

Chapter 4 Development of Social Environments for the Growth of Children and Young People

Section 1 Rebuilding of Relationships among Families, Schools, and Local Communities

1 Support for education at home

- The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) is promoting the construction of support system for education at home in the community to provide counseling, and planning and providing learning opportunities for guardians, and visiting-type support for education at home for families with various problems.

2 Collaboration and cooperation between schools and local communities

(1) Establishment of systems in which schools and local communities collaborate and cooperate

- MEXT is promoting “Community Collaboration Activities for Learning and Education” which give community wide support for the growth of children through widespread participation by community residents and parents. This activity includes various community activities such as after-school programs, Saturday and holiday educational activities, school support activities, patrolling school routes and support for education at home.

(2) Participation of guardians and local residents in school administration

- In order to further disseminate and raise awareness about community schools, MEXT is proceeding with measures, including survey research projects, promotion councils, and the dispatch of community school promoters. In FY 2017, as a project of “Regional Strengthening Plan based on Schools” as for community school, MEXT carried out ancillary projects relating to support for creating a system and enhancement of operation with community schools and Community Cooperation Network for Learning and Education, etc.

(3) Promotion of school evaluation and information provision

- MEXT is promoting the creation and evaluation of schools that keep in close contact with local communities, by means such as formulating school evaluation guidelines so that each school and its operator can refer to them.

3 Creation of environments in which each local community as a whole raises children

(1) Promotion of the Comprehensive After-School Plan for Children

- MEXT and the MHLW jointly formulated the “Comprehensive After-School Plan for Children” in July 2014. Moreover, they have been promoting efforts focusing on an integrated style of After-School Children’s Clubs and After-School Classes for Children by thoroughly utilizing school facilities (surplus classrooms, classrooms that are temporarily not in use after schools, etc.).

(2) Support for activities of junior high and high school students during after-school hours

- MEXT is supporting efforts made through collaboration and cooperation between local communities and schools through which a system has been established to conduct educational activities on Saturdays, thanks to the cooperation with human resources, companies, and other entities with various experiences and skills in local communities. It has been promoting learning assistance that is free of charge in principle (Chiiki Mirai Juku), in cooperation with local residents, for junior high and high school students who have difficulty in learning at home or who have not developed study habits, and others in similar situations because of economic reasons or family circumstances.
- MHLW is promoting the establishment of children’s centers.

(3) Promotion of diverse activities carried out in local communities

(Environmental learning)

- The Ministry of the Environment (MOE) strives to develop human resources who will become leaders in the area to promote environmental education with the viewpoint of “Education for Sustainable Development

(ESD).”

- MEXT is promoting environmental education in schools and social education so that children can deepen their understanding and interest regarding environmental conservation in various opportunities in line with their developmental stages.

(Experiences of nature)

- MEXT is promoting dissemination and raising awareness for families and companies in order to spread an understanding of experience-based learning activities.
- The National Institution for Youth Education is providing opportunities and places for nature experience activities by leveraging the locational advantages and characteristics of its facilities.
- The Forestry Agency is promoting forest environmental education to deepen the understanding and interest in the relationships between forests, people’s lives, and the environment through various experience-based learning activities in forests.
- MOE is providing opportunities for children to learn the importance of the natural environment and other related matters by holding nature observation programs and other events in excellent natural areas such as national parks.

(Provision of opportunities for activities such as those that contribute to society and sports activities by the police)

- The police are promoting the assurance of various opportunities for activities and the creation of places for juveniles, by means such as conducting social participation activities, including activities that contribute to society and production experience activities for juveniles, along with sports activities such as judo and kendo classes for juveniles held at dojos run by the police.

(Expansion of opportunities to participate in sports)

- MEXT is working on the establishment and dissemination of guidelines on exercise and sports according to the life stage based on the findings of sports medicine and science, in order to realize a sustainable long-life society where people are healthy and vitality forever. Moreover, MEXT is supporting the efforts, in order to make measures sustainable efforts, to promote health through sports to make people have interest in sports and health promotion which lead to be habits and establish regional structure.

