Chapter 3 Policies for the Youth under Special Circumstances

◆ Section 1 Support for youths with disabilities ◆

(Support for Young People with Disabilities)
- Regarding children with disabilities, special needs education which aims at full development of their capabilities, their independence and social participation is carried out in various forms, in both regular schools (resource rooms and special classes) and schools for special needs education. In addition, the School Education Law was amended and enforced in April 2007; it is now made explicit in the law that special needs education shall be promoted in all regular schools.
- The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) has implemented projects to enhance the support system in schools for children with disabilities. In addition, with the intention of improving vocational training in schools for special needs education, MEXT has implemented the policy named "practical research projects to promote the occupational independence" in collaboration with the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare from April 2007.
  Moreover, MEXT implements research projects named "Comprehensive support model for early developmental disabilities" and "developmental disabilities support model for high schools", those are aimed to develop appropriate support methods and effective coordination system with related organizations since FY2007, in response to increasing needs for the educational support for children with developmental disabilities.
  In addition, National Institute of Special Needs Education has opened the total information website "Developmental Disabilities Education Information Center", provides various information regarding correct understanding, support methods, and curriculums of teacher training for developmental disabilities.

◆ Section 2 Support for Single Parent families ◆

(Single Parent Family)
- In December 2007, a summary of the employment support strategy which is one of the pillars of the “Development Strategies ‘Employment through welfare’” and “5 year promotion plan” was prepared.
Based on the current situation, the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, in 2008, will try to build new employment support as follows and also try to enhance the support for self-independence of single mother families.

A) Establish support project for employment and self-independence of single mother families
   1) Addition sessions promoting working at home to the single mother employment and self-independence support center projects.
   2) Setting up a support project for employment and self-independence for the public

B) Project regarding special grants for high technical skill training programs
   Partly amount is aided for promoting admissions

C) Projects for establishing self-support programs for mothers
   Employment Preparation support courses are held to promote desire to work in single-mothers who find difficult to return to work immediately.

(Support for Education of Foreign Students)
- In 2007, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology implemented "a program to promote adaptation of foreigners to Japanese life circumstances", based on the following.
  1) Held a conference with the governments of foreign students home countries to promote cooperation in educational areas
  2) Japanese language classes set up with the help of people of Japanese descent, instructors training program for foreigners with Japanese language skills, and Japanese education program to conduct long term training of volunteers for "Foreign residents in Japan"
  3) Projects to promote the acceptance of foreign students and returnees that makes provisions to accept foreign students in schools and promotes school attendance for foreign children not attending school
  4) JSL (Japanese as a second language) curriculum implementation support program designed to promote and enhance teaching method utilizing JSL curriculum which was designed to develop foreign students' abilities to participate in learning activities in Japanese.

Also, the "Investigation Committee for evaluating the foreign students education regarding elementary and middle school education" in June 2008, published a report "Education Plan for Foreign Students" defining the measures to be taken in the next 5 years. As a result of this report, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology aims at better supporting measures for foreign students’ education.

◆Section 3 Measures against Juvenile Delinquency and Social Maladjustments◆

(Measures against Juvenile Delinquency)
- In order to respond appropriately to the recent serious condition of juvenile delinquency, on May 25, 2007, "A bill for the partial revision of the Juvenile Act." was established, and it took effect on November 1, 2007.

The main revisions revised in this Act included the following
   1) Establishing police investigation procedures for cases relating to juvenile offenders under 14 years old alleged to have violated any criminal law or ordinance
   2) To be able to send juveniles aged roughly 12 or older to the Juvenile Training School under protective measures when the family court finds it necessary to implement.
   3) Stipulation of the provisions on measures when juveniles under probation has failed to comply with the conditions and the provisions that the director of the probation office and the superintendent of the juvenile training school may give guidance or advice for parents and guardians of juveniles under the protective measures.
   4) Establish a system to assign a court-appointed council who is an attorney for juvenile for certain serious offenses.
- Along with arranging and enhancing the conditions items in probation, and changing in the special conditions as per the execution status of probation, further improving the measures of coordination of the social circumstances for persons committed in a juvenile training school for their reintegration into society, arrangement of measures to hear opinions from crime victims in parole examinations for release from juvenile training schools and measures to communicate crime victims’ feelings to juveniles under probation, the “Offenders Rehabilitation Act”, was enacted in the 166th Diet. The act was promulgated on June 15, 2007 and has been fully enforced on June 1, 2008, but some articles with regard to support for crime victims have been enforced earlier on December 1, 2007.

(School Refusal /Social Withdrawal /Eating Disorders)
- The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, since 2007, has implemented the "self-support project for children having problems" to survey and evaluate effective approaches to support children such as to prevent behavioral problems by early detection and early treatment of behavioral problems, utilizing support structure built in coordination with related authorities, so far, promoted.

