

White Paper on Children and Young People 2014

<Summary>

June 2014
Cabinet Office, Government of Japan

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About the White Paper on Children and Young People

This White Paper on Children and Young People is an annual report submitted to the National Diet in accordance with Article 6 of the Act on Promotion of Development and Support for Children and Young People (Act No. 71 of 2009). This is the fifth report as designated by the Act. (It would be the 56th report if counted together with the White Paper on Youth [not designated by law] which has been issued since 1956.)

Part 1 Situation of Children and Young People

This part describes the situations of children and young people using various statistical data.

- Chapter 1 Population
- Chapter 2 Health
- Chapter 3 Environments Where Children Grow up
- Chapter 4 Social Independence
- Chapter 5 Safety and Problematic Behavior
- Chapter 6 Life Activities and Attitudes

Special Feature: Attitudes of Young People Living in the Present -Insights Gleaned from International Comparisons-

Based on the “Survey on Attitudes of Young People in Japan and Foreign Countries” conducted in FY 2013 by the Cabinet Office, this white paper analyses the characteristics of Japanese young peoples’ attitudes on six items: self-perception, home, school, relationships with friends, workplace and marriage/childcare, and discusses suggestions for measures to develop and support children and young people.

Part 2 Status of the Implementation of Measures to Support the Development of Children and Young People

This part describes the status of the measures for supporting the development of children and young people implemented in FY 2013 by presenting them in keeping with the General Principles, which are based on Article 8 of the Act on Promotion of Development and Support for Children and Young People.

- Chapter 1 Promoting Measures to Support the Development of Children and Young People in a Comprehensive and Systematic Manner
- Chapter 2 Providing Support for the Healthy Development of All Children and Young People
- Chapter 3 Supporting Children, Young People and Their Families Facing Difficulties
- Chapter 4 Improving the Environment for the Healthy Development of Children and Young People to Be Supported by Society as a Whole
- Chapter 5 Framework for the Promotion of Future Measures

Column

This section presents children and young people who work toward the reconstruction and recovery of disaster-stricken areas, efforts against companies that appear to treat young people as “disposable items” by providing poor working conditions, support networks for children and young people in communities, rehabilitation support for juvenile delinquents through cooperation between agencies concerned and measures to clean up the harmful environments surrounding children.

Part 1 Situation of Children and Young People

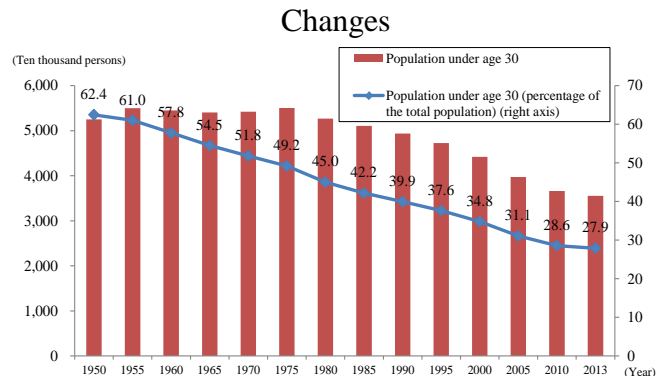
Chapter 1 Population

Section 1 Population

1 Current situation and changes

○ The population under age 30 has been declining almost constantly since 1975 (Figure 1).

Figure 1 Population under age 30



Sources: “Population Census” and “Population Estimates” (as of October 1st each year), MIC (the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications)

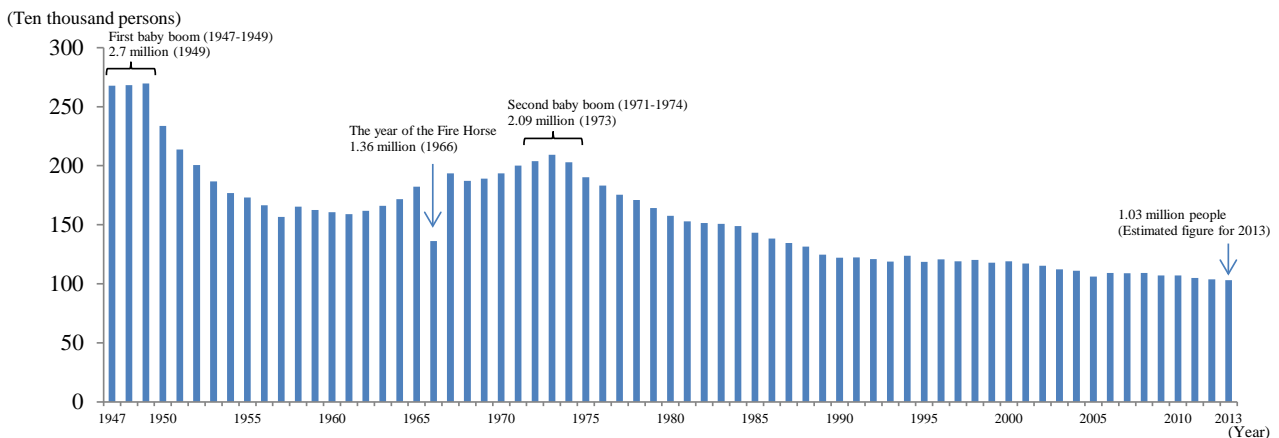
Note: Okinawa Prefecture is not included in the figures for 1970 and before.

2 Population dynamics

(Births)

○ The number of births has continued declining slightly (Figure 2).

Figure 2 Number of births



Source: “Vital Statistics,” MHLW (the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare)

Note 1: Okinawa Prefecture is not included in the figures for 1972 and before.

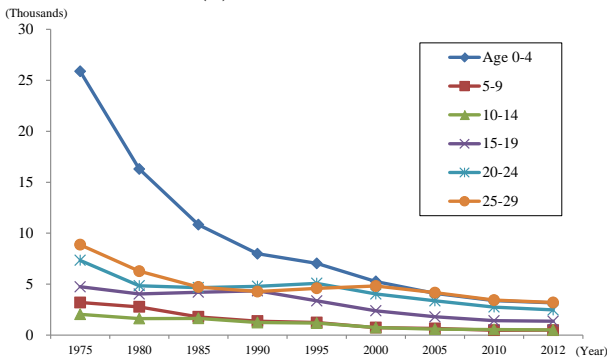
Note 2: The figure for 2013 is an estimated figure as of January 1, 2014.

(Deaths)

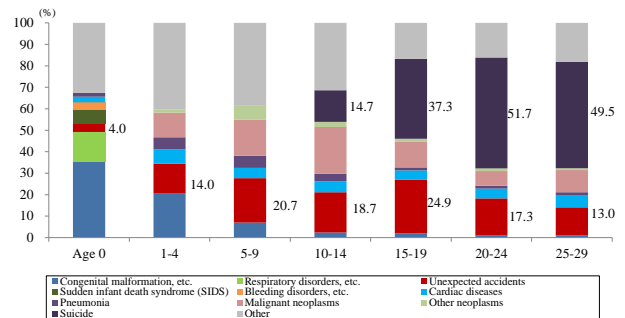
- The number of deaths is the largest between ages 25 and 29, followed by ages 0 to 4. Unexpected accidents are the leading cause of death of children between the ages 0 and 14, while suicide is the leading cause among people aged 15 or older (Figure 3).
- The number of suicides under the age of 30 who were identified by the police is 3,348. Health problems such as depression are a major cause or motive. Problems regarding school are also a major cause among people aged 19 and under (Figure 4).