(Encouragement for cultural and art activities)

- MEXT is promoting experience-based learning cultural and artistic activities for children, by means such as providing opportunities for children to feel familiar with the performing arts and supporting efforts aiming to provide opportunities for children to experience and learn traditional culture and contemporary ways of life.

(Promotion of *hanaiku* (“flower education”) activities)

- The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) is promoting “flower education” activities for children to develop feelings of kindness and beauty through contact with flowers and greenery, such as creation of flower beds and flower arrangements.

(Promotion of symbiosis and convection between cities and agricultural, forestry, and fishing villages)

- MAFF, MEXT, and the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications (MIC) are supporting efforts related to overnight stays in agricultural, forestry, and fishing villages by children.

(4) Development of opportunities for experience-based learning and interactive activities, etc.

(Youth education facilities)

- The National Institution for Youth Education is providing opportunities for various experience-based learning activities through national youth education facilities.

(Urban parks)

- The Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism (MLIT) is promoting the development of urban parks which serve as bases for various activities, such as contact with nature, sports and recreation, and cultural and artistic activities.

(Places for sports activities)

- MEXT is enhancing environment for sports in regions, such as comprehensive community sports clubs.

(Natural parks)

- MOE is promoting the development of safe and comfortable park use facilities in national parks and other natural parks, for example, sidewalks, playgrounds, and resting places.

(Development of waterfront areas)

- MLIT, MEXT, and MOE are implementing the “‘Children’s Waterfront’ Rediscovery Project’ to promote environmental learning and experience-based learning nature activities in waterfront areas (“Children’s Waterfront”) such as along rivers in surrounding local communities.

(Management of Recreation Forests)

- Recreation Forests, suitable for natural observation, field sports or recreation, designated within National Forests by the Forestry Agency, are managed in partnership with those concerned in local communities.

(Creation of places for learning and interaction in disaster-affected areas)

- MEXT is supporting the creation of safe and secure places for children who have been affected by disasters to stay during times such as after school and on week-ends, and learning and interactive activities by utilizing schools and community learning centers.

(Promotion of barrier-free to roads, off-road parking lots, parks, government facilities, public transportation, etc.)

- Based on the Act on Promotion of Smooth Transportation, etc. of Elderly Persons, Disabled Persons, etc. (Act No. 91 of 2006) (hereinafter referred to as “Barrier-Free Act”), MLIT is obliged to comply with “Smooth Transportation Standards” for construction of new facilities (passenger facilities, vehicles, roads, off-road parking lots, urban parks, buildings etc.), compliance efforts obligation to existing facilities, etc., based on the “Basic Policy on Promotion of Smooth Transportation” by the end of FY 2020. In FY 2017, based on changes in the environment surrounding the Barrier-Free Act, and with the aim of the Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games 2020, MLIT aims to realize a cohesive society and further advance barrier-free society. For these reasons, MLIT submitted a revision draft of the Barrier-Free Act to the 196th Diet.
- MLIT and the National Police Agency (NPA) are aiming to realize barrier-free for traffic lights, etc. installed on the roads constituting the main life-related routes within the priority improvement area in the Barrier-Free Act. In principle, MLIT and NPA are aiming to complete the installations of traffic lights such as acoustic traffic lights and pedestrian sensitive traffic lights, road signs indicating pedestrian roads and road signs indicating crosswalks by FY 2020.

(Safety inspections for playground equipment in parks)

- MLIT is working to ensure thorough awareness of the Guideline for Safety of Playground Equipment in Urban Parks in order to ensure the safety of playground equipment and promote the creation of safe and pleasant playgrounds.

4 Community building which makes it so that crimes that victimize children and young people hardly occur

(1) Community building which makes it so that crimes that victimize children and young people hardly occur

(Support to ensure children’s safety on school roads and the surrounding areas)

- The police are supporting the activities of Children’s #110 Emergency Houses, where children can ask for help, in addition to strengthening patrol activities taking into account school roads and commute times.

