

National Youth Development Policy

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Headquarters for Youth Development

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I. Introduction

(Definition of “youth”)

Youth refers to the period when, in accordance with their mental and physical development, youngsters grow from being children to being adolescents. In this period, while experiencing various troubles and emotional conflicts, adolescents establish their livelihood bases as the standard-bearers of society, contribute to society through their participation in public affairs, and widen the scope of their activities both domestically and internationally in accordance with their skills, aptitude, and so on.

(Formulation of the National Youth Development Policy and related government efforts)

Amid the enormous changes that are taking place in Japanese society and the international environment, such as the low birthrate and aging of the population, advancement of information society, the increase of nuclear families, the disparities between cities and nonmetropolitan regions, the diversification of employment patterns, and globalization of the economy, in December 2003 the government formulated the first National Youth Development Policy in order to clearly indicate the basic principles of the government toward youth development and the basic direction of medium- and long-term measures and to promote related measures comprehensively and effectively. Since then the government has been promoting various measures.

In addition, after the compilation of the first National Youth Development Policy, the government engaged in the revision of systems, building of new frameworks, and so on that are closely related to youth development. Among other things, it has enacted basic laws and formulated guidelines and basic plans in such fields as low birthrate countermeasures, dietary education, and suicide countermeasures; taken a series of steps to revive education, including revision of the Fundamental Law of Education and other related legislation and formulation of the Basic Plan for Educational Development (approved by the cabinet in July 2008); and established a Work-Life Balance Charter.

Furthermore, as efforts in other specific fields, among other things the government has revised such legislation as the Law Relating to the Punishment of Acts Involving Child Prostitution and Child Pornography, the Protection of Children, Etc., the Child Welfare Law, the Law Relating to the Prevention of Child Abuse, Etc., and the Juvenile Law and enacted such legislation as the Law Relating to the Building of an Environment, Etc. Enabling Adolescents to Use the Internet Safely and Securely.

(Changes in Conditions in Recent Years)

The first National Youth Development Policy was formulated at a time when Japan was suffering a long-term economic slump following the collapse of the bubble economy. The Japanese economy was forced to undergo severe structural reforms, and the impacts, such as the difficulties faced by new graduates in finding jobs, the rise in the unemployment rate, and growing job instability, were particularly evident among adolescents.

In addition, in parallel with these circumstances, observers began to point out the widening income gap in society and decline in the educational role of the family.

After that, although the economy began to recover, income and consumption did not increase on a par with the recovery of corporate business results. Moreover, the diversification of employment patterns was making even further headway. In these circumstances, the number of “freeters” (job-hopping part-timers) and NEETs (people not in employment, education, or training) continued to hover at a high level. A growing number of observers began pointing to the danger that the various problems faced by children and adolescents might impact one another and become increasingly complex and expressing concern about the widening economic disparities in Japanese society and their fixation over generations.

Furthermore, many observers expressed concern that, as a result of the even more rapid development of information technology, the deluge of information available and diversification of means of transmission might have a negative impact on children.

The Referendum Law was passed, and it was decided that legislative measures would be taken, in addition to the examination of the provisions of related legislation, so that people aged between 18 and 20 can participate in national elections etc. during the period leading up to the coming into force of the Law. With regard to lowering the age of adulthood in civil law, the Legislative Council of the Ministry of Justice is discussing and investigating the matter, and the preparation of the necessary environment and conditions.

In recent years, as a result of the occurrence of serious crimes by youth that have caught the attention of society, the outbreak of incidents in which children are the victims of crime, and the problem of recidivism among young criminal offenders, concern has been increasing about the safe and secure growth of adolescents. Against this background, such factors have been pointed out as the lack of smooth relations and communication with other family members and acquaintances, the unstable work environment, the economic hardship faced by parents, and the isolation of adolescents from their surroundings.

(Formulation of a new National Youth Development Policy)

In response to these bewildering changes in the situation that have occurred in recent years, it is necessary for the government to take steps bearing in mind the perspective of respect for and protection of the human rights of youth as stipulated in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCROC) and other documents, from the standpoint of individual youth, and in cooperation with not only related administrative bodies but also families, schools, local communities, and others so that all youth in Japan can achieve healthy growth.

For this purpose, while continuing the principles of youth development and so on set out in the first National Youth Development Policy, the government has formulated this new National Youth Development Policy in order to further promote youth development policy in response to the changes that have taken place. This new policy indicates the government’s basic principles regarding youth development policy and the basic direction of medium- and long-term measures from now on.

II. Basic Principles

The government will promote youth development policy in accordance with the following three basic principles and aim to realize a society in which all youth, throughout their growth process, are protected by surrounding people with affection, sympathy, and responsibility and can overcome difficulties and display their potential amid ties with people whom they trust—in other words, a society that guarantees the sound growth of each and every youth.

(1) Give primary consideration to the position of youth

For their parents and families as well as for society, youths are precious embodiments of possibility. In order that they can grow up in good health and achieve their individual potential to the maximum extent in Japanese society today, first of all, more than anything else, it is necessary to support both the fulfillment of their present lives and their growth toward the future not from the perspective of the convenience of adult society or related organizations and so on but from the perspective of these youths.

(2) Provide youths with support so they can develop in good health with the goal of achieving social independence and coexisting with others

It is necessary to provide support for their growth into socially independent individuals who are healthy in body and mind, who have compassionate care for others, and who, through a process of challenge and trial and error, establish their own selfhood with the capability to realize their own possibilities and live together with others and with the community.

(3) Implement support by society as a whole that is appropriate to the circumstances of each individual youth

Individuals differ in terms of their abilities, potential, hardship, and so on. It is important for responses to youth to be fine-tuned in accordance with these individual circumstances. In the development of youth, based on this awareness, and bearing in mind that supporting the sound growth of youth is the responsibility of society as a whole and that the problems of youth reflect those of adult society, it is necessary not only for the government but for all groups and individuals to have an awareness of their involvement and, having gained the trust of the youths, to fulfill their respective roles and responsibilities and address the issue while mutually cooperating and complementing one another.