Figure 3 Number of deaths

(1) Number of deaths



(2) Cause of death (percentages, in 2011)

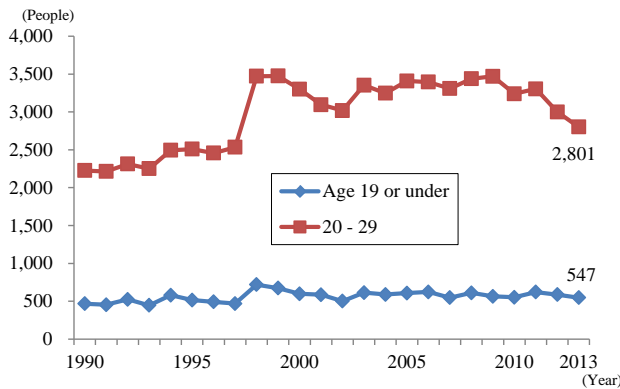


Source: “Vital Statistics,” MHLW

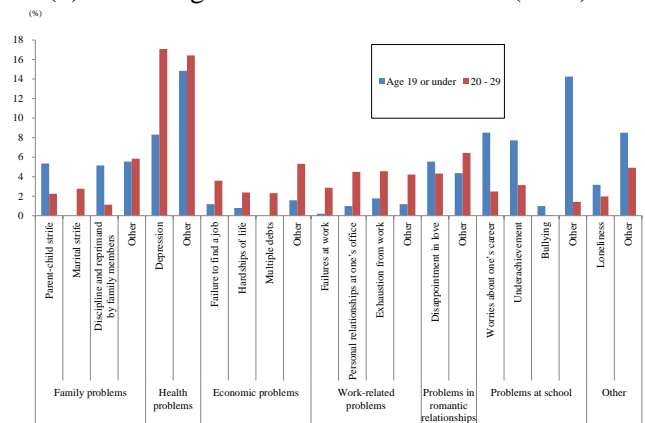
Note: In (2) Cause of death, “Cardiac diseases” refers to cardiac diseases excluding hypertensive ones; “Congenital malformation, etc.,” to congenital malformation, deformities and chromosomal aberrations; “Respiratory disorders, etc.,” to perinatal respiratory disorders and cardiovascular disorders; and “Bleeding disorders, etc.,” to bleeding disorders and blood disorders of fetuses and newborns.

Figure 4 Circumstances of suicides

(1) Changes



(2) Percentage of each cause or motive (2012)



Source: “The Circumstances of Suicide,” Cabinet Office and National Police Agency

Note: The causes or motives in (2) include up to three causes or motives for each suicide that can be clearly identified based on data proving it to be a suicide, such as a suicide note.

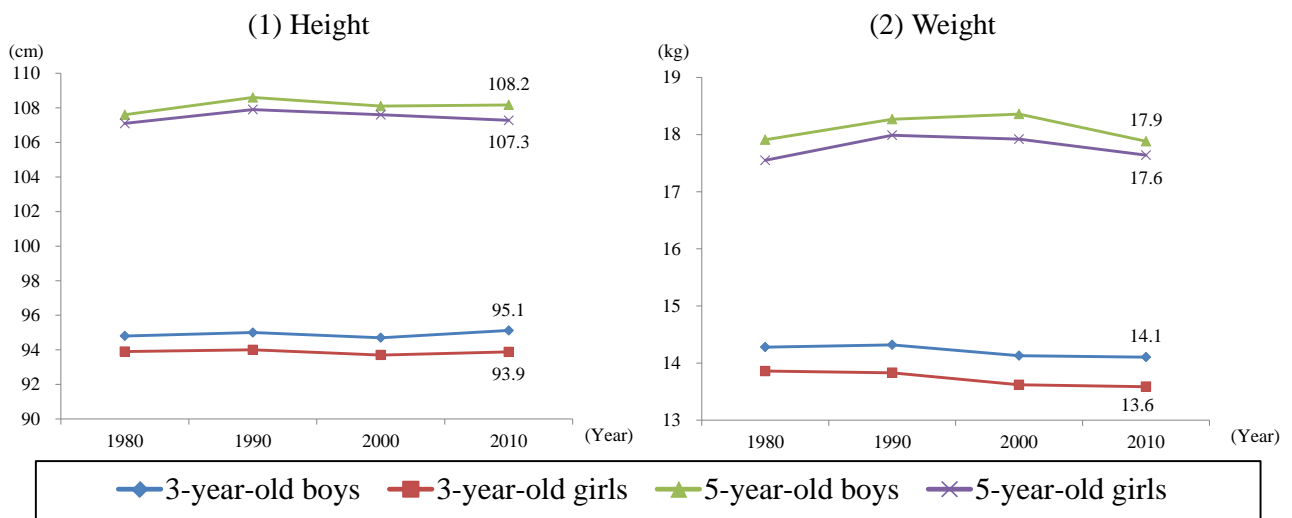
Chapter 2 Health

Section 1 Growth

1 Physical constitution

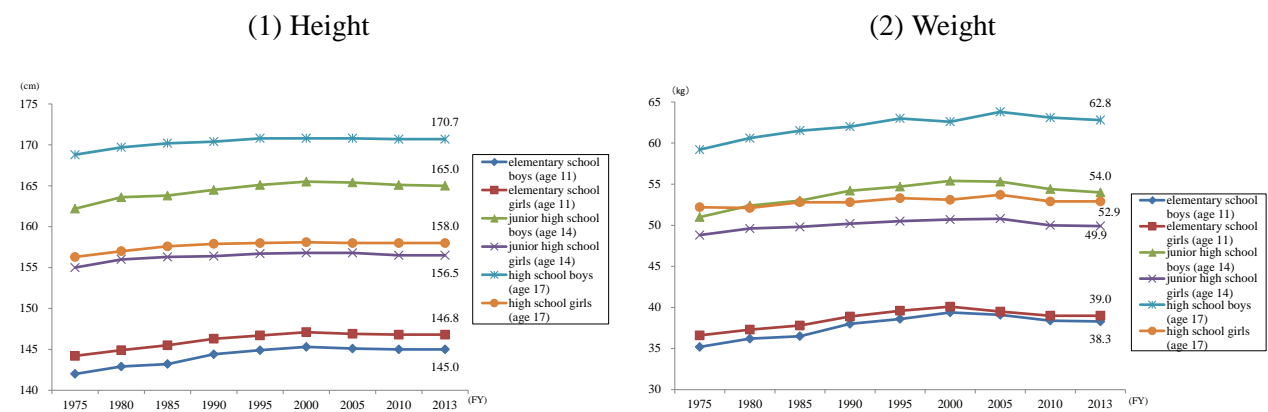
○ While average heights have remained largely unchanged, the average weights of elementary school students and junior high school students are on the decrease (Figure 5, Figure 6).

Figure 5 The heights and weights of preschool children



Source: “National Growth Survey on Preschool Children,” MHLW

Figure 6 The heights and weights of elementary school students, junior high school students and high school students (mean values)



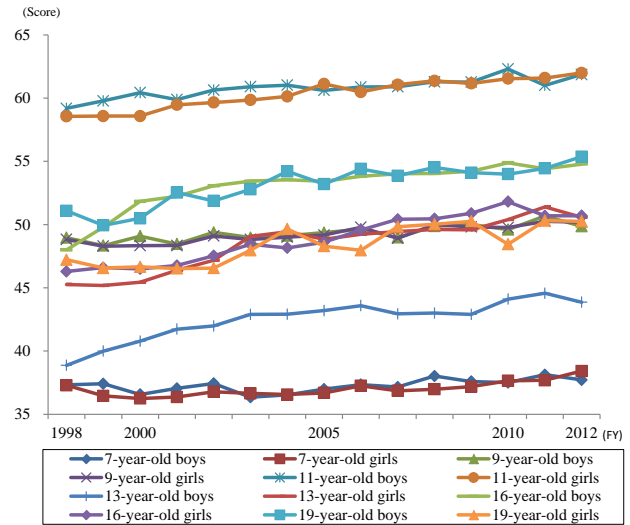
Source: “School Health Survey,” MEXT (the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology)

2 Physical fitness, motor ability

○ The physical strength and motor ability of elementary school students, junior high school students and high school students have been increasing almost constantly (Figure 7).

