 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.

Support for non-regular and fixed-term employees

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.

Promoting Telework

Under the “Declaration to be the World’s Most Advanced IT Nation” decided by Cabinet on June 24, 2014, 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 birthrates 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 telework more than ever before.

Government’s initiative

In “the council for promotion toward the success of female civil servants and work-life balance” consisting of administrative vice-ministers of all government ministries and agencies, we decided in October 2014 “the policy for promotion toward the success and work-life balance of female national civil servants,” which emphasized “Reform in of work style,” “Reform to balancing job with child care and family care for all civil servants,” and “reform toward the women’s active participation.” Based on the policy, each of the government ministries and agencies formulated guidelines, taking comprehensive actions to achieve by the end of 2020.

(Promotion of women's participation and advancement)

Promotion of women's participation and advancement in the workplace

We are guiding and educating companies so that they treat men and women employees equally in accordance with the Act on Securing, Etc. of Equal Opportunity and Treatment between Men and Women in Employment, and urging them to take positive action toward elimination of disparities between men and women.

In order for women workers to balance work-and-family and appeal their abilities, we decided "the Bill of Promotion of Women's Participation and Advancement in the Workplace" in the cabinet meeting on October 17, 2014, and submitted it to the 187th Session of the National Diet. The draft stated that the country, local governments and private businesses should grasp the situation of women's employment and advancement, make an action plan by setting numerical targets, and make the information public. However, because the draft was abandoned due to incomplete deliberations, we decided the same again in the cabinet and resubmitted it to the 189th Session of the National Diet on February 20, 2015.

Supporting the Re-employment of Women Who Are Child-rearing (Mother's Hello Work projects)

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 180 Mother's Hello Work and Mother's corners (as of April, 1 2015).

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

Regarding farm management, we are working on the creation of women-friendly work environment to promote their welfare, by taking measures for turning such bodies into foundations; promoting management-agreement conclusion among family members; and certifying such bodies that are positively addressing women's participation and advancement.

Support for women's relearning to promote their active participation in many fields

To promote women's active participation, it is important to support their relearning toward employment, entrepreneurship, participation in various activities in the regions. So, we need to support regions, colleges, vocational schools that address such efforts.

In 2014, vocational schools and colleges carried out programs "the strategic promotion for nurturing core persons in the growing sectors" to nurture specialists who will play a core role, in cooperation with companies and businesses, and developed the standard educational programs for IT, nursing care, and tourism which are expected to be prospective in the future. Also, local colleges and vocational schools, in cooperation with local businesses, addressed the development of "local version of educational programs for relearning" to nurture human resources in response to regional needs.

Promotion of women's participation and advancement in local regions

Cabinet Office has been promoting regional women's participation and advancement with "the grants for accelerating regional women's active participation" and "the program for promoting regional women's active participation models." Also, the National Women's Education Center, only one national center for women's education, carried out a training program and a learning support program for local governments/facilities staff to improve the functions of women-related facilities, which are to become central bodies to promote women's active participation.

Section 5 Enhancement of Efforts According to Regional Situations

(1) Support for regional measures by taking advantage of their strength

Support for local governments' efforts

With the aim of seamless support for marriage, pregnancy, childbirth and childrearing, “The grant for accelerating regional countermeasures to the falling birthrate” is provided for local governments in order to help their pioneering efforts according to the regional characteristics. Also, the grant for urgent regional-resident daily-life support (regional revitalization priority type) is provided to help local governments, which are addressing regional revitalization in the field of countermeasures to the falling birthrate by creating jobs and promoting tourism and immigration.

Support for specified non-profit groups who help regional childcare

To provide childrearing parents with learning opportunities and counseling, we are training regional people with childrearing experiences to help with home education, and organizing home education support teams who cooperate with such people and specialists.

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.

Training of “childcare assistants”

To secure human resources needed for implementing Comprehensive Support System for Children and Child-rearing, we prepared a childcare assistant training system in detail to give necessary knowledge and skills for childcare assistants, who are interested in childcare and want to engage in childcare support programs. Such training has been implemented since FY 2015 in each prefecture and municipality according to regional situations.

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.