III. Priority Issues

In this National Youth Development Policy, “youth” is the general term for people ranging in age from 0 to about under 30 years. Bearing in mind the characteristics and issues in each growth stage and

such recent conditions as the delay in social independence, the following priority issues will be addressed in particular so that youth can accumulate sound growth throughout each age group.

(1) Efforts to establishing the foundations of sound growth

The foundations for the sound growth of youth include a sense of trust toward a few specific people, such as parents and guardians; self-esteem and self-affirmation; and an orderly lifestyle, such as going to bed, getting up, and having meals at regular times. In order to promote these basic foundations, efforts will be made so that youth acquire basic lifestyles, physical strength, basic academic abilities, sociability, and also receive dietary education and so on.

In addition, from the perspective of supporting efforts in families, environmental improvement will be promoted through all kinds of child-raising support, harmony of work and everyday life, and so on.

(2) Efforts to cultivate an affluent humanity and foster the capabilities, strength, and creativity for living in society

On top of these foundations for sound growth, through the accumulation of experience in various activities and exchanges with other people, a spirit of respect for one's own life and the life of others and knowledge, experience, and sociality required to become socially independent will be nurtured and also the creative strength to give birth to new values and open the way to the future will be cultivated. For this purpose, efforts will be made to enhance natural and social experiences, group activities, interchanges with different generations, and international exchange for the purpose of understanding different cultures, and acquisition of high-level knowledge and skills.

(3) Efforts to support the growth of youth facing difficulties

In cases where youths come up against various difficulties or disadvantageous conditions or are in danger of doing so, in response to the specific difficulties, related agencies and other organizations will coordinate and provide seamless support comprehensively not only to the youth but also to families to prevent problems from arising, make early detection of problems and prompt actions in response, and deal with difficulties so that they can be overcome.

(4) Efforts to build an environment to support the daily lives of youth

All organizations and individuals are to coordinate and cooperate with each other and endeavor to establish places for youth in the community, etc. and settle various problems. For this purpose, through organic collaboration between related organizations and groups, the utilization of various local community resources, and so on, efforts will be made to improve the social environment, such as rebuilding relationships among households, schools, and local communities, adopting harmful environment countermeasures, and building safe and secure communities, and to foster a favorable climate through the promotion of a national campaign for youth development.

IV. Basic Direction of Measures for Youth, etc.

1. Measures by age group

Support will be implemented in accordance with each stage of development so that youth can master the necessary knowledge, skills, living habits, etc., display their individual abilities and potential, and lead independent lives as members of society.

In doing so, in view of the need to prevent or reduce the difficulties, etc. that youth face, special consideration will be given to cultivating sociability and a strength to live not only through the acquisition of academic skills, basic living habits, and so on but also through the enhancement of various experiences, exchange, etc.

In addition, in the implementation of measures, consideration will be given to individual differences and emphasis will be placed on continuity in each age group.

(1) Infancy

In infancy, the foundation is nurturing basic trust and affection toward human beings. At this stage, it is important to form strong loving bonds with parents and a few specific people, to develop cognition and emotion through various contact with multiple people, and to form character. Based on this perspective, the following measures will be implemented.

(i) Ensuring and promoting mother-child health

(Ensuring safe and anxiety-free pregnancy and childbirth)

Regarding safe and anxiety-free pregnancy and childbirth, contact will be made at various opportunities, such as medical examinations for expectant and nursing mothers, so that related persons and pregnant women can have a common understanding.

In addition, efforts will be made to improve perinatal medical treatment, including the establishment of general perinatal mother-child medical centers and so on, ensuring cooperation between perinatal medical treatment and emergency medical treatment, etc.

(Improvement of local public health)

In order to ensure the mental health of expectant and nursing mothers, such as relieving child-raising anxiety and responding to post-childbirth depression, community-level mother-child health projects will be promoted, such as medical examinations for expectant and nursing mothers, infant medical examinations, and health guidance.

(Improvement of infant medical care)

Through medical plans stipulated by each prefecture, efforts will be made to promote the building of a mutual medical cooperation setup among facilities providing medical treatment for infants

(including emergency medical treatment for infants) and to support the establishment of infant primary emergency centers, hospitals offering emergency treatment for infants, etc. so that children can receive medical services in the community at any time and without anxiety.

In addition, efforts will be made to relieve the concern of parents, etc. by means of an infant emergency telephone consultation service and to spread and promote the activities of community residents and related organizations to support infant medicine in the community.

Furthermore, studies will continue with regard to measures relating to remuneration for infant medical treatment.

(Promotion of food education)

In order to support appropriate eating habits before childbirth and to entrench desirable eating habits in people from infancy, efforts will be made to provide expectant and nursing mothers and child-raising families with learning opportunities and information relating to food.

In addition, in order to foster healthy minds and bodies, efforts will be made to promote dietary education in child day-care centers and kindergartens.

(ii) Improvement of child-raising support

(Support for child-raising families)

Efforts will be made to visit families with infants, provide information relating to child-raising support, understand the child-raising environment, etc. For families that require support, efforts will be promoted to offer guidance, advice, etc. on child raising through home visits.

In order for measures to support the upbringing of the next generation to be effective, in addition to the steady implementation of measures, it is necessary to make the young generation aware of the importance of the family and the strength of the community in supporting the family. In order to change the attitudes of society as a whole, efforts will be made to establish a “family day” and “family week” and to promote a national campaign to restore family and community bonds.