(Promotion of the improvement of security facilities for public facilities, such as roads and parks, and apartment houses)

- NPA is further promoting the improvement and management of public facilities and other facilities taking into account crime prevention, based on the Outline for the Promotion of Safe and Secure Community Building.
- The Public-private Joint Conference on Development and Dissemination of Building Components with High-performance in Crime Prevention, which comprises of NPA, MLIT, METI, and private entities dealing

with building components, is making efforts to develop and disseminate anti-crime building components with a certain level of performance in crime prevention.

(Promotion of responses to disasters at child welfare institutions, kindergartens, and other facilities)

- MLIT is concentrating on the development of facilities for saving life from sediment disasters in order to protect facilities used by persons requiring special care such as child welfare institutions and kindergartens.

(2) Development of an environment where children can go out and play outside peacefully

(Traffic safety measures on school roads)

- MEXT, MLIT, and NPA are promoting efforts to ensure traffic safety on school roads.

(Prevention of unforeseen accidents involving children)

- The Consumer Affairs Agency is implementing projects to protect children from accidents, in light of the current situation where unforeseen accidents rank high as a cause of child death.

(Promotion of measures for traffic safety on community roads)

- NPA and MLIT try to form pedestrian-priority areas in urban areas and residential areas by combining the speed control measures of vehicles effectively in order to ensure safe passage of children and others on the community roads.

(Development of bicycle use environment)

- MLIT and NPA are raising awareness of “Guidelines for Creating a Safe and Comfortable Bicycle Environment” (partly revised in July, 2016) in order to early secure safe bicycle traffic space based on the principle of using roadways. In addition, based on the Act on Promotion of the Use of Bicycles (Act No. 113 of 2016) came into effect in May 2017, MLIT and NPA are promoting effective awareness-raising of bicycle traffic rules, appropriate separation of pedestrians, bicycles and cars to create safe and comfortable bicycle use environment.

Section 2 Enhancement of Childrearing, etc.

1 Efforts aimed at realizing a society to support children and child-rearing

(1) Comprehensive promotion of measures to deal with the declining birthrate

- The government, based on outlines and other plans pursuant to the “Basic Act for Measures to Cope with Society with Declining Birthrate” Article 7 (Act No. 133 of 2003), is promoting comprehensive measures to deal with the declining birthrate, by means such as further improving child-rearing support measures and developing an environment where hopes for marriage and childbirth can be realized. In addition, the Comprehensive Support System for Children and Child-rearing, pursuant to 3 child- and child-rearing-related acts, came into effect in April 2015.

(2) Enrichment of Childcare

- The Government is pursuing efforts based on “Acceleration Plan for Reducing Wait-listed Children” aiming at reducing the number of children on waiting lists for admission. In response to this in 2016, the Government revised the “Child and Child Care Support Act” (Act No.65 of 2012) such as raising the upper limit of the rate of contributions collected from general business owners in order to enhance the system for providing child and child rearing support, a project to subsidize and provide assistance to facilities establishment aimed at in-house maintenance work (hereinafter referred to as “corporate-led childcare project”). With this corporate-led childcare project that began in April 2016, the Government is working to develop the childcare facilities for 70,000 children by the end of FY 2017, and is working to enhance the system for providing support for children and child rearing.
- Moreover, regarding securing childcare facilities, the Government published a “Child-Rearing Security Plan” in June 2017, based on the fact that the female employment rate is increasing and applicants for nursing care is continuing to increase, and the “New Economic Policy Package” was approved by the Cabinet in December 2017. This plan was scheduled two years earlier from the end of FY 2022 to the end of FY 2020 in order to secure childcare facilities for 320,000 children and resolve the wait-listed children.
- In addition, the government is implementing comprehensive securing measure to improve working

condition, etc. in order to secure nursing personnel who respond to the maintenance of childcare facilities.

- Regarding the financial resources necessary for the above-mentioned “New Economic Policy Package,” in addition to utilizing the increased revenue by raising the consumption tax rate, the government plans to secure by increasing the child and child care contribution by the employer, and in order to take these measures, the Child and Child Care Support Act was partially amended in March 2018.

(3) Support for child-rearing in local communities

- MEXT is promoting support for education at home, by means such as providing child-rearing courses and learning opportunities for guardians.
- MHLW is intended to improve “Regional child-rearing support bases” where child-rearing parents casually gather and consult and exchange thoughts in familiar places and promoting “Family Support Centers.” Moreover, MHLW is promoting “User Support Services.”