(2) Promotion of efforts in concert with “regional revitalization”

Promotion of the measures against the falling birthrate in concert with regional revitalization

The Comprehensive Strategy for Overcoming Population Declines and Vitalizing Local Economy in Japan formulated by the country stipulates that the country and local governments should promote the comprehensive measures against the falling birthrate in concert with the “Outline of Measures to Cope with Society with Declining Birthrate,” so that local governments can study and promote “the local version of the Comprehensive Strategy for Overcoming Population Declines and Vitalizing Local Economy in Japan” in concert with the measures based on the new Outline of Measures to Cope with Society with Declining Birthrate.

Chapter 2 Promotion of Detailed Measures against the Falling Birthrate

Section 1 Support for Individuals' Marriage, Pregnancy, Childbirth and Childrearing

(1) Marriage

(Provision of information on life design planning)

Support for life design planning

To plan a life design for marriage, pregnancy, childbirth and childrearing combined with work as desired, it is important to get knowledge and information in the proper stage of life. As a part of information, we have prepared a list of measures taken by local governments for marriage, pregnancy, childbirth and childrearing, and a list of pregnancy- and childbirth-related medical and scientific information.

(Provision of detailed information on marriage and childrearing)

Promotion of understanding through “Family’s day” and “Family’s week”

We are carrying out education programs during “Family’s day” and “Family’s week” to enhance public awareness and understanding of how it is important that children’s lives are passed to the next generation and that childrearing is supported by families and communities.

Survey and Research on Family Formation

In FY 2014, 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 support local governments, concerned bodies and others that are working on countermeasures to the declining birthrate.

(2) Pregnancy and childbirth

(Construction of seamless support systems from pregnancy to childrearing)

Improvement of “the comprehensive childrearing support centers”

We carried out model projects in 29 municipalities to support pregnancy, childbirth and childrearing seamlessly according to the regional characteristics. They include an arrangement of maternal and child health coordinators who provide necessary support according to the needs of expectant/nursing mothers; postpartum care programs; and expectant/nursing mother support program to relieve their feeling of solitude.

Also, by using the FY 2014 supplementary budget, we improved the comprehensive childrearing support centers (one-stop bases providing comprehensive consultations according to various needs from pregnancy to childrearing). Additionally, we carried out seamless support programs for pregnancy through childrearing including postpartum care, according to regional characteristics, to provide mental/physical care for mothers/children just after discharge from hospital.

House-call services for all households with babies (Hello My Baby Project)

“House-call services for all households with babies (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.

(Prevention of Disadvantageous Treatment for Reason of Pregnancy, Childbirth and Maternity leave)

Dissemination of guidelines and guidance to companies

We instructed companies about “Guidelines that stipulate that employers shall comply with regulations on the prohibition of discrimination on the grounds of workers gender.” The regulations show specific items falling under “Disadvantageous Treatment for Reason of Pregnancy, Childbirth and Maternity Leave” prohibited under the Act on Securing, Etc. of Equal Opportunity and Treatment between Men and Women in Employment and the Child Care and Family Care Leave Act. In addition, we strengthened the instruction to companies, and based on the Supreme Court ruling on October 23, 2014, we released a notification clarifying the statutory interpretation about Prohibition of Disadvantageous Treatment for Reason of Pregnancy, Childbirth and Maternity leave .

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.

(Reduction of economic burdens of pregnancy and childbirth, and improvement of counseling support)

Reduction of economic burdens of prenatal checkups, childbirth, and maternity leaves before/after childbirth

We enhanced the support for an economic burden of prenatal checkups by using the FY 2008 second supplementary budget and the FY 2010 supplementary budget so that pregnant women can receive checkups as many times as needed (about 14 times). The support was continued until FY 2012 by the prenatal checkup temporary special grant through prefectural fund programs. But the FY 2013 onwards, the fund programs have been taken over by the general revenue to help regional financial measures.

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.

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: 56 municipal governments in FY 2014).

(Improvement of perinatal care)

Improvement of childbirth environment

To enable women to have childbirth and childcare at ease, we are taking measures to increase obstetricians by utilizing “the prefectural framework,” which secures the number of students learning at medical schools under the conditions that the graduates have to work at specified areas or medical departments; and by securing the number of obstetricians by supporting doctor-shortage clinics.