Figure 7

Motor ability of children aged 6 to 19 (Total score on the new physical strength test)

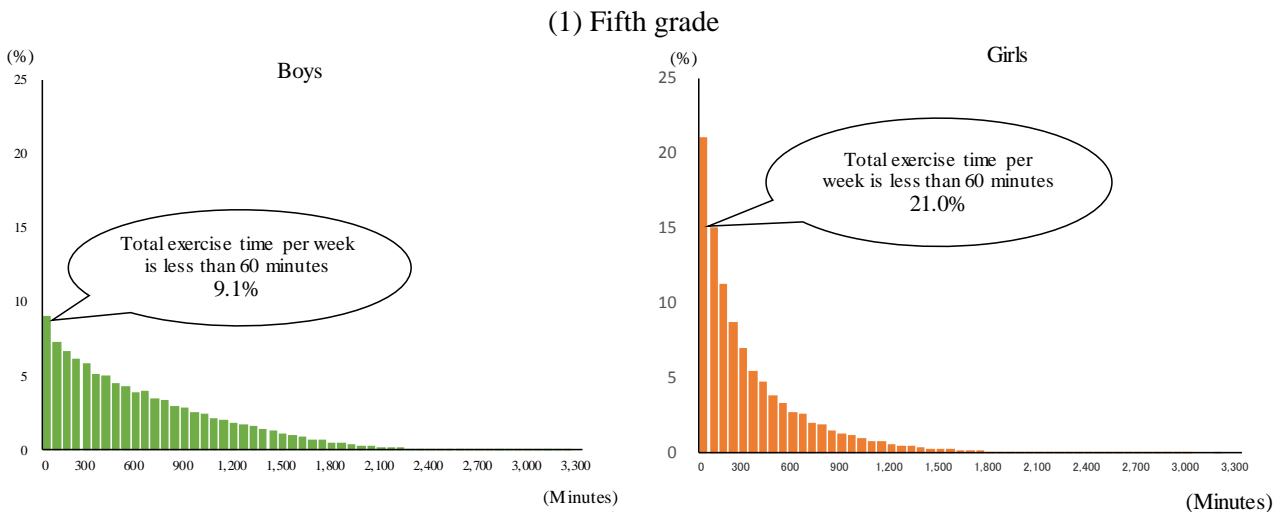


Source: "Survey on Physical Fitness and Motor Ability," MEXT

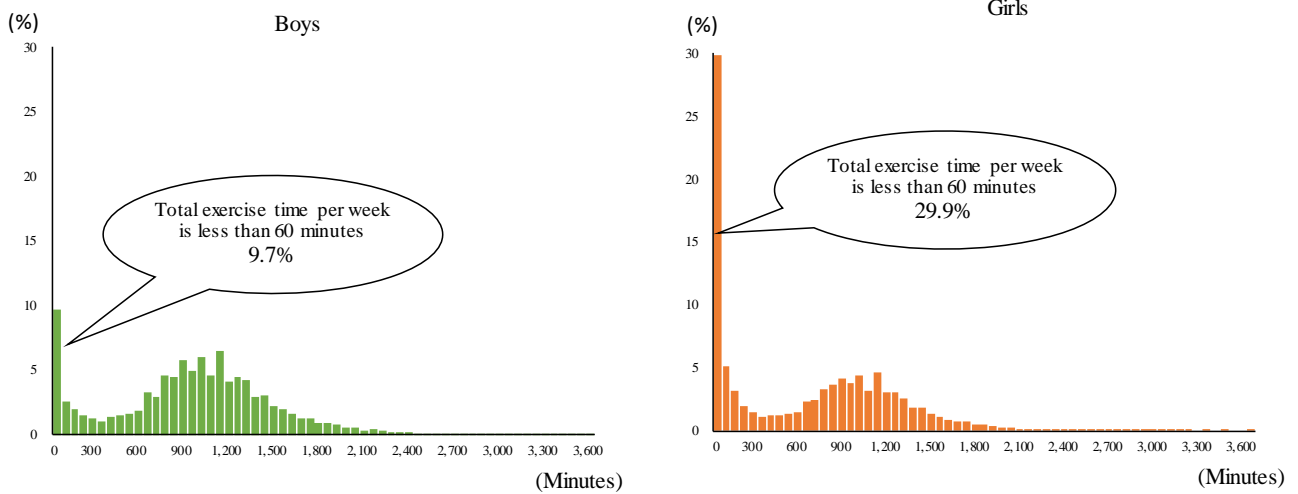
Note: The new physical strength test has been conducted since FY 2002

- Ten to thirty percent of elementary school students and junior high school students do little exercise (Figure 8).
- Seventy to ninety percent of young people in their 20s are not in the habit of exercising (Figure 9).

Figure 8 Total exercise time per week (students in 5th grade and 8th grade) (FY 2013)



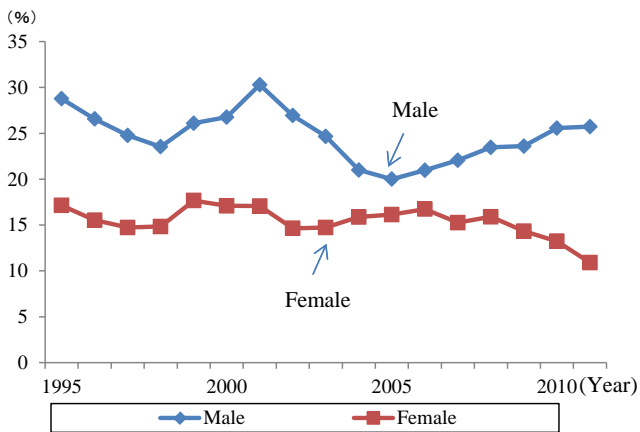
(2) Eighth grade



Source: "National Survey on Physical Fitness, Motor Ability and Exercise Habits," MEXT

Figure 9 Exercise habits of people in their 20s

Percentage of people in the habit of exercising



Source: "National Health and Nutrition Survey," MHLW

Note 1: People in the habit of exercising are defined as those who do more than 30 minutes' exercise two days or more a week and continue it for over a year.

2: To help understand this tendency, the moving averages of the values of the last three data points are shown in the graph.

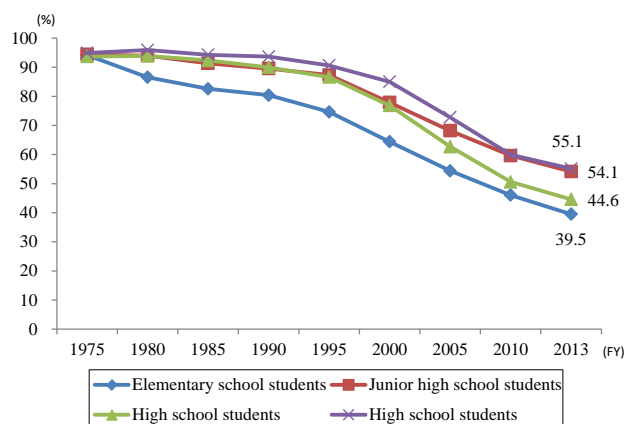
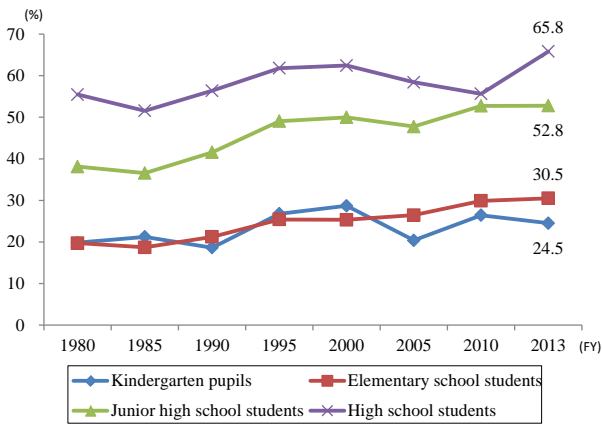
Section 2 Diseases