(4) Dissemination and promotion of the certified centers for early childhood education and care system

- The Cabinet Office, MEXT, and MHLW shall continue to spread the certified centers for early childhood education and care, in line with communities’ needs and operators’ requests, because the facilities can flexibly respond to various needs from guardians and local communities; for example, they are available to use regardless of the employment situation of parents.

(5) Support for child-rearing in kindergartens

- MEXT is promoting the implementation of child-rearing support, by means such as providing child-rearing consultations, information, opportunities for kindergarten attendance by pre-kindergarten children with their parents, and opportunities for interactions between guardians. The MEXT is providing support for financial measures and other measures to promote childcare held before and after regular education time.

(6) Child allowance system

- For the purpose of contributing to stable family lives as well as the sound growth of children who will lead the next generation’s society, child allowances are paid to those who care for children before the completion of junior high school.

Section 3 Measures to Counter the Harmful Environments Surrounding Children and Young People

1 Revision of the “Act on Development of an Environment that Provides Safe and Secure Internet Use for Young People”

- The Act on Development of an Environment That Provides Safe and Secure Internet Use for Young People (Act No.79 of 2008) (hereinafter referred to as “Act on Development of Internet Environment for Young People”) was established on June 1, 2008 and it was enacted on April 1, 2009. However, after that the use of devices and services, such as smartphones and applications, which are difficult to handle by measures against existing mobile phones, has expanded rapidly and filtering utilization rates are sluggish. In order to respond to situations, on February 1, 2018, the Act on Development of Internet Environment for Young People was revised to promote the use of filtering.

Figure 23 Overview of the Revision of the Act on Development of Internet Environment for Young People

Overview of the Revision of the Act on Development of Internet Environment for Young People

Internet connection via smartphone, application, public wireless LAN, has become widespread, filtering utilization rate is sluggish. In order to respond to this situation, the Act is revised to promote the use of filtering.

1. Mobile phone Internet connection service providers (mobile ISP) and contract agency

At the time of new contract for mobile phone line and change or update mobile phone line contract with change of model and name change, require below



* Expand target equipment for filtering obligation not only to mobile phones but also to the devices that can browse the Internet using mobile phone lines

2. Mobile phone / PHS manufacturers

To require pre-installation of filtering software, etc. as an easy filtering measure

3. OS developers

To require effort obligation to develop OS to facilitate filtering activation measures / easy filtering measures

Enforcement date: On the day specified by a Cabinet Order, but not exceeding one year from the promulgation date.

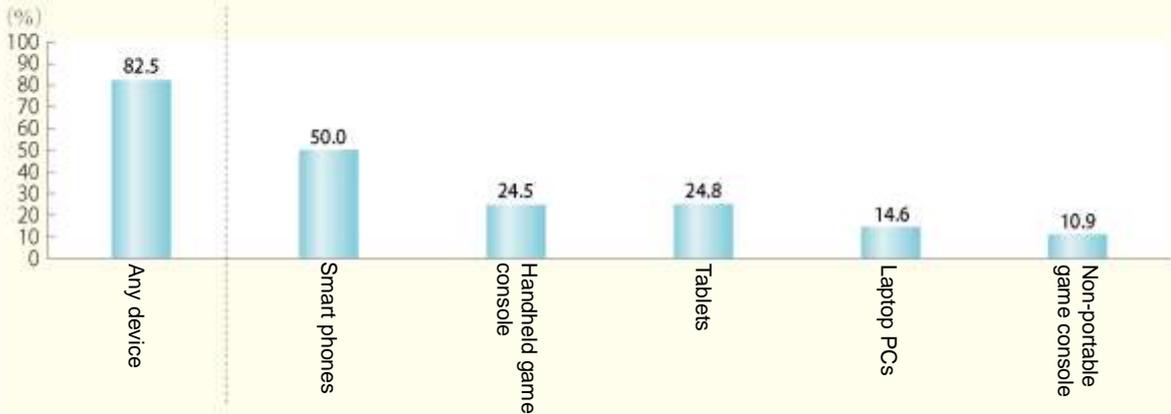
Source: Material provided by the Cabinet Office

(1) Ascertainment of actual condition

- The Cabinet Office is conducting the Fact-finding Survey on Internet Use Environment of Young People targeting young people and their guardians, which aims to obtain fundamental data on the development of the Internet use environment of young people, in addition to reviewing the status of the implementation of the Act on Development of Internet Environment for Young People.

