

Chapter 1 Promotion of Comprehensive Measures for Development and Support for Children and Young People

Section 1 Formulation of the National Youth Development Policy

- In December 2003, the Headquarters for Promotion of the Cultivation of Youth formulated the National Youth Development Policy, for the purpose of clearly specifying basic principles related to youth development for the national government and the mid- to long-term directions of measures, as well as comprehensively and effectively promoting measures taken in a broad range of fields including health, welfare, education, labor, and responses to delinquency. Also, in December 2008, a new version of the National Youth Development Policy was formulated.

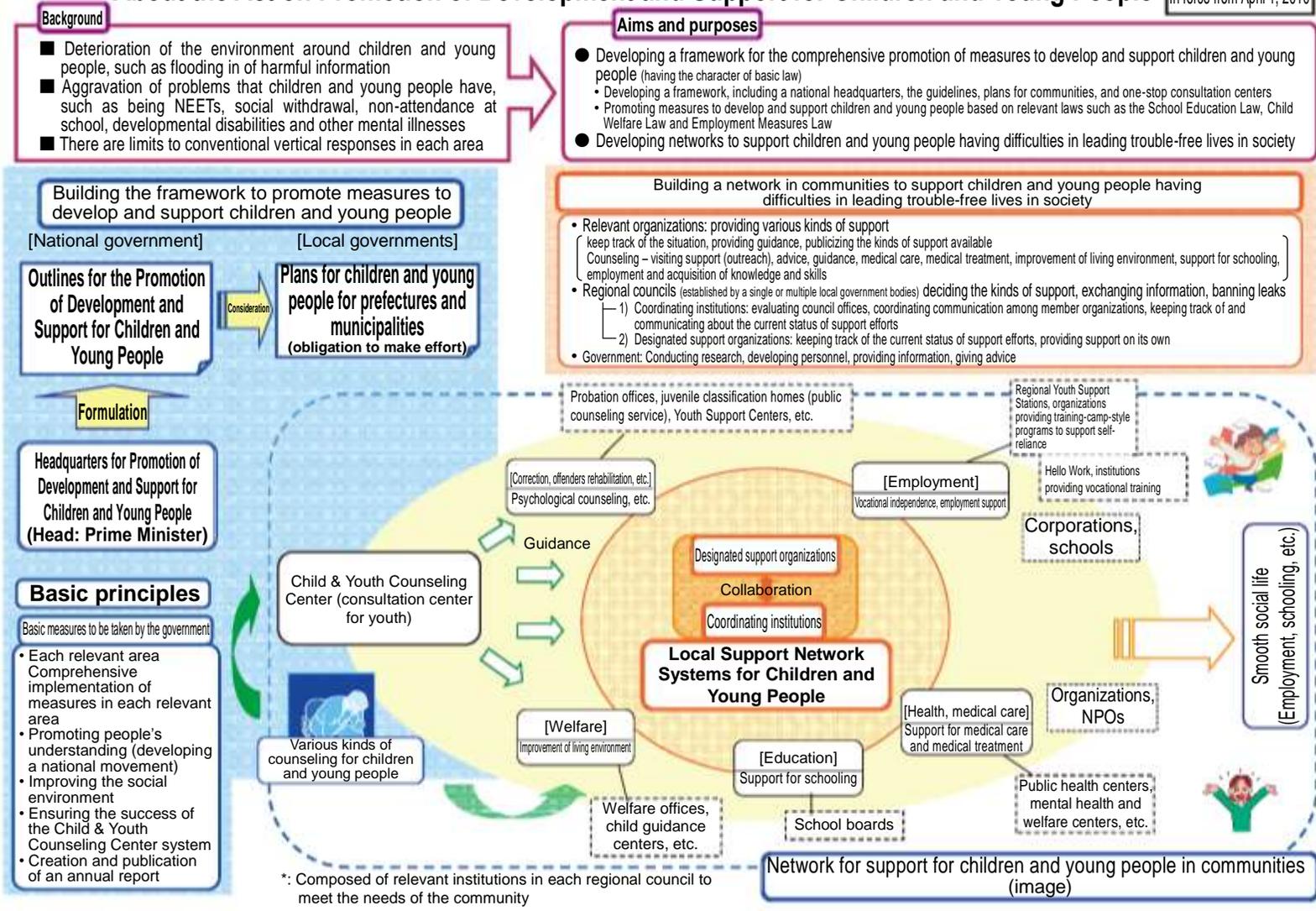
Section 2 Establishment of the Act on Promotion of Development and Support for Children and Young People and the Measures Taken Pursuant to the Act