Utilization of midwives

To ensure safe childbirth by means of midwife’s assistance in communities, we implemented in FY 2014 a midwife temporary transfer support program, and supported dissemination activity of this program and guideline in order to amend the uneven distribution of midwives, strengthen their competency, and secure the training facilities for students who study nursing and midwifery.

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

1) Enhancement of perinatal medical 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 and regional centers for perinatal medicine, all of which play a key role in perinatal medical care, are being developed and the perinatal medical care system is being enhanced in coordination with child delivery facilities in local communities.

2) Securing emergency perinatal medical care systems

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

(Efforts to Support Fertility Treatment)

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 2014: 62 municipal governments).

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).

(Measures for health promotion and prevention of mother-to-child transmission)

Promotion of measures for mothers/children’s health and prevention of mother-to-child transmission
We are promoting measures for mothers/children’s health service through the 21st century national campaign for mothers/children’s health under “the healthy mother and child 21,” in which health targets/indexes of adolescent girls and expectant/nursing mothers are detailed.

(3) Child-rearing

(Reduction of childrearing and educational burdens in expenditure)

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, as special-case benefit.

Stepwise implementation of free child education

METI provides subsidies for local governments which are implementing “kindergarten enrollment encouraging programs.” The aim is to exempt kindergarten entrance and nursing fees to reduce parents’ economic burdens and correct the disparity of fees between private and public kindergartens. In FY 2004, with the aim of equalization of the fees between nursing schools and kindergartens, METI provided households-on-welfare with free nursing; reduced the fees to half for the second child and removed the income cap; and made the fees free for the third and subsequent children and removed the income cap as well.

Supporting the Learning of High School Students

Concerning the High School Tuition-Free 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 Act 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.

Measures for educational expenses reduction for higher education

To help students who have motivation and ability but give up seeking after a higher education due to the economic reason, we are improving the scholarship program run by the Japan Student Services Organization.

With the FY 2014 budget, we have increased the number of students who can receive the interest-free scholarship by 12,000. Also we are improving the scholarship program to increase the benefit for Japanese students who will study abroad; extend the loan repayment grace period from 5 years to 10 years for the poor; decrease the imposition rate of late payment from 10% to 5%; and improve the relief measures for borrowers in serious poverty.

(Support for various people who help raise children and grandchildren)

Support by grandmothers/grandfathers

The Urban Renaissance Agency Rental Housing program provides preferential treatment for childrearing families and close living families who help childrearing families, by increasing the winning odds at a lottery time for such applicants who want to move into newly built rental houses. The program also provides “Program to promote the close living of family members,” which discount the rent for a certain period for such new tenants (first-served basis) who move into the existing rental houses.

Construction of regional childrearing bases by utilizing vacant shops in shopping streets, and empty rooms in primary/middle schools 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 promoted through measures such as allowing for significant flexibility in procedures of disposing public property in diverting public school facilities, which were maintained with government subsidies provided, to other purposes and preparing pamphlet to show some examples of their use.

(Improvement of environment where children grow healthy and safe)

<Improvement of childcare-friendly housing>

Support for Homeownership through Loans and Tax reduction (system)

Japan Housing Finance Agency has reduced the interest rates of “Flat 35S” that is the major part of its securitization support business to promote the quality of houses in term of durability and variability etc.

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.

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.

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 to be built on site, and for leading efforts to contribute to the stable acquisition of housing for child-rearing families.

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.

<Enhancement of Medical Treatment for Children>

Enhancement of Medical Treatment for Children

In the successive revision of medical service fees in recent years, a focused valuation on the costs of medical care for children has been conducted and, in the revision of medical service fees in FY 2014, new measures have just been implemented, one of which is an extension of the upper limit in days for the hospitalization fees for newborn babies in the neonatal specific intensive care unit (NICU) etc. who have diseases such as congenital abnormality.

Improvement of measures for children with specific chronic pediatric diseases

From January 2015, based on the amended Child Welfare Act (Act No. 47 of 2014), we have started an aid program to maintain children' health and reduce part of medical expenses of families who have a child with specific chronic pediatric disease.

Immunization

According to the revision of the "Preventive Vaccinations Act" (Act No. 68 of 1948), 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 regular reporting system of adverse events, and establishing the Immunization and Vaccine Committee of the Health Science Council and other measures.