Figure 24 Rate of Internet use by young people (FY 2017)

◆ Approximately 82.5% of young people use the Internet with any Internet-associated device.



Source: "Fact-finding Survey on Internet use Environment of Young People in FY 2017" Cabinet Office

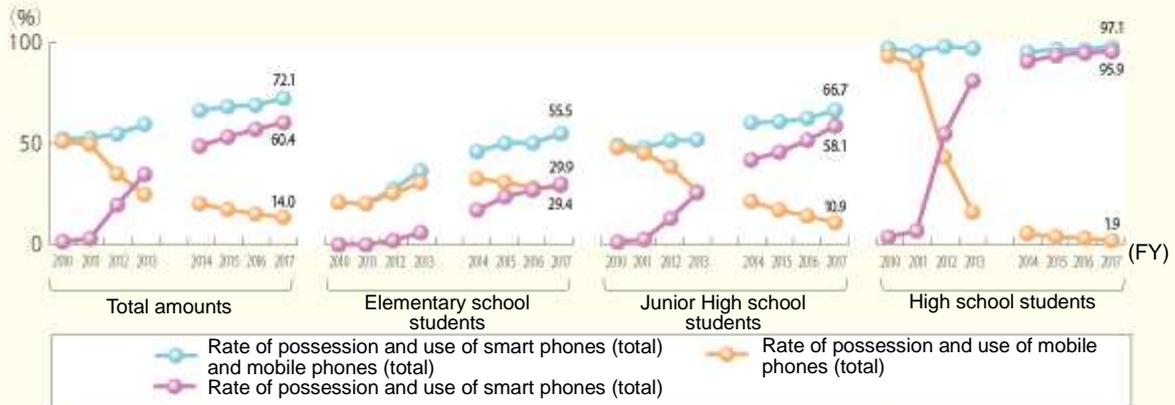
Note 1: The survey targets are young people aged 10 to 17. (The same shall apply hereinafter up to Figure 26.)

Note 2: "Any device" means any smartphone, so-called cheap smart phone, smart phones with limited functions and smart phones for kids, a smart phone for which a mobile phone contract is expired, mobile phones, mobile phones with limited functions and mobile phones for kids, laptop PC, desktop PC, tablet, learning tablet, tablet for children's entertainment, portable music player, handheld game console, non-portable game console or TV connected to the Internet.

Figure 25 Status of possession and use of smart phones and mobile phones by young people

◆ The rate of possession and use of mobile phones is decreasing while that of possession and use of smartphone is increasing.

◆ For elementary school students, the rates of possession and use of mobile phones (total) and smartphones (total) is changing at almost the same degree.