1 Widespread diseases and abnormal conditions

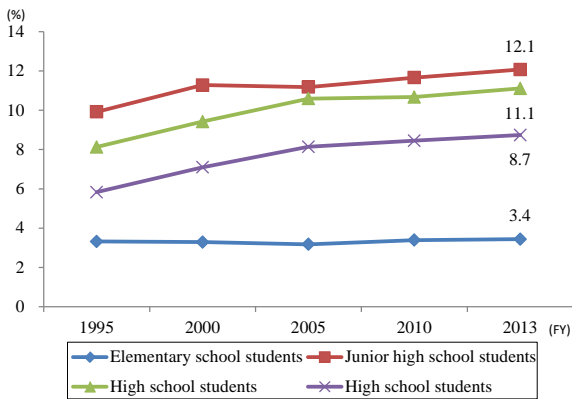
○ The percentage of students with dental caries has declined, but the percentage of students with allergic rhinitis and asthma has increased (Figure 10).

Figure 10 Widespread diseases and abnormal conditions

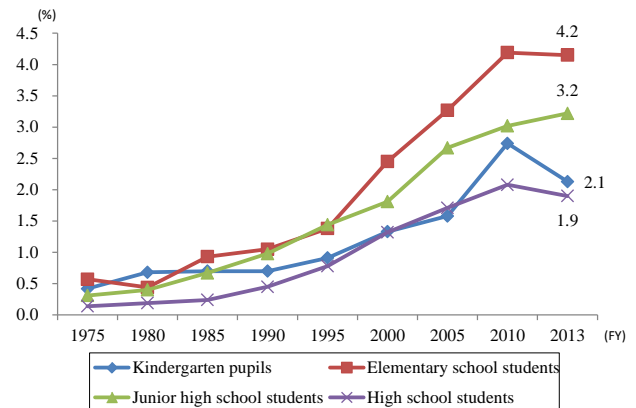
(1) Uncorrected visual acuity less than 1.0 (2) Dental caries (including those having undergone treatment)



(3) Nasal and sinus disorders (allergic rhinitis, etc.)



(4) Asthma

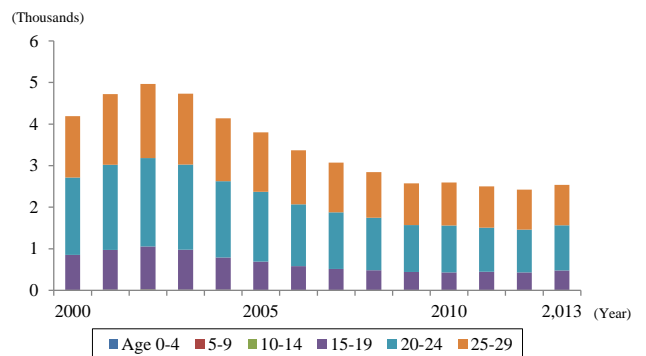


Source: "School Health Survey," MEXT

Note: The percentages of kindergarten pupils are only for 5-year-old boys.

○ The number of persons with sexually transmitted diseases is on the decrease (Figure 11).

Figure 11 Number of cases of sexually transmitted diseases reported



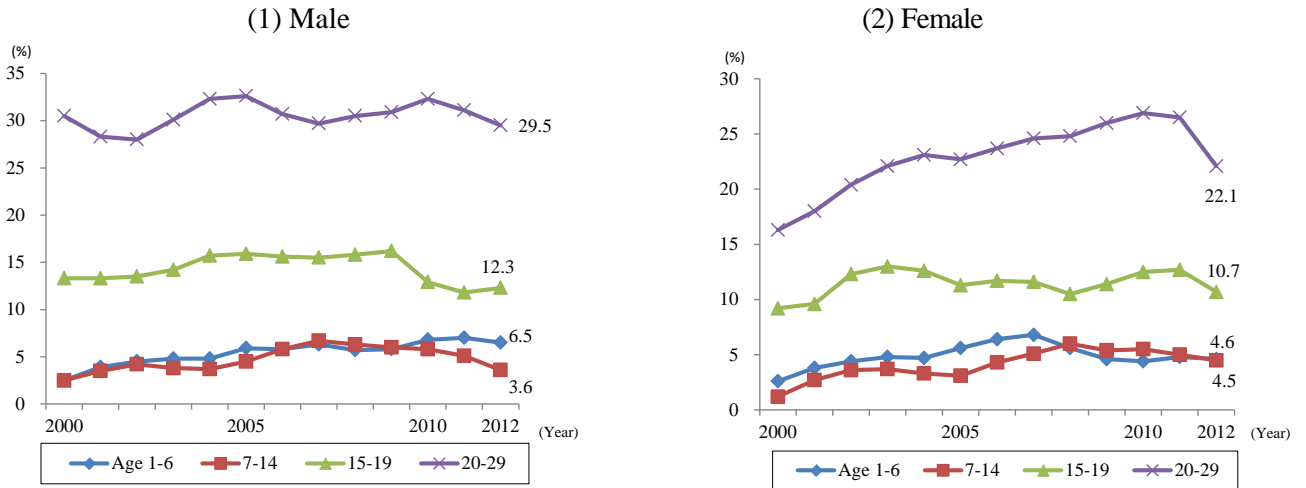
Source: "Survey on Outbreak of Infectious Diseases," MHLW

- Note:
- The number above is the sum of the cases of genital chlamydial infection, genital herpes virus infection, condyloma acuminata and gonococcal infection that were reported by the designated institutions (937 medical institutions across the country in 2011) based on the Act on Prevention of Infectious Diseases and Medical Care for Patients Suffering Infectious Diseases.
 - The reported numbers for 2013 are approximate (as of April, 2014.)

Section 3 Food Education

○ The percentage of people under 30 who skip breakfast has been slightly on the decrease. The percentage tends to be higher in older people (Figure 12).

Figure 12 Percentage of people who skip breakfast



Source: "National Health and Nutrition Survey," MHLW

Note 1: Skipping a meal includes the following three cases: 1) Not having a meal, 2) Getting nutrients by taking pills or an energy drink only, 3) Having sweets, fruits, dairy products or one's favorite drink only.

2: The figures until 2011 are the moving averages of the values of the last three data points. The figures for 2012 are for that single year.

Chapter 3 Environments Where Children Grow up

Section 1 Education

1 The number of students and the percentage of students who go on to a higher stage of education

(Preschool education and childcare)

○ The number of kindergarten pupils is 1.58 million and the number of nursery school pupils is 2.22 million (Figure 13).

(Compulsory education and beyond)

○ The numbers of students in compulsory education and high school education have continued to decrease. The number of students in higher education has remained largely unchanged (Figure 14).

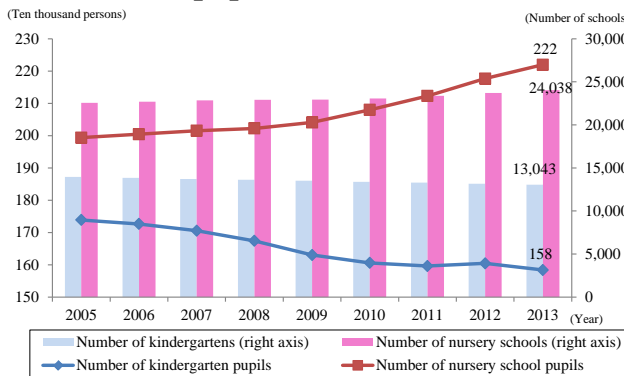
(Percentage of students who go on to a higher stage of education)

○ More than 50% of students go to a university or a junior college (Figure 15).