(Establishment and entry into force of the Act on Promotion of Development and Support for Children and Young People)

- At the 171st Session of the National Diet in 2009, the government submitted the Bill on Promotion of Comprehensive Measures for Youths. In July 2009, the House of Representatives amended the Bill and unanimously approved the Act on Promotion of Development and Support for Children and Young People (Act No. 71 of 2009, hereinafter referred to as “the Act” in this Section). The Act came into force on April 1, 2010. The main provisions of the Act are as follows:
 - Preparation of outlines to establish a headquarters and to promote measures to develop and support children and young people (hereinafter referred to as “the Outlines”), preparation of plans on support and development for children and young people in local communities, and the development of a framework including “one-stop consultation counters”
 - Development of regional networks to support children and young people who have difficulties in smoothly leading their social lives

About the Act on Promotion of Development and Support for Children and Young People

In force from April 1, 2010



Source: Cabinet Office website (<http://www8.cao.go.jp/youth/wakugumi.html>)

Figure 1 Overview of the Act on Promotion of Development and Support for Children and Young People

(Formulation of Outlines pursuant to the Act on Promotion of Development and Support for Children and Young People)

- As a special institution pursuant to Article 26 of the Act, the Headquarters for Promotion of Development and Support for Children and Young People (hereinafter referred to as “the Headquarters”) was established in the Cabinet Office. The members of the Headquarters are the Prime Minister (head) and all other Cabinet ministers. In July 2010, the Headquarters formulated an outline pursuant to the Act (Vision for Children and Young People).
- Expert’s meetings regarding the investigation and evaluation of the promotion of the development of children and young people have been held since July 2011. As a result of these meetings, the Report on Overall Investigation on the Outline for the Promotion of Development and Support for Children and Young People (Vision for Children and Young People) and the Matters to Be Incorporated into a New Outline (Organized Opinions) were compiled in July 2014 and November 2015 respectively.
- At the said meetings, some members pointed out that many of the children and young people who were facing difficulties in leading their social lives had experienced various problems, that they were facing a combination of various problems, and that their situations were becoming rather complicated and diverse; for example, problems such as poverty, child abuse, bullying, non-attendance at school, and being so-called NEETs adversely influenced each other.
- In February 2016, the Headquarters formulated a new Outline for the Promotion of Development and Support for Children and Young People, considering matters pointed out at the said meetings and also consulting young people’s opinions. The basic policies in the new Outline are to make focused efforts to address the following five challenges: (1) the sound development of all children and young people, (2) support for children and young people facing difficulties and their family members, (3) the development of social environments for the growth of children and young people, (4) training for human resources who will be responsible for supporting the growth of children and young people, and (5) assistance for children and young people who will carve out a creative future.

Figure 2 Outline for the Promotion of Development and Support for Children and Young People

February 9 (Tuesday), 2016
 Approved by the Headquarters for Promotion of
 Development and Support for Children and Young People

Outline for the Promotion of Development and Support for Children and Young People (Overview)

- Aiming to create a society where all children and young people can soundly grow to lead independent lives and play important roles -

The Outline specifies matters such as basic policies regarding measures to support children and young people pursuant to the Act on Promotion of Development and Support for Children and Young People (Act No. 71 of 2009).