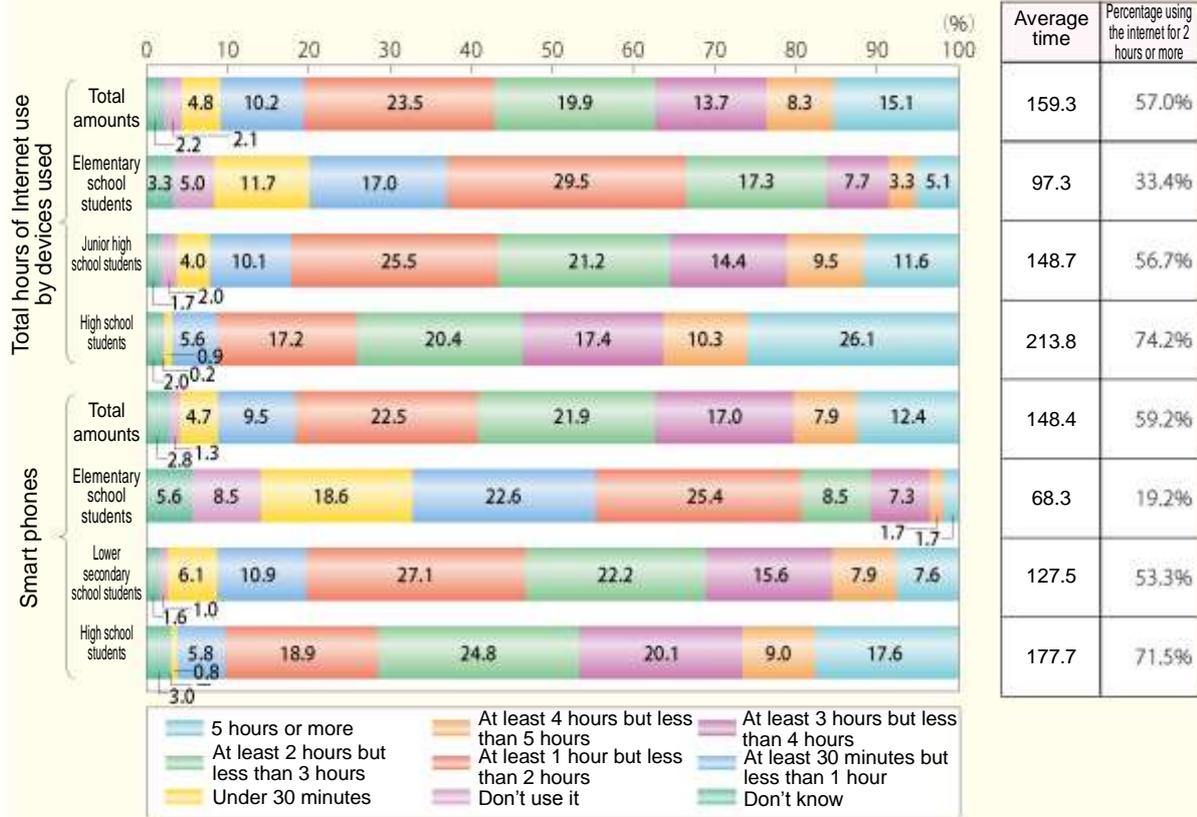


Source: "Fact-finding Survey on Internet Use Environment of Young People in FY 2017" Cabinet Office

Note: In the surveys from FY 2010 to FY 2012, a question about the possession of smartphones and mobile phones allowed only one answer from among multiple choices. As for the surveys for FY 2014 and FY 2017, however, the question about use of smartphones (4 models) and mobile phones (2 models) allowed multiple answers. As the survey method changed in FY 2014, the survey results cannot be directly compared with those for FY 2013 or before.

Figure 26 Hours of Internet use by young people (per weekday) (FY 2017)

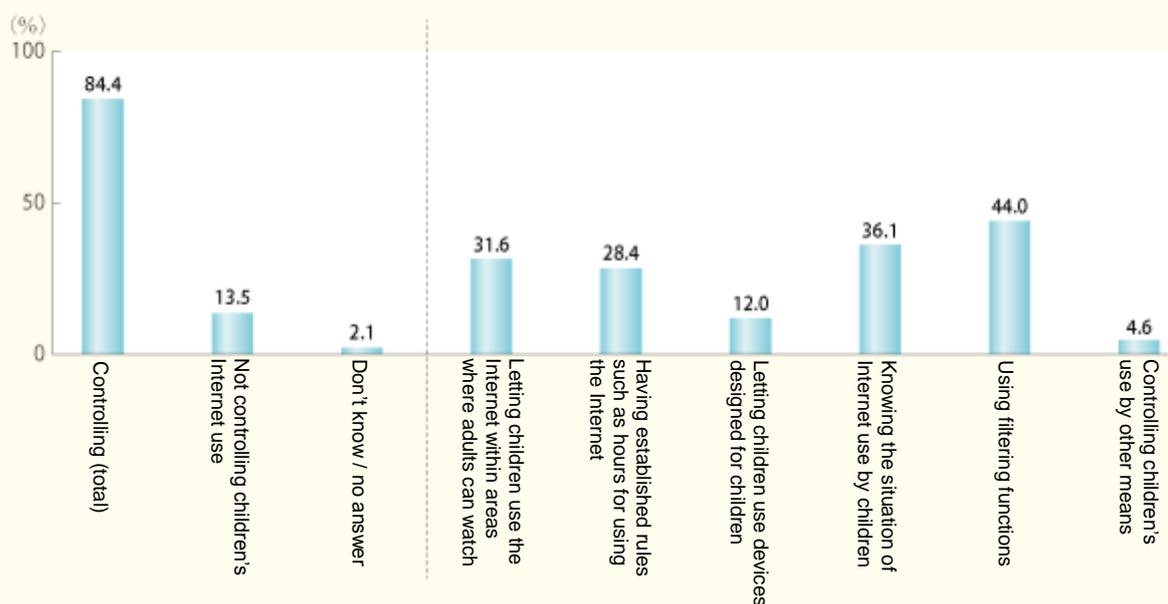
- ◆ Average time of internet use by young people is 159 minutes.
- ◆ As the school types advance, times become longer. 26.1% of high school students use internet 5 hours or more in the total hours by devices used.