(Special needs education)

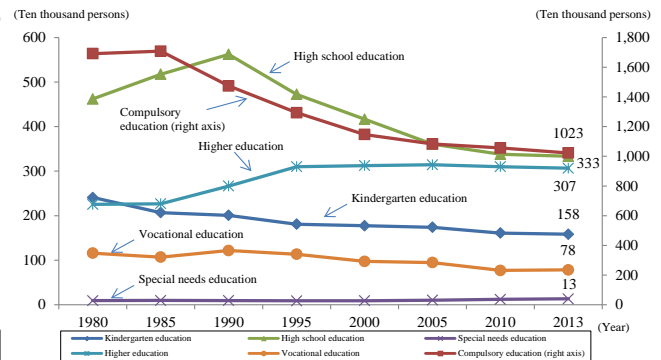
○ The number of students who receive special needs education is 385,333, which accounts for 2.5% of the total in FY 2013 (Figure 16).

Figure 13 The numbers of kindergarten pupils and nursery school pupils



Sources: “Basic School Survey,” MEXT and “Collected Data on Nursery Schools,” MHLW

Figure 14 Number of students in each educational category



Source: “Basic School Survey,” MEXT

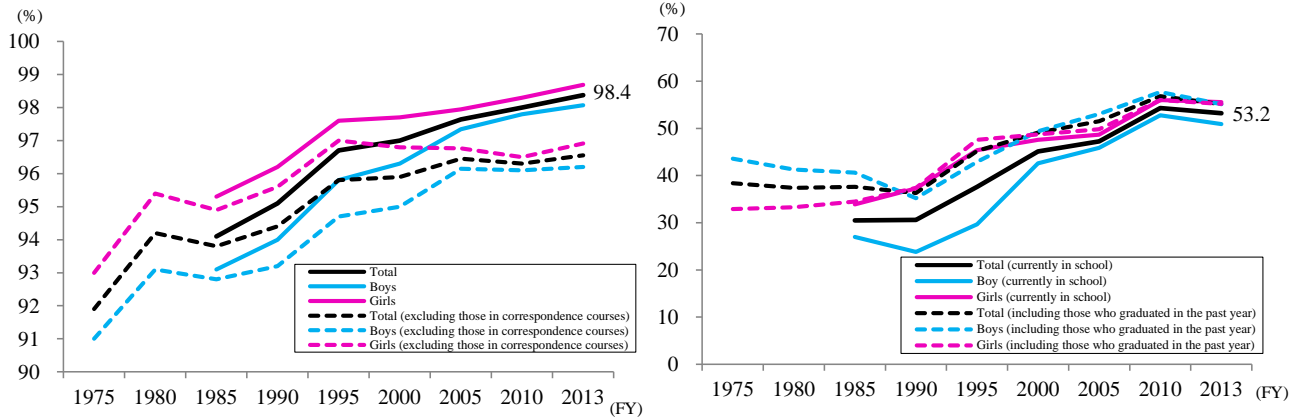
Note 1: Compulsory education refers to elementary schools, junior high schools and lower secondary schools. High school education refers to high schools and upper secondary schools. Higher education refers to colleges of technology, junior colleges and universities. Special needs education refers to schools for special needs education. (It had referred to the total number of schools for handicapped children until FY 2006.)

2 High schools include students in regular courses, major courses and special courses. Junior colleges include students in regular courses, major courses and special courses as well as auditing students. Universities include undergraduate students, graduate students, students enrolled in major courses and special courses, auditing students and research students.

Figure 15 Percentage of students who go on to higher-level schools

(1) Percentage of students who go on to high school

(2) Percentage of students who go on to universities or junior colleges



Source: “Basic School Survey,” MEXT

Note 1: The “percentage of students who go on to high schools” refers to the percentage of junior high school graduates and lower secondary school graduates who go on to high schools, upper secondary schools, high schools for special needs education (regular courses or special courses), or colleges of technology (including those who obtain employment and excluding those who graduated in the past year).

2 The percentage of students “currently in school” who go on to universities or junior colleges refers to the percentage of high school graduates and upper secondary school graduates who go on to universities (undergraduate courses, distance learning or special courses), junior colleges (regular courses, distance learning or special courses), or colleges of technology (enrolled in major courses) (including those who obtain employment).

The percentage “including those who graduated in the past year” is defined as the number of new students enrolled in undergraduate education and junior college regular courses (including those who graduated from a high school in the past year) divided by the number of those who graduated from junior high schools or lower secondary schools three years earlier.

Figure 16 Students who receive special needs education

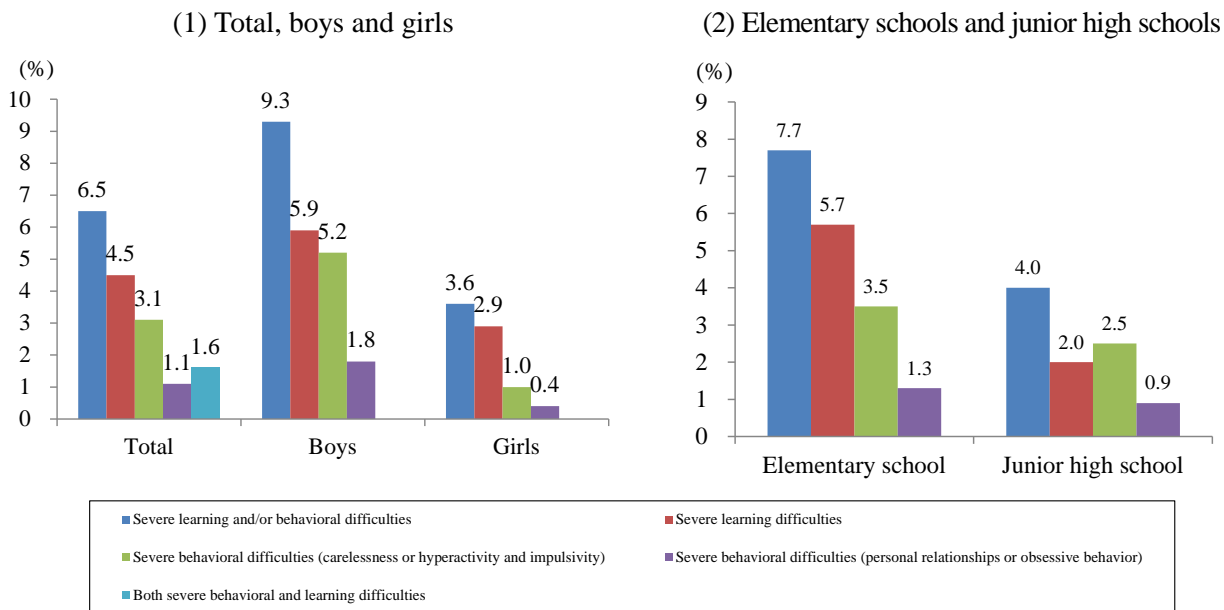
Students who receive special needs education (in FY 2013). (People)

	Kindergarten, elementary school, junior high school and high school	Compulsory education (elementary school and junior high school)
Total number	15,282,720	10,300,120
Students who receive special needs education	385,333 (2.5%)	319,936 (3.1%)
Among them, those who are attending schools for special needs education	132,570 (0.9%)	67,173 (0.7%)
Among them, those who are in special support classes	174,881 (1.1%)	174,881 (1.7%)
Among them, those who receive guidance by attending a special education class	77,882 (0.5%)	77,882 (0.8%)

Source: “Data on Special Needs Education,” MEXT

Note: The figures for students who receive guidance by attending a special needs education class are figures for public elementary schools and junior high schools.

○ About 6.5% of students in regular classes in elementary schools and junior high schools may have developmental disabilities and need special educational support in FY 2012 (Figure 17).