I. Introduction

- It is expected that **all children and young people** develop self-esteem and self-affirmation, establish their identities, become aware of their relationship with society, and **soundly grow as socially independent individuals**, carving out a bright future while working together with a diverse range of persons.
- Support for the development of children and young people is a challenge to be addressed by all of society, while **entities including the national government, local governments, schools, companies, and local communities** play their own roles, and **families in particular take the lead by mutually cooperating and collaborating**. Note that it is necessary to consider, **from the viewpoints of individual children and young people**, their best interests, by **appropriately understanding their developmental stages from the long-term perspective** of their entire lifetimes.
- The goal **for all concerned entities** is to create a society in which all children and young people can soundly grow and **all young people can lead independent lives and play important roles by leveraging their capabilities**.

Current situations and issues

- [Families]**
 - Currently, parents are apt to have anxieties and be subject to burdens; therefore, it is necessary to build an environment in which all of society mutually supports child-rearing.
 - It is necessary to make efforts to stop the cycle of poverty and efforts to prevent child abuse.
 - As home environments are diverse, it is necessary to respond to children, young people, and their family members, depending on the individual circumstances surrounding them.
- [Local communities]**
 - There is a concern that human relationships in local communities are weakening.
 - It is necessary to promote efforts to be made for mutual assistance in which residents in local communities, NPOs, and other entities contribute to support for the development of children and young people.
- [Information and communications environment]**
 - The ever-changing information and communications environment positively and negatively influences the development of children and young people.
 - It is necessary to respond to the spread of illegal and harmful material, bullying on the Internet, and Internet addiction.
- [Employment]**
 - It is important to provide sufficient opportunities for career education and job skill training, which develop the capabilities and attitudes necessary for young people to establish social and vocational independence throughout various levels of school.
 - It is important to stabilize youth employment and increase young people's incomes by taking measures such as smooth employment support, changes in the employment of part-time workers from part time to full time, and the improvement of the treatment of such workers.

Facts that have become apparent through past efforts

[Composite nature and complexity of problems]
 The problems of children and young people having difficulties such as poverty, child abuse, bullying, and non-attendance at school adversely influence each other, and it has become apparent that such problems are complex and combined together.

II. Basic policy (five focused challenges)

1. Sound development of all children and young people

- Formation of basic lifestyle habits, the improvement of academic abilities and physical fitness, and the fostering of norm consciousness and kindness
- Development of the ability to maintain physical and mental health and to think by oneself
- Promotion of the development of consultation services regarding development and support for children and young people that take the actual situations of each region into consideration

3. Development of social environments for the growth of children and young people

- Enrichment of various kinds of experience-based learning activities and interactive activities conducted in places such as local communities
- Appropriate use of information and communications technology, taking the rapid dissemination of the Internet into consideration

5. Assistance for children and young people who will carve out a creative future

- Development of global human resources and human resources in science and technology
- Development of human resources who will adapt to and utilize the evolution of information and communications technology
- Assistance for young people who are playing important roles in the revitalization of local communities

2. Support children, young people, and their families facing difficulties

- Support through building vertical networks for providing seamless support between age groups and horizontal networks in which various relevant agencies cooperate in an organized manner
- Improvement of outreach (home-visit support) programs, in which supporters visit families and the like to provide support
- Strengthening of measures against child poverty and measures to prevent child abuse

4. Training for human resources who will be responsible for supporting the growth of children and young people

- Enrichment of mutual assistance in local communities through collaboration between the government and public and private sectors
- Training of coordinators who have comprehensive knowledge

III. Basic measures

1. Sound development of all children and young people

- (1) Support for self-development
 - (i) Acquisition of daily life skills
 - Promotion of learning activities on the appropriate use of the Internet, etc.
 - (ii) Improvement of academic abilities
 - (iii) Enrichment of higher education
- (2) Securing the health, safety, and security of children and young people
 - (i) Promotion of health education, securement and enrichment of health, and other health-related activities
 - Enrichment of education related to knowledge about mental health and drug abuse and knowledge about sex according to different stages of development
 - Enrichment of the provision of information and education concerning a correct understanding about pregnancy, childbirth, and child-rearing
 - (ii) Enrichment of counseling systems related to children and young people
 - Public announcements and awareness-raising activities regarding institutions in which children and young people receive counseling when they face difficulties and solutions for such difficulties
 - Improvement of Child & Youth Counseling Centers
 - Utilization of school counselors and school social workers, etc.
 - (iii) Education for the prevention of damage
- (3) Support for the vocational independence and employment of young people
 - (i) Acquisition of employment skills and motivation
 - (ii) Enrichment of employment support
- (4) Support for participation in social development