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."

<Children's sound growth>

Improvement of the Educational Environment at Schools

The curriculum guidelines aim to develop a zest for life which is balanced in solid academic prowess, richness in humanity, health and fitness 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 junior high schools since April 2012, and for high schools since April 2013.

Concerning the placement teachers and other staff, which serve as the basis of a school's educational environment, in FY 2011 and FY 2012, the number of teachers and other staff for each school, which required that elementary 1st and 2nd grade classes having 35 pupils or less, has been increased. In FY 2014, the number of teachers and other staff has been decreased due to the declining birthrate etc. On the other hand, the number of teachers and other staff required for the establishment of English as an elementary

school subject and the enhancement of special needs education, has been increased to 703. In addition, the project for dispatching instructors and other personnel for supplementary lessons to utilize about 8,000 school supporters to give supplementary study for academic development has been conducted since FY 2013.

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.

Promotion of bullying prevention measures

Based on "the law aimed at preventing bullying" enacted in June 2013 and "the basic policy for bullying prevention" formulated in October 2013, we are promoting bullying prevention measures to overcome bullying problems under "the program for comprehensive bullying prevention measures" in cooperation with the country, local governments, schools, community people, families, and other persons concerned.

Promotion of bullying prevention measures along with school supporters

In close cooperation with schools, we are promoting appropriate measures along with the school supporters who consist of retired policemen etc., and making efforts to detect bullying at an early stage, by considering the emergency and seriousness of such cases, the intention of both bullied pupils and their families, and the situation of school responses. As of April 2014, about 800 school supporters are allocated in 43 prefectures.

Promotion and dissemination of dietary education and encouragement of various experience-based activities

1) Dissemination and promotion of dietary education

Based on "the basic policy for food and nutrition education" formulated in March 2011, we encouraged healthy eating habit of Japanese food that are excellent in nutrient balance in combination with rice, fish, meat, milk, dairy products, vegetables, seaweeds, beans, fruits, tea, etc. We also supported dietary education, including educational farming, for children to deepen understanding agriculture, forestry and fisheries through agricultural and forestry experiences. Further, we are promoting programs by making good use of regional characteristics, such as adoption of local products into school lunches.

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 March 2015, further promoting consumer education.

3) Hands-on Activities and Culture/Art 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 experience-based learning 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 experience-based learning 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.

(3) 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.

4) Place of Contact with Nature

Under the guidance and cooperation of park rangers and park volunteers, opportunities are provided for children to learn the manners in nature, and conservation of the natural environment.

5) Hands-on Activities of Agriculture and Fisheries Industries, and Exchange Experiences between Cities and Agricultural and Fishing Villages

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 agricultural and fishing villages, learning about nature, farming, forestry and fishing.

6) Ensuring Recreation Places for Children (Parks, Watersides 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.

<Improvement of communities’ safety>

Support for infants during disaster

Based on “the outline of emergency drills,” local governments are carrying out emergency drills, with care-required people including infants and pregnant women.

Child Injury Prevention

Since December 2009, we have been carrying out the project: “Protect Kids from Accidents!” to prevent children from unexpected accidents.

1) 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 June 2014 and efforts are being made to keep facility administrators informed of the measures.

2) Promotion of safety measures for buildings

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.

Prevention of accident and its recurrence in kindergartens and nursing schools

Pursuant to the interim report, “Review of measures to prevent recurrence of serious accident in educational and nursing facilities,” published on November 28, we submitted our report, “How to report accidents caused in specified educational and nursing facilities,” to the government, which states how to concentrate information on serious accidents into the country.

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.

Protection of Citizens from Becoming 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 2014, 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.

To strengthen the system for watching and protecting children on the route to school, METI has been promoting measures to prevent children from being involved in crimes, training school-guard leaders to be allocated, and supporting the prefectural education boards’ seminars held for school teachers and staff.

Efforts to protect children from harms on the internet

We actively cooperate with authorities and organizations concerned to protect children from becoming victims of internet crime. On the other hand, we request mobile-service providers to amplify explanations about proper use of online filters and safety measures to parents and guardians. We are also engaged in educational activities on internet problems for the guardians and online etiquette for children at appropriate occasions such as entrance ceremony.