Figure 17**Elementary school students and junior high school students who may have developmental disabilities and need special educational support**

Source: “Survey on students in regular classes who may have developmental disabilities and need special educational support,” MEXT (December 2012)

- Note 1: The values in the graphs are estimates. Note that the values in graphs (1) and (2) may have errors of about ± 0.1 to 1.1%.
- 2: The difficulties of elementary school students and junior high school students in this survey are based on the answers submitted by the homeroom teacher and checked by a special needs education coordinator or an assistant principal (or a vice principal). They are not decisions made by a team of experts on developmental disabilities or diagnoses made by doctors. Therefore, it should be noted that the values are not the percentage of students with developmental disabilities, but the percentage of those who may have developmental disabilities and need special educational support.
- 3: “Severe learning difficulties” refers to showing severe difficulties in one or more of the following abilities: listening, speaking, reading, writing, calculating and reasoning. “Severe behavioral difficulties” refers to showing serious problems with regard to one or more of the following points: “carelessness,” “hyperactivity and impulsivity,” and “personal relationships or obsessive behavior.” “Both severe behavioral and learning difficulties” refers to the cases that show both characteristics and are included in both of the two categories above.

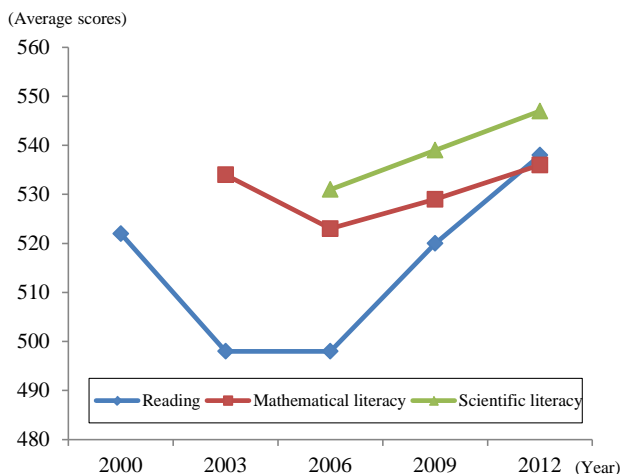
2 Academic achievements

(Academic achievements)

○ Japanese students’ academic achievements rank high internationally (Figure 18).

Figure 18 OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA)

(1) Changes in average scores



(2) Ranking

	Among OECD member countries (34 countries)	Among all participating countries/regions (65 countries/regions)
Reading	1st	4th
Mathematical literacy	2nd	7th
Scientific literacy	1st	4th

Source: "Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA)," OECD

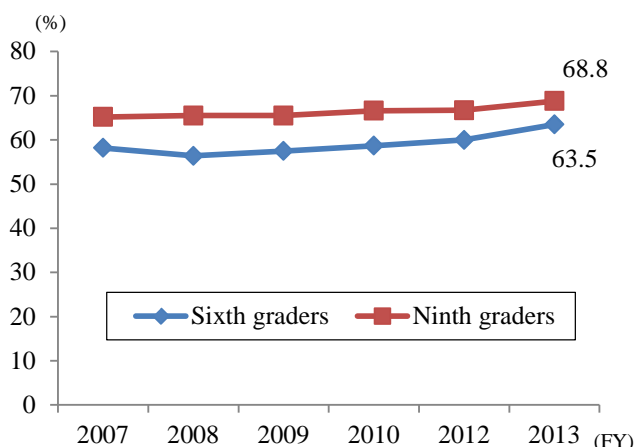
Note: Assessment to examine how much 15-year-old students who have finished compulsory education can utilize their knowledge and skills in various situations in their actual lives. In 2012, this assessment was conducted in 65 countries/regions (34 OECD member countries and 31 non-OECD countries/regions) for about 510 thousand students.

(Learning conditions)

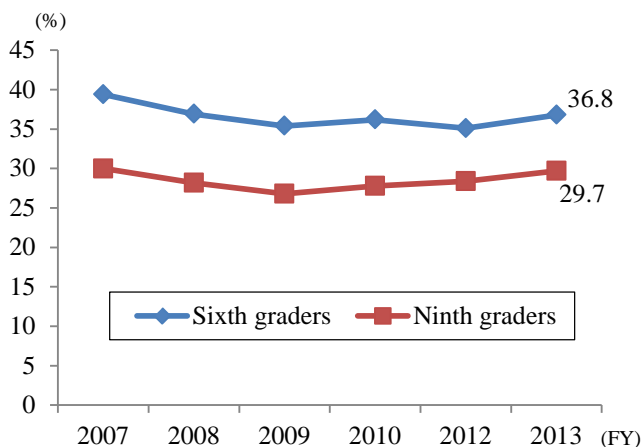
○ The percentage of sixth graders and ninth graders who study over an hour a day on weekdays outside of school is on the rise to a certain extent. Nearly 40 percent of sixth graders and 30 percent of ninth graders read books over 30 minutes a day on weekdays (Figure 19)

Figure 19 Learning conditions of elementary school students and junior high school students

(1) Study over an hour a day on weekdays outside of class



(2) Read books over 30 minutes a day on weekdays



Source: "National Assessment of Academic Ability," MEXT

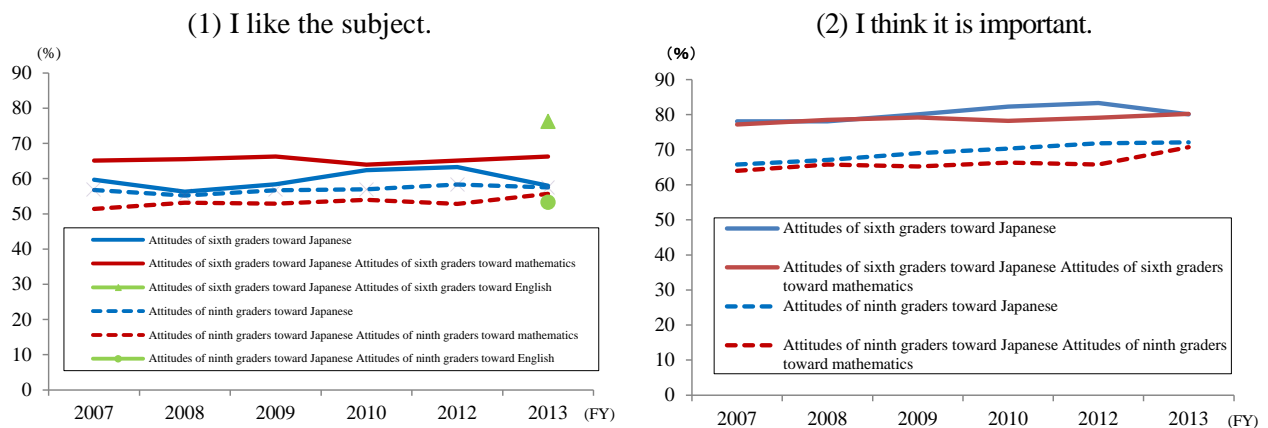
Note 1: For (1), the time they are studying at cram schools or being taught by private tutors is included. For (2), textbooks, reference books, cartoons and magazines are excluded.

2: In FY 2011, this survey was not conducted due to reasons including the effects of the Great East Japan Earthquake.

(Attitudes toward learning)

○ Junior high school students have been moving away from science and mathematics (Figure 20).

Figure 20 Attitudes of elementary school students and junior high school students toward learning



Source: “National Assessment of Academic Ability,” MEXT

Note 1: The percentages in the graphs are the percentages of students who chose affirmative statements including “agree” or “somewhat agree” for each question.

2: In FY 2011, this survey was not conducted due to reasons including the effects of the Great East Japan Earthquake.