2. Support children, young people, and their families facing difficulties

- (1) Enrichment of multiple-level support in light of the composite nature and complexity of the issues that children and young people face
 - Promotion of the establishment of the Local Support Network Systems for Children and Young People and the enrichment of activities conducted by the Systems
 - Development of human resources involved in outreach (home-visit support)
- (2) Efforts according to type of difficulty
 - (i) Support for NEEITs, children and young people suffering from social withdrawal, and those affected by non-attendance at school
 - Enrichment of support provided by Regional Youth Support Stations
 - (ii) Support for children and young people with disabilities and other special needs
 - (iii) Support for children and young people who have become involved in delinquency or crime
 - (iv) Responses to problems of child poverty
 - Expansion and enrichment of efforts made through the National Movement
 - (v) Support for children and young people who need particular attention
- (3) Prevention of suffering and the protection of children and young people
 - (i) Measures to prevent child abuse
 - Prevention of the incidence of child abuse and prompt and appropriate responses at the time of incidence
 - (ii) Measures against crimes that harm the welfare of children and young people

3. Development of social environments for the growth of children and young people

- (1) Rebuilding of relationships among families, schools, and local communities
 - (i) Proactive support for guardians, etc.
 - (ii) Collaboration and cooperation between *schools working as a team* and local communities
 - (iii) Creation of environments in which each local community as a whole raises children
 - Promotion of the Comprehensive After-School Plan for Children
 - Promotion of various kinds of experience-based learning and interactive activities that nurture sociability and humanity
 - (iv) Community building which makes it so that crimes that victimize children and young people hardly occur
- (2) Enrichment of child-rearing support
- (3) Measures to counter the harmful environments surrounding children and young people
 - Strengthening of education and awareness-raising activities on safe and secure Internet use
 - Provision of opportunities for experiences of nature and overnight trip programs for young people who appear to be addicted to the Internet
- (4) Promotion of a reasonable work-life balance

4. Training for human resources who will be responsible for supporting the growth of children and young people

- (1) Training for diverse human resources and entities in local communities
 - Promotion of participation by persons such as those who have had experience with childcare and elderly people who have had various experiences and entities including NPOs and companies
- (2) Development and securement of human resources with higher levels of expertise
 - Development of human resources who coordinate support by leveraging their comprehensive knowledge
 - Securement of human resources who are specialists in fields including education, medical care, health, and welfare and the improvement of their expertise

5. Assistance for children and young people who will carve out a creative future

- (1) Development of human resources who will play important roles in a global society
 - Enrichment of support for studying abroad, etc.
- (2) Development of human resources in science and technology who will be responsible for innovations
 - Support for advanced science and mathematics education, etc.
- (3) Development of human resources who can adapt to and utilize the evolution of information and communications technology
 - Development of human resources who can solve specific problems in society by utilizing information and communications technology in a highly leveraged manner
- (4) Assistance for young people who are playing important roles in the revitalization of local communities
 - Development of professionals with advanced specialized skills who will be responsible for regional industries
 - Promotion of the Community-Reactivating Cooperator Squad system
- (5) Development of next-generation world-class athletes and emerging artists
 - Scouting for, development of, and training of next-generation athletes who are expected to achieve excellent performance in international competitions
 - Development of world-class creative artists
- (6) Assistance for activities such as those that contribute to society
 - Establishment of a Prime Minister's Award

IV. Promotion systems for measures

- (1) Ascertaining the state of affairs and other information related to children and young people, and collecting and sharing information
- (2) Public announcements and awareness-raising activities
- (3) International coordination and cooperation
- (4) Promotion of measures
 - Promotion of efforts to be made by all of society by strengthening collaboration among entities including the government, schools, companies, and NPOs, while sharing information on cutting-edge efforts made in local communities

Source: Cabinet Office website (<http://www8.cao.go.jp/youth/wakugumi.html>)