Source: "Fact-finding Survey on Internet Use Environment of Young People in FY 2017," Cabinet Office

Figure 27 Efforts made by guardians for young people who use the Internet on smart phones (FY 2017)

- ◆ Among guardians of young people possessing a smartphone, 84.4% are making some efforts concerning Internet use by young people.
- ◆ Among the efforts being implemented, “Using filtering functions” (44.0%) and “Knowing situation of Internet use by children” (36.1%) are major answers.



Source: “Fact-finding Survey on Internet Use Environment of Young People in FY 2017,” Cabinet Office
 Note: The survey targets are guardians of young people aged 10 to 17.

(2) Raising awareness for children and their guardians

- The Cabinet Office is working on awareness-raising activities, by means such as preparing, publishing and distributing leaflets to promote the dissemination of filtering for Internet use and the proper use of the Internet. Also, the Cabinet Office and relevant ministries made efforts including awareness-raising activities intensively developed under a project called the “Spring Safety Net and Simultaneous Action for New School Term” from February to May every year, particularly around the time of graduation, advancement to higher levels of education, and enrolment when many young people start using smart phones. As measures to prevent the recurrence of the case in Zama City that was discovered in October 2017, the Cabinet Office will further augment efforts such as educational activities focusing on promoting the use of filtering and improving Internet literacy ahead of schedule for yearly initiatives to conduct “Safety Net -Winter Vacation / New School Term All-in-One Emergency Action-” (from December 2017 to May 2018).
- The police are promoting public announcements and awareness-raising to protect children from the damage caused by crimes attributed to the use of online dating sites and SNS and the influence of illegal and harmful material on the Internet.
- MIC is implementing the nationwide “e-Net Caravan”, which holds courses nationwide for raising awareness for the safe and secure use of the Internet for children, mainly targeting children and their guardians and teachers.
- The human rights bodies of MOJ are carrying out various activities for human rights awareness-raising, under the slogan “Eliminate Human Rights Violations on the Internet,” as one of the priority targets of activities for human rights awareness-raising.
- MEXT is holding the “National Forum for the Safe Use of the Internet” on use of the Internet in order to promote effective efforts made by guardians, school officials, local governments, and business operators.

(3) Dissemination and raising awareness of filtering

- The police are making efforts to disseminate filtering to protect children from harmful material and promote voluntary measures taken by providers, in addition to promoting investigations of illegal material.
- MIC is promoting the review of filtering services by mobile Internet service providers, and making efforts

to improve the understanding of the concerned people at school and guardians regarding filtering.

- MEXT has organized the “Internet Morality Caravan”, which conducts learning-based participatory symposiums concerning filtering and rules for using the Internet targeting guardians and others throughout Japan.
- METI is promoting the improvement of the Internet literacy of all those concerned and effective and voluntary measures taken by young people and their guardians, through conducting “Internet safety classes” and other opportunities.

(4) Investigation of malicious and illegal acts, etc.