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.

Unravelling environmental factors that affect children’s health and development

In order to examine the effect of environmental factors including chemical substances, we have been conducting a “The Japan Environment and Children’s Study (JECS)” since FY 2010.

(Support for various families and children)

<Support for children in poverty>

Promotion of policy on poverty among children

In June 2013, The Act on Promotion of Policy on Poverty among Children was enacted and has been enforced since January 17, 2014. The article 8 stipulates that an outline of the policy on poverty among children shall be established to promote the policy on poverty among children comprehensively. In light of this, “a review meeting on the policy on poverty among children” was held from April to June, 2014 to hear opinions from a wide range of people concerned, and the opinions were reviewed and coordinated from the comprehensive perspective. Thereafter “General Principles of Policy on Poverty among Children” was decided on August 29, 2014 in the cabinet meeting.

Also on April 2, 2015, the advocators from various fields gathered to hold a kickoff event called “an advocators’ meeting on the ‘children’s future support national movement’” in order to gain the public cooperation and understanding and roll out the policy on poverty among children as “The Children’s Future Support National Movement.”

<Support for single parent families>

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.

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.

Ensuring Child Support

In the amendment to the Civil Code (Act No. 89 of 1896 and final amendment made by Act No. 74 of 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.

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.

<Prevention of child abuse and enhancement of social care>

Dissemination and enlightenment toward child abuse prevention

The month of November has been designated as “a child abuse prevention month” since 2004 to raise public awareness of child abuse. During the period, we have been carrying out intensive PRs and enlightenment activity in cooperation with relevant government ministries and agencies, local governments, and organizations concerned.

Prevention of child abuse and early detection before it becomes too late

1) Senior-vice-ministers meeting on child abuse preventive measures

We held a meeting of senior-vice-ministers from relevant government ministries and agencies on child abuse preventive measures on August 29, 2014, and summarized them on December 26, 2014 to prevent child abuse at an early stage, detect and respond appropriately before it becomes too late.

2) Promotion of seamless child abuse preventive measures

We are improving a seamless and comprehensive support system to promote:

1. Prevention of abuse occurrence,
2. Early detection and early response, and
3. Protection and support for self-reliance of abused children and support for parents

The child consultation centers’ nationwide hotline (0570-064-000) is to be changed to a three-figure-number 189 from July 2015.

3) Examination of death due to child abuse

Regarding deaths due to child abuse, “the advisory committee in charge of examination of child abuse and aid-requiring cases” established under “the Social Security Council Children’s Committee” has been analyzing and examining deaths due to child abuse since 2004, and summarized problems extracted from such cases, and proposed as concrete measures.

4) Efforts by schools

To promote early detection of and early response to child abuse at schools, we prepared training materials for teachers and distributed to the education boards. Also, we are strengthening the link between schools and child consultation centers, helping school nurses’ response, and supporting the systems which respond to children’s consultations.

Improvement of social security

Based on “the future image and assignment of social security” compiled in July 2011, we are supporting families’ childcare, foster parent entrustment systems, and foster families; improving the quality of facility operation; helping parent-children relationship construction and independence of children; and protecting children’s rights.

<Efforts to Support Children with Disabilities>

Improvement of facilities for person with disabilities

The 3rd Basic Program for Persons with Disabilities was formulated in September 2013. The Programme includes constructing inclusive education system and improvement of care for children with disabilities.

In June 2013, “The Act on promoting elimination of discrimination on the grounds of disabilities” was enacted to eliminate discrimination on the ground of disabilities. On February 24, 2015, based on the above act, “The basic policy for promoting elimination of discrimination on the grounds of disabilities” was decided in the cabinet meeting to show the government basic direction. Toward the enforcement of this policy from April 2016, the heads of government administrations and the incorporated administrative agencies are to work on corresponding measures; and the competent minister is to prepare guidelines to make the policy known to the public.

Childcare for Children with Disabilities

Child-development support and nursery-center-visit supports that provide support for children with disabilities, 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.

Enhancement of Support for Children with Developmental Disorders

Concerning the support of children with developmental disorders, and according to the “Act on Support for Persons with Developmental Disabilities” (Act No.167 of 2004), 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.