◆ Section 4 Protection and Prevention of damages to Juveniles ◆

(Measures to prevent Child Abuse)
- After child abuse incidents and serious loss of children's lives, the number of children coming to children's guidance clinics regarding abuse, is increasing consistently and in 2007. There were 40,639 child abuse cases i.e. nearly 3.5 times more than prior to the execution of "Child Abuse Prevention Law". The child abuse problem remains one of the tasks of the society which should be addressed urgently.
- The Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare for preventing its occurrence, from 2007, implements "all visit Projects for the infants up to 4 months (hello baby project)" to prevent isolation of the infant's family, to ensure the sound development of the baby by providing families with infants with the first opportunity to connect with the community, by visiting them to give childrearing support information and understand their nursing environment (In 2007, it was implemented in 1,063 cities i.e. nearly 58.2% of cities nationwide (The 2007 Act for Measures to Support the Development of the Next Generation Grants Received Determination base).
- In 2008, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, carries out the survey research on methods to employ Professional School Social Workers who support the students in dealing with the challenges to adapt to the various environments by using the network with child consultation centers and related organizations, by using technology and expertise in social welfare, in addition to usage of knowledge related to the educational field, in order to address problems such as child abuse.
- Due to the incidents of death cases due to child abuse, apart from building prevention measures, it has become tremendously important to raise the awareness, thus "Special Verification Committee for the cases of Child Abuse Protection" is executed since 2004 under the Social Security Council Committee and 4 reports have been summarized till the date. Recently, the verification Committee has performed an analysis of death cases based on the survey held by the ministry of Labour and welfare, in several prefectures and cities. And in June 2008, a total summary report including reports from first edition to 4th edition was published.
- In 2007, two laws of the Child Welfare Act and the Child Abuse Prevention Law were revised and were in effect in April 2008.

The main revisions are as follows.
In addition to this, the local child consultation center and management guidelines were revised
  • For safety of children, strengthening the surveillance on gates and restricting the entry of non permitted persons.
  • Strengthening the restrictions of communication and meetings for guardians. Regulation for prohibiting loitering of guardians near the kids was formulated by several prefectural governors.
  • Clarification of measures to be taken for the guardians who do not abide by the rules
  • Analysis of important child abuse case through local and national authorities
  • Regulating the cooperation of local public organizations for setting up “Local network for protection of children”

(Measures for child care by local committee).
(Other Crime Prevention Measures)

- Fire and Disaster Management Agency, in coordination with the police department, and in coordination with the local communities such as local fire stations, local police stations, local elementary schools and middle schools, PTA, Old aged clubs, Ladies clubs, Anti crime organizations, etc, promoted a model project by implementation of "Local Safety Station" for safety of local people from disaster and fire. In May 2008, the model projects were held in 412 organizations, and aiming the implementation of the project nationwide, "Local Safety Station session" were held in fiscal year 2007 where case studies of 6 different places were discussed. In February 2008, discussions based upon the existence and activities of "Local Safety Station" were held "Private Disaster prevention organizations and creation of a safe city- symposium - Starting from the local safe station activities".

- In June 2008, the "School Health Act" was revised and changed to "School Health Safety Act". In the revised act the following points are mentioned, measures and implementation of a comprehensive school safety plan or creation of guideline for measures to be taken in case of disasters, safety maintenance of school equipments and teaching safety measures in daily life.

(Disaster cases due to bullying)

- The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology since year 2008 has started implementing "Project for total support Measures against bullying", and promotes school initiatives to regarding effective approaches with external professional help in case of bullying problem, bullying prevention or early bullying discovery.

- Regarding "Cyber Bullying", in 2007,"Conference of professionals for creation of safe environment for children" was held. In December 2007, urgent proposal for issues regarding "Cyber Bullying Problem", and in June 2008, a secondary conclusive proposal regarding "Prevention of Children from Cyber Bullying - Review proper usage of the Internet on mobile phones" were put together. A notification was given to all the prefecture's education councils in July 2008 and more efforts are being taken to match with the circumstances of each place to handle cases of harmful information from mobile phones in school.

(Disaster and Accident Prevention Measures)

- In schools, for preventing children from crimes, traffic accidents and other natural disasters, special sessions are held to teach the self protection and emergency shelter measures. Also in coordination with the families and local authorities, through the several educational activities at school, a safe education is promoted considering the developmental stage of children.

The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, is creating the disaster prevention education materials for elementary school students in 2007. Also in fiscal year 2008, disaster prevention education materials for middle school students were created and also practical activities were implemented in high schools regarding instructions related to bicycles and cars.

◆Section 5 Supporting Youth under Unfavorable Working Conditions◆

(Employment Promotion for Middle and High School Dropouts and Young Unemployed Youths)

- From 2007, in young work plaza and hello work of 9 prefectures, a rigorous recruitment activity is implemented, and for job-hopping part-timers of 25(hereinafter referred as to senior job-hopping part-timers), using the know how and information, through which a interaction stage is created for youths to exchange their thoughts, and also to learn the employment search methods to find an appropriate job. "Job Club (Recruitment Club)" activities are implemented who support the employment search activities.

- Since 2006, special consultation is executed for the youths and “local youth support station” are setup in several regions, and work as the central network of local youth support organizations and also makes efforts to make the service of each organization more effective. In 2008, the setup of service centers increased from 55 to 77 different places. A support model of visiting home is also been introduced.