- NPA operates Internet Hotline Center Japan, which receives reports concerning material including illegal material and notifies the police or requests the deletion of the information by parties such as providers and website managers. The Center also requests that corresponding similar institutions in foreign countries work toward the deletion of child pornography material stored on web servers in those countries.
- The police are proceeding with investigations, while making efforts to ascertain illegal and harmful material circulating on the Internet, by means such as cyber patrols and cybercrime prevention volunteers, commissioned by prefectural police.
- The human rights bodies of MOJ give advice about how to make requests for the disclosure of the originator’s information and requests for the deletion of material concerned to providers and others concerned, if they receive consultations on material violating human rights. The bodies seek a remedy, in cases where it is difficult for victims to recover on their own from the damage caused by such material, by means such as requesting that providers and others concerned delete the material concerned.

(5) Promotion of voluntary efforts made by relevant organization

- The Safe Internet Development Promotion Council, established by bodies including private companies, various entities, and Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs), is implementing activities such as the improvement of literacy and dissemination of filtering in each area of Japan, by utilizing various media, including the Internet.

(6) Improvement of the environment related to media, etc. other than the Internet

- The Cabinet Office is attempting to promote the information sharing among prefecture on the measures against harmful environment by posting the enactment status of the ordinances and regulations, and the designation status of harmful materials, etc. of each prefecture on the website.
- The police are enforcing criminal acts against violating ordinance for sales of harmful materials to young people which are regulated by the Prefectural Ordinance of Juvenile Protection.

2 Responses to Internet Addiction

- MEXT is holding learning-based, participatory symposiums for guardians and the “Safe Internet Workshop for Young People,” in which young people study the effective utilization of the Internet and share their outcomes, along with other activities, for the sake of promoting measures against the harmful environments surrounding young people.

3 Regulation of sex-related special businesses

- The police are proactively proceeding with investigations into illegal sex-related special businesses in the business prohibited areas such as around schools and illegal adult entertainment businesses including those where persons under 18 years old are made to entertain guests.

4 Prohibition of sales of alcohol and tobacco to minors

(1) Investigation and Punishment

- In order to improve the environment so that minors cannot easily obtain alcohol or tobacco, the police are making approaches to the concerned industries to take voluntary measures, such as measures for thorough age verification, in addition to thorough guidance and investigations.

(2) Prevention of drinking

- The Liaison Council of Relevant Ministries for Social Regulations regarding Alcohol (the Cabinet Office, NPA, Japan Fair Trade Commission (JFTC), MIC, MEXT, MHLW, and the National Tax Agency) has designated April as Minors' Drinking Prevention Month and is conducting nationwide activities for public announcements and awareness-raising, through coordination between the constituent entities.
- The Cabinet Office has compiled a “Basic Plan for Promotion of the Measures against Alcohol-related Harm”, which is the basic plan to promote measures against Alcohol-related Harm in a comprehensive and systematic manner, in accordance with the “Basic Act on Measures against Alcohol-related Harm” (Act No. 109 of 2013). The Cabinet approved the basic plan on May 31, 2016.

(3) Prevention of smoking

- The Ministry of Finance (MOF), with a view to prevent minors from smoking, has set the following conditions when issuing Tobacco Retail License. When vending machines are installed, they shall be vending machines that distinguish adults from minors; when cigarettes are sold on the Internet, the age of anyone who wants to buy cigarettes shall be verified using an official identification in advance.

Section 4 Promotion of a Reasonable Work-life Balance

(1) Promoting measures based on the “Charter for Work-Life Balance” and other policies

- The Cabinet Office and relevant Ministries and Agencies are making efforts through cooperation between the public and private sectors to achieve a reasonable balance between work and life, based on the “Charter for Work-Life Balance” and other policies.

(2) Support for a balance between childcare and work

- MHLW is supporting the development of workplace environment where support systems for a balance between childcare and work can be used with peace of mind, including measures such as taking childcare and family care leave and short work hours, in addition to ensuring thorough dissemination or enlightenment of the “Act on Childcare Leave, Caregiver Leave, and Other Measures for the Welfare of Workers Caring for Children or Other Family Members (Child Care and Family Care Leave Act)” (Act No. 76 of 1991).