Immediate support after discovery of disorders

We are making efforts to discover special-care-requiring infants at an early stage to support them by referring to proper institutions, immediately after any disorder is discovered on the occasion of infants’ health checkups or at various facilities used by childrearing families.

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.

<Support for young NEETs and hikikomori children>

Support for children and youth through community networks

Based on the Act on Promotion of Development and Support for Children and Young People enforced in April 2010 (Act No. 71 of 2009), 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.

<Support for orphans>

Support for orphans

To provide health and livelihood supports for children and families in the areas affected by the Great East Japan Earthquake, we established in 2014 “the comprehensive health and livelihood support programs for affected children,” and implemented “the counseling and aid program for orphans,” in which pediatric psychiatrists provide on-site counseling and mental health service.

For orphans due to traffic accidents, the National Agency for Automotive Safety & Victims' Aid has been providing interest-free loans for such children up to the graduation from middle school to help their sound growth, while the Foundation for Orphans from Automobile Accident has been providing a financial aid for orphans less than 16 years old by the time they become 19 years old.

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.

<Supporting School Enrollment for the Children of Foreign Residents>

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.

(4) Education

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.

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.

1) 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.

2) 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.

Promotion of career education

To promote career education based on Gender-Equal Society, we distributed booklets to high-school students and implemented workshops for them to think men and women's way of working and family life, so that they can choose their own way of living from among various options on the basis of the life events.

(5) Work

Presentation of role models

We established "women's challenge awards" to praise women, individuals, women's organizations, and women's groups that are playing active roles by challenging entrepreneurship or activities in specified NPOs and communities, as well as their supporters.

Section 2 Promoting Measures against the Falling Birthrate by Whole Society

(1) Creation of friendly society for marriage, pregnancy, children and childrearing

(Dissemination and enlightenment of maternity and stroller sign)

Dissemination and enlightenment of maternity and stroller sign

We are spreading the use of maternity and stroller sign through our website and various occasions and asking transportations, workplaces and restaurants for cooperation.

To demonstrate places and facilities where strollers can be used, we have established "the stroller use in public transportation council."

(Commendation of good examples and information dispatch)

Implementation of "Children/families/youth cheering group commendation"

We have introduced "the children/families/youth cheering group commendation" to praise companies, groups and individuals that accomplished excellent supports for childrearing families and the development of children and youth. Also we are implementing "the program to publicize the case-studies of children/families/youth cheering groups' activity" to spread excellent supports for the development of children and youth.

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.

(Improvement of facilities and environment for easy outing of pregnant women, mothers and children)

Helping mothers and children at stations and shops, and making public transportation comfortable for child-taking-families

In cooperation with railroad companies, MLIT has started "the manners-up campaign in the train" using keywords, "Let's give a warm-hearted word to mothers and children" and prepared posters urging passengers to give a seat to pregnant women. Railroad companies posted the posters in the trains and stations and announced to passengers "Let's say hello to mothers and children."

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 Accessibility" 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 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.

Improvement of Road Traffic Environment

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

(Preferential service to persons with children)

Nationwide campaign of childrearing support passport

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.

(2) Efforts by companies

(“Visualization” of companies’ measures against the falling birthrate and for work-life-balance)

Formulation and publication of general employer action plans (Act on Advancement of Measures to Support Raising 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 2015, the notification rate for companies with 101 employees to those with 300 employees is 97.8%. 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 on Advancement of Measures to Support Raising Next-Generation Children” (Act No.120 of 2003). 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.

Dissemination and promotion of “Kurumin” and “Platinum Kurumin” certification

Based on the 2014 Amending Act, a special certification system was established on April 1, 2015, under which, from among the companies that received “Kurumin certificate,” those that performed a higher level of support for work-life-balance and satisfied certain requirements are given “Platinum Kurumin” certificate.

Under “the Law for Partial Amendment of the Income Tax Act, etc.,” the special tax treatment for certified Platinum Kurumin companies has been expanded since 2015 and extended three years to March 2018, upon reviewing their assets and extra depreciation deduction rate.

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.”

(Incentives for companies that address measures against the falling birthrate)

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 a comprehensive evaluation bid system.