(Establishment of workplaces that make it easier for both men and women to balance child raising and work)

On the basis of the Law for Measures to Support the Development of the Next Generation, the formulation and implementation by employers of action plans relating to measures to support the development of the next generation will be supported and independent efforts in companies will be promoted.

In addition, on the basis of the Law Concerning the Welfare of Workers Who Take Care of Children or Other Family Members Including Child Care and Family Care Leave, publicity, enlightenment, advice, guidance, etc. concerning the diffusion of child-care leave and such measures as the shortening of working hours to care for children will be implemented, and the establishment of a workplace environment that makes it easy for both men and women to balance work and child raising

will be promoted.

Furthermore, in order for measures to be effective, from the perspective of the long-term implementation of the measures, a national campaign in which the public and private sectors come together to change the attitudes of labor and management, including a review of ways of working, will be promoted.

Since women in rural communities engaged in farming, fishing, and forestry have a particularly heavy burden, because they must combine household work and child raising with agricultural work, etc., efforts will be made to reduce this burden and establish the necessary support setup so that women can balance the agricultural business and housework, child raising, etc. and participate in management.

(Reemployment support for people who quit work for child raising, etc.)

As support for the reemployment of women who quit work for child raising, etc., on the basis of the Women's Second Challenge Support Plan (formulated on December 26, 2005; revised on December 25, 2006), efforts will be continued to offer comprehensive support, including (1) the establishment of counters where women can easily ask for advice and the networking of support organizations in the community; (2) support through learning and skill development; (3) comprehensive reemployment support for women who quit work for childbirth, child raising, etc.; (4) the implementation of training and support through loans, etc.; and (5) the supply of various information.

(Elimination of waiting time for child day-care services)

In order to enable all people who so desire to entrust their children to care services and work, efforts will be made in an intensive priority period from fiscal 2008 to fiscal 2010 to ensure service providers, setting the goal of eliminating waiting time for child day-care services and also setting numerical targets for the provision of day-care services for infants under three years of age and after-school children's clubs for children in the first to third grades of elementary school in 10 years' time of 38% and 60%, respectively.

For this purpose, efforts will be made to improve child-care measures both qualitatively and quantitatively and to build the necessary social infrastructure, including (1) the quantitative expansion of day-care services and the diversification of means of provision; (2) expansion of measures eligible under the after-school children's healthy development project; (3) the planned expansion of day-care services necessary in response to the increased ratio of working women working; and (4) guarantee of services with a certain level of quality

(Child-raising support by various entities and network building)

A consultation setup will be established utilizing people with experience in child raising and so on so that parents, etc., who tend to become isolated, can easily make inquiries and receive advice and guidance.

Through cooperation with nonprofit organizations and others, the formation of local child-raising networks will be promoted.

Efforts will be made to promote child-raising support in the community through the implementation of action plans formulated by prefectures and municipalities on the basis of the Law for Measures to Support the Development of the Next Generation and child-raising support programs and so on in municipalities based on the Child Welfare Law.

Measures will be promoted so that all kindergartens that so desire can provide day-care services. Also, in order for kindergartens to fulfill a role as community infant education centers, such activities will be promoted as consultation services in kindergartens, information supply, visits to kindergartens by parents and children who do not attend, and the provision of opportunities for exchange among parents.

In order for consultations in kindergartens to be implemented smoothly, efforts will be made so that child carers acquire, maintain, and improve the knowledge and skills necessary for offering consultations and advice relating to the care of babies, infants, etc.

Furthermore, in order to expand diverse and flexible child day-care services, home child care, in which care is provided to infants lacking care in small numbers in homes, etc., will also be promoted.

(Economic support)

From the perspective of reducing the economic burden on child-raising families, etc., child-care leave benefits and child allowances will be paid.

(iii) Improvement of nursing and education in child day-care centers, kindergartens, etc.

(Strengthening of cooperation between child day-care centers and kindergartens and promotion of an authorized children's care facility system)

Cooperation among child day-care centers and kindergartens will be promoted, and new guidelines for child day-care centers and kindergarten education aimed at consistency in the content of education will be implemented from fiscal 2009.

In addition, regarding the authorized children's center system, with the aim of establishing more than 2,000 such centers as early as possible, efforts will be made to popularize and publicize the system, conduct improvements in operation toward the smooth transition to authorized children's centers based on cooperation between child day-care centers and kindergartens, and tackle reform of the authorized children's center system.

(Cooperation between child day-care centers/kindergartens and elementary schools)

In order to improve education that takes continuity in the growth and development of children into consideration, cooperation and exchange between child day-care centers/kindergartens and elementary schools, including the deepening of mutual understanding, will be promoted through the publicizing of new guidelines for child day-care centers, kindergarten education, and elementary school education, etc.

(Promotion of third-party evaluation of services)

Guidelines, etc. for the third-party evaluation of services will be revised and content improved.

In addition, in order to enhance third-party evaluation based on self-assessment, guidelines will be formulated relating to self-assessment by child carers, etc. and facilities involved in child day care.

(Maintenance and improvement of quality of unauthorized child day-care facilities)

Efforts will be continued to maintain and improve the quality of unauthorized child day-care facilities by efficiently understanding the state of management of unauthorized facilities, etc.

(Opportunities for varied experiences)

In order to promote the balanced mental and physical development of children, opportunities will be provided for a variety of experiences, including contact with nature.

In addition, parents' understanding of the need for a variety of experiences in infancy will be deepened through opportunities for parents and children to participate together in nature activities, etc.

(Safety education)

Safety education will be promoted through child day-care centers, kindergartens, etc. so that children recognize dangerous places and play and are aware of the actions necessary to avoid danger at times of natural disaster, crime, and so on.

In addition, traffic safety education for children and parents will be promoted in cooperation with child day-care centers, kindergartens, etc.