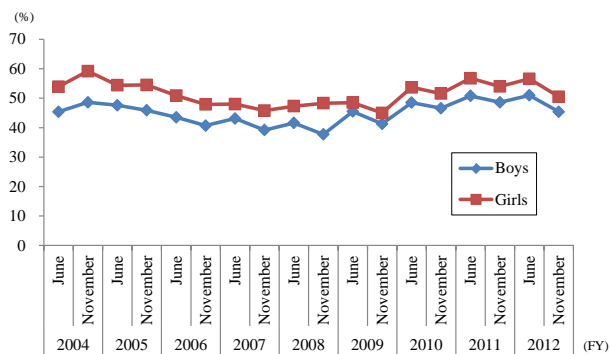
3 Various school-related problems

(Bullying)

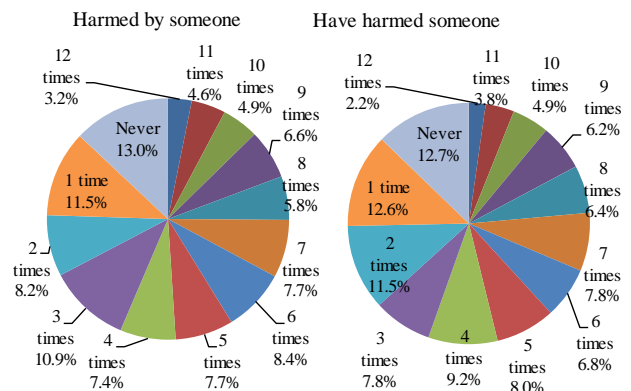
- Bullying is always occurring and assailants and victims often exchange roles. Bullying is not just a problem that is limited to particular bullies and bullied children (Figure 21).
- The number of young people who were arrested or taken into custody by the police for bullying has sharply increased (Figure 22).

Figure 21 Bullying situation

(1) Trends in the percentage of students who have suffered from bullying in elementary school



(2) How many times students who were fourth graders in 2007 have been involved in “leaving someone out of a group, ignoring or backbiting” for the six years until he/she became a ninth grader



Sources: “Follow-up Survey on Bullying 2010-2012,” (2013) National Institute for Educational Policy Research, MEXT

Note 1: Summary of the Survey is as follows

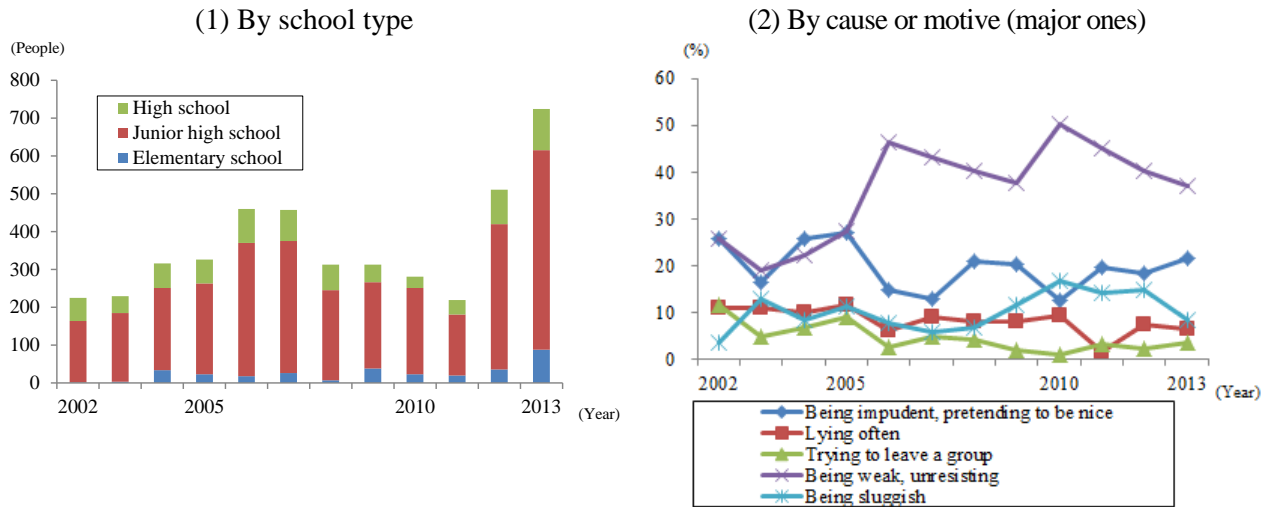
Objective: Follow-up method for students from elementary school to junior high school, not only maintaining anonymity but also specifying the individuals: survey by self-administered questionnaire that the children themselves answer

Scope: All children from fourth graders to ninth graders in junior high school districts chosen as sample areas (About 800 students per grade)

Period: This survey was conducted two times, at the end of June and November, during each school year

2: Answers on experiences including “being driven out of a group, ignored or backbitten” within less than three months from the start of a new school term are shown in the graphs. The percentages in the graph are extrapolated from the values for these answers: “More than once a week,” “2 to 3 times a month,” “1 to 2 times so far.”

Figure 22 Arrests and guidance in the cases caused by bullying



Sources: "Overview of the State of Juvenile Protection and Guidance," and "The State of Juvenile Delinquency," National Police Agency

- Note 1: The term "cases arising from bullying" mentioned here includes "cases of bullying" and "cases of retaliation against bullying" committed by elementary school students, junior high school students and high school students arrested or taken into custody by the prefectural police. Until 2012, the term "bullying" was defined as "cases in which a single person or a group physically attacks or psychologically oppresses a certain person or group (such as through intimidation, harassment or ostracism) one-sidedly and repeatedly, thus inflicting pain on the victim(s), excluding cases that are due to conflicts between delinquent groups such as motorcycle gangs." As of 2013, the term "cases caused by bullying" is defined as "Acts that have psychological and physical influence on persons including children (including acts that are committed through the Internet) and are committed by persons including other children who have certain relationships with the said children such as being enrolled in the same school as persons including the said children, and acts that cause persons including children who have become the victims of the said acts to feel physical and mental pain" as prescribed in Article 2 of the Act on Promotion of Measures against Bullying Prevention.
- 2: Multiple answers can be given for causes or motives. The causes or motives for cases of retaliation against bullying were all included in "Other" until 2007. They have been included under each cause or motive since 2008.

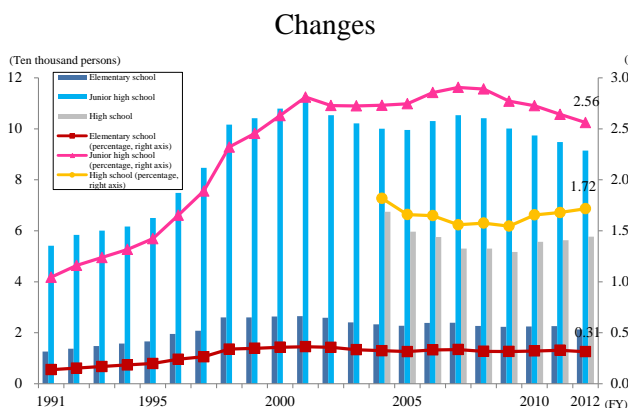
(Truancy)

○ The number of students who stay away from school has remained largely unchanged in elementary schools. It is on the decline in junior high schools and on the rise in high schools (Figure 23).

(Dropping out of high school)

○ The number of high school dropouts has continued to decline (Figure 24).