(2) Elementary school age

In the elementary school period, it is important to gain physical strength and exercise skills as the basis for future growth, accumulate diverse knowledge and experience, and acquire sociability, including an awareness of one's role and sense of solidarity in mutual relations with family members and friends. Based on this perspective, the following measures will be implemented.

(i) Ensuring and promotion of health

(Improvement of educational and consultation setup in schools)

In cooperation with experts, health education will be promoted in schools with regard to guidance relating to mental health, education to prevent drug abuse, guidance relating to sex in accordance with the child's stage of development, measures to counter infectious diseases, appropriate response to environmental hygiene, etc.

In addition, as well as efforts to address various health problems, support will be provided for the establishment of educational consultation setups through the utilization of school counselors, school social workers, etc. so that children can receive appropriate counseling.

(Consultations in the community)

Counseling projects in the community relating to the growth, development, and mental health

problems of children will be promoted.

(Improvement of pediatric medicine)

A cooperate setup among medical institutions providing pediatric medical treatment (including emergency pediatric treatment) will be built and support will be provided for the establishment of pediatric primary emergency centers, hospitals designated as pediatric emergency facilities, etc. so that children can receive medical services in the community at any time and without anxiety.

In addition, efforts will be made to relieve the concern of parents, etc. through pediatric emergency telephone consultations and to popularize and promote the efforts of local residents and related organizations to support pediatric medicine in the community.

Furthermore, studies will be continued with regard to measures relating to remuneration for pediatric medical treatment.

(ii) Acquisition of daily life skills

(Formation of basic living habits)

Efforts will be promoted inside and outside of schools toward the improvement of living habits, such as rest and sleep, meals, exercise, and help with household chores. In particular, efforts will be made to improve dietary guidance in schools through the organization and promotion of instruction on nutrition, the compilation of overall plans regarding dietary guidance, etc. so that children can gain accurate knowledge relating to diet, master desirable eating habits, and develop an affluent humanity.

In addition, efforts concerning dietary education will be promoted in cooperation with families, schools, local communities, and so on through the provision of opportunities to learn about and experience food, etc. so that not only children but parents and others also can practice a healthy dietary life.

Furthermore, an attitude of well-disciplined living will be taught through moral education in schools and group overnight stays, etc. in youth education facilities, etc.

(Improvement of physical strength)

In order to improve the physical strength of children, physical education lessons will be improved by upgrading the quality of instructors and utilizing special physical education teachers and outside instructors, etc.

In addition, a national survey and analysis of the state of physical strength, etc. will be conducted, and, in light of the results, efforts will be promoted for the improvement of physical strength in schools and local communities.

Nature activities will be promoted in urban parks, which are playing areas for children and bases for their sports and recreation activities, etc., as well as in waterside areas by the sea and rivers, forests, etc.

(Development of communication skills, norm consciousness, etc.)

In order to foster a spirit of sympathy, communication skills with people who have different opinions or different standpoints, an attitude of valuing life and nature, kindness toward others, sociability, norm consciousness, etc., efforts will be made to ensure and improve various opportunities in schools, youth education facilities, etc., such as learning through presentations and debates, the improvement of moral education, and the expansion of such experience activities as nature viewing and group overnight stays, and to promote delinquency prevention classes, etc.

(Safety education)

In order to cultivate skills so that children can protect themselves from danger, such as crime, traffic accidents, and natural disasters, safety education will be promoted in accordance with the child's stage of development and in cooperation with schools, families, and the local community.

(Environmental education)

In cooperation with related ministries and local public organizations, efforts will be made to diversify lifelong environmental education and learning opportunities in the home, schools, local communities, companies, etc. and to improve the quality of instructors.

In youth education facilities, etc., efforts will be made to utilize the affluent natural environment and give them the function of bases for children's environmental education.

(iii) Improvement of academic ability

(Establishment of definite academic ability, including knowledge and skills, ability to think, make judgments, and express oneself, and enthusiasm for learning)

In order to realize the steady implementation of "Course of Study" curriculum guidelines, the necessary support will be provided so that efforts by schools can make progress toward (a) acquisition of basic and fundamental knowledge and skills; (b) development of the ability to think, make judgments, express oneself, etc. that are necessary for the solution of issues utilizing this knowledge and skills; and (c) raising of the enthusiasm for learning and establishment of study habits.

(Understanding and assessment of national academic ability)

In order to understand the academic ability of children and study conditions and utilize this information for the improvement of educational policy and instruction, a national academic ability and state of learning survey will be conducted on all children in the sixth grade of elementary school. The questionnaire will cover such topics as Japanese language, arithmetic, living habits, and study environment. The results will be analyzed and examined to ascertain the academic ability of children, the relationship between academic ability and study conditions, and so on. Support will be provided toward improvements in schools that are deemed to have problems, outstanding efforts will be popularized, etc.

(iv) Guarantee of opportunities for activities that lead to social independence

(Ensuring of opportunities for group activities)

The establishment of after-school children's clubs, children's halls, urban parks, etc. will be promoted to ensure places for group activities, and, through after-school children's classes, etc., efforts will be promoted to provide opportunities for study activities, sporting, cultural, and artistic activities, recreation, etc. with the participation of local residents.

(Experience of volunteer and other community service activities)

In local volunteer activity support centers, research will be conducted on effective ways of matching people who want to take part in activities and recipients, cooperation with related groups and organizations, the operation of the support centers, etc., and support will be provided for youth to participate in local community activities through volunteer work.

(Promotion of special activities in schools)

Special activities in schools will be promoted so that, through class, children's hall, and other group activities, children can develop independent and practical attitudes as group and society members.

(Promotion of coexistence and exchange between cities and rural communities engaged in farming, fishing, and forestry)

In order to foster an enthusiasm for study, a spirit of independence, a spirit of sympathy toward others, norm consciousness, etc. in children, to support their strong growth, and furthermore to promote their interest in and understanding of rural communities engaged in farming, fishing, and forestry and the agricultural, forestry, and fishery industries, experience activities in schools and practical learning in community activities will be promoted and, through the improvement of acceptance setups in rural communities engaged in farming, fishing, and forestry, support for school activities, etc., activities will be promoted that provide experience of the agricultural, forestry, and fishery industries, experience of nature, living experience, etc. by means of long stays in rural communities engaged in farming, fishing, and forestry.

Furthermore, through support for the opening of lodgings in rural communities engaged in farming, fishing, and forestry, the establishment of exchange and experience facilities, etc., exchange by whole families, the acceptance of groups of children, etc. will be advanced, and coexistence and exchange between cities and rural communities engaged in farming, fishing, and forestry will be promoted.

(Various activities in the local community, etc.)

In order to promote the healthy development of children both mentally and physically,

various experience activities, such as environmental studies, nature activities, group stays, community service, sports, and art and traditional culture will be promoted and opportunities for various activities involving exchange with other generations and other regions, etc. will be provided in a variety of places, such as youth education facilities, schools, community youth groups, NPOs, etc.

(3) Adolescence

In the period of adolescence, it is important for youth to search for self-identity and, while acquiring social norms, knowledge, and skills, to begin the transition toward becoming an adult. Based on this perspective, the following measures will be implemented.

In addition, bearing in mind the special characteristics of adolescents in the period of adolescence, while maintaining an appropriate distance, consideration will be given to supporting growth and providing fine-tuned counseling and support in accordance with gender differences.

(i) Ensuring and promotion of health

(Improvement of educational and counseling setup in schools)

Regarding guidance relating to mental health, education to prevent drug abuse, guidance relating to sex in accordance with the stage of development, infectious disease countermeasures, etc., continuing from the elementary school period, health education will be promoted in schools with the cooperation of experts and support will be provided for the improvement of school counseling arrangements, such as the utilization of school counselors, school social workers, etc.

(Counseling in the local community, response in medical institutions)

In the community, efforts will be made to improve counseling relating to the mental health of adolescents, drug abuse, sex, infectious diseases, etc. and to improve responses by medical institutions. In particular, in order to foster a healthy attitude relating to sex and spread an accurate understanding, counseling services will be improved, including counseling and educational activities by people of the same generation who share the same values (peer counseling and peer education) will be popularized and counseling and assistance will be implemented individually for adolescents with worries about pregnancy with regard to medical, mental, and social problems.

(Response to special issues in adolescence)

Various efforts will be promoted with the aim of eliminating smoking and drinking by people under age and reducing the abortion rate, the ratio of people with sexually infected diseases, and the frequency of emaciation among adolescent girls.

(ii) Acquisition of daily life abilities and social life abilities

(Formation of basic lifestyle)

Efforts will be promoted inside and outside of schools toward the improvement of lifestyle, such as rest and sleep, meals, exercise, and help with household chores. In particular, since the ratio of adolescents skipping breakfast is thought to be high and poor eating habits, obesity, and emaciation are evident in this age group, on the basis of the fundamental matters learned in elementary school, efforts will be made to improve guidance relating to diet in schools so that adolescents acquire desirable dietary habits and self-control skills with regard to food. In addition, in cooperation with families, schools, local communities, etc., dietary education efforts will be promoted through the provision of opportunities to learn about food, the supply of information, etc.

Furthermore, an attitude of well-disciplined living will be taught through moral education in schools and group overnight stays, etc. in youth education facilities, etc.

(Improvement of physical strength)

In order to respond to the various needs of adolescents and to improve their physical strength, physical education classes will be improved by upgrading the quality of instructors, etc.

In addition, efforts will be made to establish the conditions toward making martial arts compulsory in junior high school physical education, to enable martial arts to be implemented safely and smoothly, and to improve club activities by promoting joint club activities by several schools, utilizing outside instructors, etc.

Furthermore, the state of physical strength, etc. nationwide will be surveyed and analyzed and, in light of the results, efforts will be promoted to improve physical strength in schools and in the community.

Nature activities will be promoted in urban parks, which are bases for adolescent's sports and recreation activities, etc., as well as in waterside areas by the sea and rivers, forests, etc.

(Development of communication skills, norm consciousness, etc.)

In order to foster a spirit of sympathy, communication skills with people who have different opinions or different standpoints, an attitude of valuing life and nature, kindness toward others, sociability, norm consciousness, etc., continuing from the elementary school period, efforts will be made to ensure and improve various opportunities in schools, youth education facilities, etc., such as learning through presentations and debates, the improvement of moral education, and the expansion of such experience activities as nature viewing and group overnight stays, as well as the promotion of delinquency prevention classes, etc.

(Safety education)

In order for adolescents to foster the ability to protect themselves and others from danger, such as crime, traffic accidents, and natural disasters, safety education will be promoted in cooperation with schools, families, and local communities.

(Acquisition of realistic understanding and knowledge concerning social and economic mechanisms)

In order to promote accurate understanding concerning legislation, taxation, the public pension system, finance, the economic mechanism behind them, and so on, related administrative organizations and schools, etc. will cooperate and efforts will be promoted.

(Experience of volunteer and other community service activities)

Surveys and research will be implemented on effective ways of matching people who want to participate in volunteer activities and recipients, community service programs for senior high schools, etc. In addition, projects related to volunteer work, etc. will be implemented in youth education facilities, etc., adolescents will acquire civic-mindedness and sociability through volunteer activities, and support will be given for their participation in the local community.

(Promotion of special activities in schools)

Special activities in schools will be promoted so that, through class, student council, and other group activities, students can develop independent and practical attitudes as group and society members.

(International exchange activities)

In order to foster international understanding and an international perspective among youth, opportunities to experience other cultures and engage in international exchange will be provided through the compilation of exchange programs with other countries, the invitation and dispatch of Japanese and foreign youth, the supply of study abroad information, the promotion of related projects, etc.