Figure 23 The status of truant students

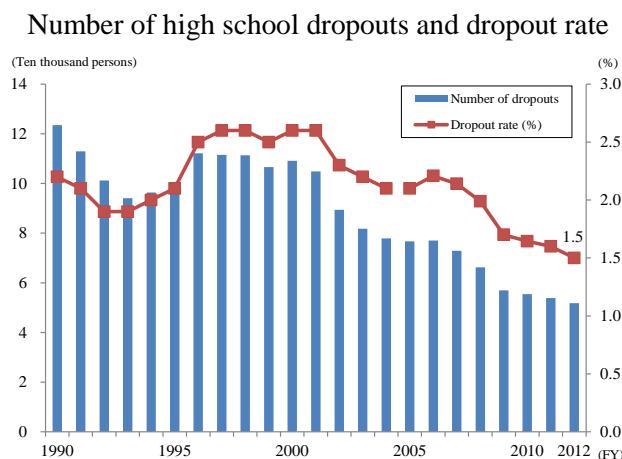


Source: “Survey on various issues related to giving guidance to students, such as students’ problematic behavior,” MEXT

Note 1: The term “truant students” is defined as the students who are absent from school continuously or intermittently for 30 days or more in one school year because of truancy. Truancy is defined as the situation in which a child does not attend school or cannot attend school even if he/she wants to because of some psychological, emotional, physical or social factor or context (excluding diseases or economic reasons).

2 The survey covers national, public and private elementary schools, junior high schools and high schools (junior high schools include lower secondary schools). High schools have been surveyed since FY 2004.

Figure 24 High school dropouts



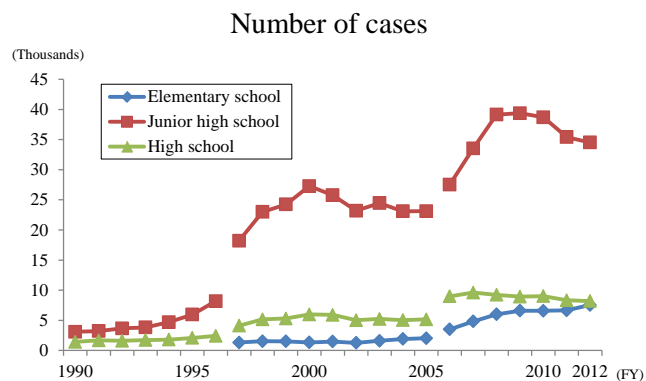
Source: “Survey on various issues related to giving guidance to students, such as students’ problematic behavior,” MEXT

Note: The survey covered public and private high schools until FY 2004. Since FY 2005 it has covered national, public and private high schools.

(School violence)

○ The number of cases of school violence has increased especially in junior high schools (Figure 25).

Figure 25 Number of cases of school violence



Source: “Survey on various issues related to giving guidance to students, such as students’ problematic behavior,” MEXT

Note 1: Survey methods changed in FY 1997.

2: The survey covered only public junior high schools and high schools until FY 1996. It started to cover public elementary schools in FY 1997 and national and private schools in FY 2006.

3: Junior high schools include lower secondary schools.

Section 2 Experiential Activities

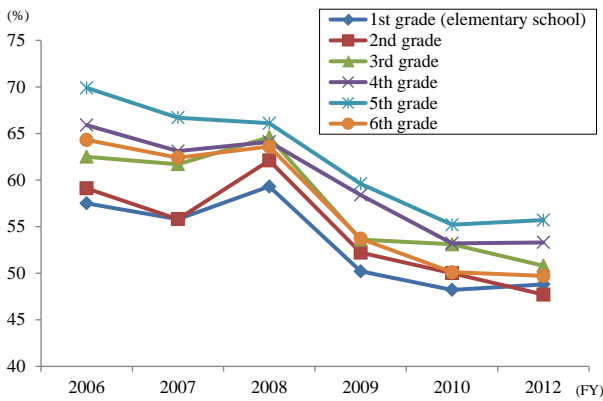
1 Present situation

- The rate of participation in outdoor activities that associations other than schools organize is on the decline (Figure 27).

2 Significance and effects

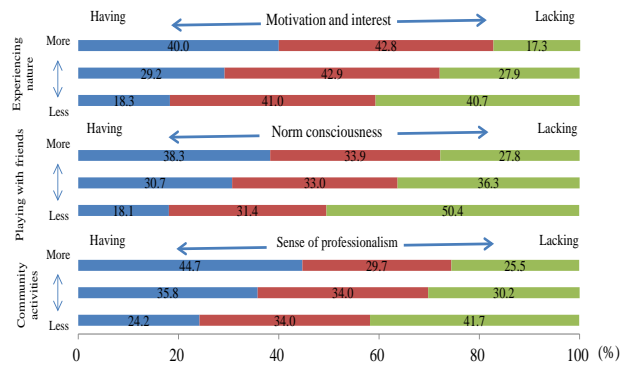
- The more experiential activities children participate in, the more motivation, interest and norm consciousness they will have in the future (Figure 28).

Figure 27 Rate of participation in outdoor activities that associations other than schools organize



Source: “Fact-finding Survey on Experiential Activities and Independence of Young People (conducted in FY 2010),” National Institution for Youth Education (FY 2011)

Figure 28 Relationship between experiences in childhood and motivation and interest in adulthood

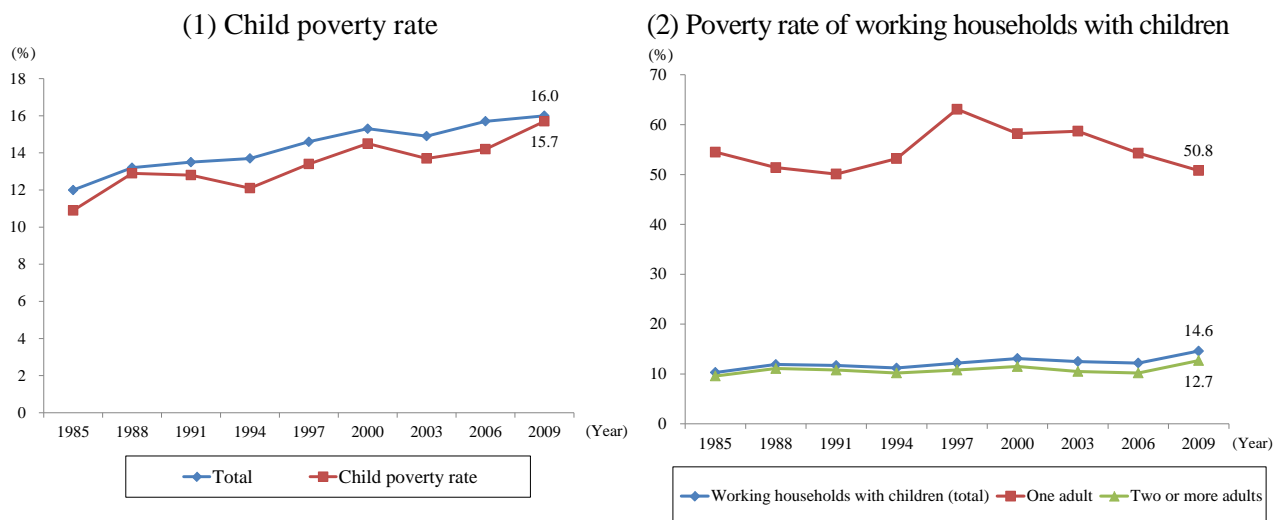


Source: “Research Study on the Actual Situation of Children’s Experiential Activities (conducted in FY 2010),” National Institution for Youth Education (FY 2011)

Section 3 Child Poverty

○ The relative child poverty rate is on the rise. Households where one adult is bringing up children in particular suffer economic hardships (Figure 29).

Figure 29 Relative poverty rate



Source: "Comprehensive Survey of Living Conditions," MHLW

Note: Based on OECD standards, the relative poverty rate is calculated using the percentage of members of households whose disposable income is less than half of the national median equivalent disposable income (the disposable income of a household divided by the square root of the number of its members and adjusted).

2: The figures for 1994 exclude Hyogo Prefecture.

3: An adult is a person aged 18 or older. A child is a person aged 17 or younger. A working household is a household whose head is over 18 years old and under 65.

4: Members of households whose equivalent disposable income are unknown are excluded.