(Promotion of coexistence and exchange between cities and rural communities engaged in farming, fishing, and forestry)

In order to promote interest in and understanding of rural communities engaged in farming, fishing, and forestry and the agricultural, forestry, and fishery industries, the acceptance of school trips, family trips, etc. to experience the agricultural, forestry, and fishery industries, etc. will be advanced and exchange between cities and rural communities engaged in farming, fishing, and forestry will be promoted through the improvement of acceptance arrangements in rural communities engaged in farming, fishing, and forestry, the improvement of exchange and experience facilities, the opening of lodgings in rural communities engaged in farming, fishing, and forestry, etc.

(Various activities in the local community, etc.)

In order for adolescents to develop independent and social attitudes as group and society members, various experience activities will be promoted, such as environmental studies and nature activities, group stays, community service, sports, and art and traditional culture, and opportunities will be provided for various activities, such as exchange with other generations and other regions, in a variety of places, such as youth education facilities, schools, community youth groups, and NPOs.

Appropriate information and opportunities to share problems will be provided to people who instruct youth, such as school teachers and youth groups.

(Environmental education)

In cooperation with related ministries and local public organizations, efforts will be made to diversify lifelong environmental education and learning opportunities in the home, schools, local communities, companies, etc. and to improve the quality of instructors.

In youth education facilities, etc., efforts will be made to utilize the affluent natural environment and give them the function of bases for youth environmental education.

(iii) Improvement of academic ability

(Establishment of definite academic ability, including knowledge and skills, ability to think, make judgments, and express oneself, and enthusiasm for learning)

In order to realize the steady implementation of “Course of Study” curriculum guidelines, continuing from the elementary school period, the necessary support will be provided so that efforts by schools can make progress toward (a) acquisition of basic and fundamental knowledge and skills; (b) development of the ability to think, make judgments, express oneself, etc. that are necessary for the solution of issues utilizing this knowledge and skills; and (c) raising of the enthusiasm for learning and establishment of study habits.

(Understanding and assessment of national academic ability)

In order to understand the academic ability of students and study conditions and utilize this information for the improvement of educational policy and instruction, a national academic ability and state of learning survey will be conducted on students in the third grade of junior high school. The questionnaire will cover such topics as Japanese language, arithmetic, living habits, and study environment. The results will be analyzed and examined to ascertain the academic ability of students, the relationship between academic ability and study conditions, and so on. Support will be provided toward improvements in schools that are deemed to have problems, outstanding efforts will be popularized, etc.

(iv) Acquisition of occupational skills and motivation

(Development of work and occupation attitudes and knowledge and skills relating to work)

In order to foster work attitudes and sociability in adolescents and contribute to their self-awareness concerning their future occupation and life, organized and systemic career education and occupational education will be promoted from the elementary school stage in cooperation with schools, companies, business organizations, parent-teacher associations, NPOs, etc. and in collaboration with related ministries. In particular, efforts will be made to promote workplace experience activities centered on junior high schools, career education in ordinary senior high schools, and occupational education in higher technical colleges. In addition, in order to further promote career education by the community as a whole, efforts will be promoted to train private-sector coordinators who will act as mediators between schools and local business circles.

Support will be provided for the supply of information, etc. so that students can make occupational choices themselves without being bound by stereotypes about certain jobs being suitable for men and others suitable for women.

(Job support)

High school graduate job supporters will be appointed in public employment security offices and, in cooperation with schools, consistent one-on-one support toward employment will be provided from preparation to settlement in the workplace.

In addition, the discovery of job openings will be promoted through collaboration between public employment security offices and schools, and practical training will be provided in public employment security offices, etc. for career counselors in senior high schools.

(4) Young adults and post-young adults

In the young adult stage, it is important for adolescents to break away from their parents and, through employment, forming a family of their own, etc., lead independent lives as members of society and participate in and contribute to public affairs. While there are already many people at this stage leading lives as the standard-bearers of society, there are also many who, at this stage and in the post-young adult stage, are continuing their efforts in universities, etc. to foster the qualities and skills necessary to support and develop various social fields and people who have difficulty in establishing social independence and require some kind of assistance. Based on this perspective, the following measures will be implemented.

(i) Improvement of university education, etc.

(Improvement of educational content)

Admission policy according to the educational principles of each university and faculty will be clarified and, with due consideration for the relationship with education after admission, efforts will be made to diversify entrance examination methods and assessment measurements so that a multilateral evaluation of the ability, aptitude, etc. of examinees can be conducted.

Support will be provided for the development of high-quality education so that universities, etc. can respond to the diversification of knowledge, study habits, and study motivation among students; on the basis of their respective objectives in education and research, promote improvements in educational content and methods so that students can master study results at the undergraduate level (undergraduate strength) and they can cultivate people with general education and specialized abilities; introduce rigorous result evaluation systems, including the authorization of graduation; etc.

In addition, support will be extended to universities, etc. that make outstanding efforts so that effective efforts to improve the educational skills of teachers can be developed in all universities, etc.

Regarding human resource development, in order to promote interactive dialogue and efforts between industry and academia, the Industry-Academia Human Resource Development Partnership will be promoted and efforts will be made to strengthen the educational function of universities through support for efforts to develop and implement human resource development programs by means of industry-academia cooperation.

(Improvement of advanced university education)

Independent efforts by universities to establish specialist graduate schools to train people who can engage in occupations requiring a high level of expertise and be active socially and internationally and to maintain and improve the quality of that education will be promoted.

In addition, efforts to form internationally excellent educational research centers in national, public, and private universities will be supported, and organized and systemic efforts to realize outstanding education in graduate schools will be promoted.

(Response to lifelong learning)

In order to expand opportunities for lifelong learning, efforts will be promoted to meet the needs of a wide range of adults and other students.

(Improvement of higher vocational schools)

In order to meet practical and specialist study needs in a variety of fields, including industry, medicine, and commerce, efforts will be promoted for the development of higher vocational schools, including a survey of issues relating to higher vocational schools and R&D relating to educational content, methods, etc. in response to issues with a high degree of social demand.

(ii) Improvement of vocational skills development and job support

(Support toward occupational independence)

In response to requests from prefectures, “Hello Work” services will be established at the one-stop service centers for adolescents to be set up through the independent efforts of prefectures, job introductions for adolescents will be implemented, projects for company explanatory meetings, seminars, etc. will be commissioned, and a variety of job support will be developed in response to local conditions.

(Job support, including guidance and advice on choice of occupation)

As job support for university students, etc., in cooperation with universities, etc., support will be provided at student career centers, etc. set up in each prefecture, including seminars to help adolescents make appropriate occupational choices, fine-tuned job guidance for individual students, career guidance by expert counselors, the provision of information, and job introductions, as well as efforts to expand the quota of applications accepted from people who have already graduated.

Also, efforts will be made to promote internships through the cooperation of universities and local companies, etc. so that university students, etc. can make independent decisions on their career choice according to their ability and aptitude.

In addition, efforts will be made to further expand fine-tuned career guidance for individual students in universities, etc. and career guidance setups through the implementation of national career guidance counseling for teachers, etc. in universities, etc.

Regarding “freeters” (job-hopping part-time workers) and other unstable workers, “freeter regular work supporters” will be appointed in public employment security offices, and consistent support will be provided from job counseling and job introductions to settlement in the workplace.

Furthermore, efforts will be made toward the positive utilization of the trial employment system, by which adolescents are hired for a certain probationary period with the possibility of transfer to regular employment afterward.

Regarding people who quit work because of human relations in the workplace, etc. and are worried and anxious about reemployment, fine-tuned support will be provided, such as individual and expert counseling, and efforts will be made to promote the start of job-searching activities and employment.

(Skill development)

In order to enable “freeters” and others who are not blessed with opportunities to acquire occupational skills to improve their skills and switch to stable employment, efforts will be made to establish and expand the “job-card system” (a system for the utilization of work activities, etc. by which, after the raising of awareness and clarification of issues through fine-tuned career

consulting, practical occupational training is provided through a combination of company training and schooling and items like evaluation by the company and job experience are entered on a job card).

Efforts will be made to promote the employment of adolescents and expand the horizons of young engineers through the implementation of adolescent's manufacturing contests as places where adolescents aged under 20 years who are in the process of acquiring skills in occupational skill development facilities, certified occupational training facilities, technical high schools, etc. can test the level of their skills against others.

(Building a mechanism for evaluating skills)

In order to establish the foundations of a adolescent's labor market centered on skills, mechanisms for practical occupational skill evaluation and public certification will be established; after the specific content of basic occupational skills to be acquired has been indicated, information will be supplied concerning certified courses and qualification examinations for acquiring them; the Youth Employability Support Program (YES-Program) to provide evidence of acquired skills, etc. will be implemented; and efforts will be promoted to build motivation for skill development and self-enlightenment among adolescents and to make use of the recruitment quotas of companies.

(Support for employment in the agricultural, forestry, and fishery industries)

In response to the various wishes, abilities, etc. of adolescents who have a desire to work in the agricultural, forestry, and fishery industries, support will be provided for the employment of adolescents from both inside and outside the agricultural, forestry, and fishery industries by supplying information, counseling, and job introductions at counseling service counters; providing experience and practical training at production sites; and lending funds for training and job support in agricultural training facilities, etc.

(Support for starting business)

In order to support the entrepreneurship of adolescents, low-interest loans for plant and equipment investment and operating funds will be implemented by government-run financial institutions for young entrepreneurs aged under 30 who have started a new business in principle within the last five years, and business startup support services utilizing the Internet will be promoted. In the information and communications field in particular, for venture companies, etc. that have started a new business in principle within the last five years, such measures as partial subsidies for necessary expenses related to the implementation of the business will be promoted.

In addition, efforts will be made to improve the environment promoting business startups, including further popularization and publicity of preferential tax measures to support fund procurement from individual investors in venture companies ("angel tax system"), etc.

Through regional Chambers of Commerce and Industry throughout the country and the

Japan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, business startup courses will be implemented to enable people who have specific action plans to start a business to acquire the practical skills necessary for starting a business.

Business startups will also be promoting by extending partial subsidies to cover expenses in the case of unemployed persons eligible to receive employment insurance who have started a business.

(iii) Support for living design and life design

(Support by scholarships, etc.)

Support measures, such as scholarships, will be promoted so that talented students with a desire to receive education do not have any worries on the economic side and can study without anxiety.

(Housing support)

In order for young households to live independently, efforts will be made to utilize the public rental housing system, and the acquisition of good-quality owned homes will be promoted by means of support for the stable supply of long-term and fixed-interest housing loans by private financial institutions utilizing the securitization support business mechanism of the Japan Housing Finance Agency. In particular, in order to ensure stable housing for child-raising households, efforts will be positively made to ease the qualifications for gaining admission to public rental housing, implement priority occupancy, support the supply of rental housing for families, and provide information related to private housing and also to provide support through the above-mentioned loan system, etc. in order to promote the acquisition of good-quality owned homes,

In addition, in order for people to lead safe, secure, and comfortable lives, the universal design of housing will be promoted, and support will be given for the supply of housing with attached child-raising support facilities.

Furthermore, in large city areas in particular, the construction of residential areas that bring work and home closer together and make child raising easier will be promoted in a comprehensive manner.

(Information supply through cooperation between social insurance organizations, educational institutions, etc.)

In appropriate cooperation with social insurance offices, schools, etc., information, counseling, etc. will be implemented with regard to the public systems necessary for living design.

(Supply of information and raising of awareness concerning social security, including

pensions)

Information supply and publicity will be conducted with regard to public pensions, and efforts will be promoted to make adolescents aware of the significance and role of public pensions, such as by distributing pamphlets on the public pension system to new adults at coming-of-age ceremonies.

(iv) Promotion of participation in society

(Supply of information and raising of awareness with regard to public systems)

Efforts will be made through effective and positive enlightenment activities to raise the awareness of adolescents regarding elections, and, in cooperation with related organizations, appeals will be made using various means and methods to encourage them to participate in voting.

Utilizing various publicity media, information will be actively supplied in order to further deepen the understanding of adolescents toward activities related to ensure the lives and security of the nation's people, such as defense, maritime safety, the police, and fire-prevention services.

(Promotion of participation in the policy-formation process)

The participation of adolescents in the policy-formation process will be promoted through utilization of the system of public solicitation for members of councils, committees, etc., the public solicitation of opinions via the Internet and so on, etc. Regarding youth development measures and measures in fields in which intergenerational agreement is essential, consideration will be given to the composition of members on councils, committees, etc. so that the opinions of adolescents are also actively and appropriately reflected.

(Social contribution activities)

Surveys and research will be implanted on effective methods to match people who wish to participate in volunteer activities and recipients, etc. and on community-service activity programs in senior high schools.

Also, training related to volunteer activities, etc. will be implemented in youth educational facilities, etc., and support will be provided for participation in the local community so that adolescents acquire civil-mindedness and sociability through volunteer activities.

In addition, support will be provided for the activities of adolescents, as standard-bearers of the community, relating to the development of the next generation, the continuity of traditional culture, etc.

In order for adolescents to acquire a wide-ranging international perspective and sense, opportunities will be provided for cooperation activities in developing countries.

Furthermore, exchange programs will be provided to foster people who will shoulder the development of relations with important neighboring countries, and opportunities will be

provided for international exchange by adolescents in order to deepen their understanding of other cultures, foster a spirit of tolerance, raise awareness of coexistence with diverse cultures, and promote contributions to international activities and social activities in the regions.

2. Measures for troubled youth, etc.

The following measures will be implemented for youth who require special assistance because they face difficulties in achieving sound growth due to various circumstances, are placed in disadvantageous situations, etc.

In providing such assistance, consideration will be given to the danger that these difficulties or disadvantageous situations could become even more complex if they intertwine with other factors.

In addition, in order to solve problems, as well as responses to the young people themselves, comprehensive support that includes their families will be provided, including efforts to offer support for advice, guidance, etc. to the parents, etc. of young people.

(1) Efforts by type of difficulty

(i) Support for youth with disabilities

(Support for youth with disabilities)

The early detection and early treatment of disabilities will be promoted, efforts will be made to improve at-home services so that people with disabilities can lead anxiety-free lives in familiar surroundings, etc., and cooperation with related organizations toward their future independence will be promoted.

In view of the fact that through a partial revision of the School Education Law, etc., the previous special education system has switched to a special support education system, from the perspective of supporting the independent efforts of infants, children, and students with disabilities toward independence and social participation, the individual educational needs of infants, children, and students will be grasped and special support education will be promoted that gives appropriate guidance and necessary support in order to enhance their strengths and improve and overcome the difficulties they face in daily life and study.

(Support for youth with developmental disorders)

For youth with developmental disorders, such as autism, autistic psychopathy (Asperger syndrome), and other extensive developmental disorders and learning disorders, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, and similar brain function disorders, since positive effects can be expected in terms of building appropriate human relations, preventing secondary disabilities, and enabling independence and participation by means of efforts to overcome difficulties that individuals have in learning, behavior, sociability, communication, etc. and improving their

response capabilities, efforts will be made toward early detection through medical examinations, etc., and the implementation of appropriate counseling and guidance will be promoted through the dissemination of health guidance handbooks, etc. so that appropriate responses can be made in families, schools, workplaces, etc.

For infants, children, and students with developmental disorders who attend school, appropriate guidance and necessary support will be provided in accordance with the state of disability, etc. and, in order to obtain wide understanding and cooperation for such educational support, efforts will be made in developmental disorder educational information centers, etc. to improve correct understanding, supply various information, etc. regarding developmental disorders to educationalists, the general public, etc. through the Internet, etc.

In addition, efforts will be made to develop appropriate assessment and monitoring for youth with developmental disorders and social life support (including appeals and counseling so that they can enhance their abilities), etc.

Regarding criteria for diagnosing developmental disorders, methods of treatment, etc. appropriate for conditions in Japan, general psychiatric assessment and clinical research will be conducted and utilization of the research results will be promoted.

(ii) Juvenile delinquency countermeasures, etc.

(Comprehensive efforts)

In order to expand and strengthen countermeasures through the collaboration of related organizations, including the community, long-term and comprehensive efforts, such as continuous surveys and research on cases of juvenile delinquency, etc. in cooperation with related organizations, including the police, schools, correction facilities, probation offices, child independence support facilities, etc., will be promoted.

Efforts by related organizations, etc. to form support teams in response to individual youth problems will be further supported; existing bodies, such as school-police liaison councils, will be revitalized; and cooperation will be promoted among related organizations, etc. utilizing “school problem solving support teams” comprising school supporters, outside experts, etc.

(Prevention of delinquency, counseling activities)

Firm guidance will be promoted for children and students who engage in problematic behavior; effective efforts will be made that lead to the prevention of such behavior, early detection, and early response, as well as efforts in cooperation with related organizations, etc.; and efforts will be promoted to establish opportunities and forums for various activities in cooperation with local people.

In addition, efforts will be made to build environments, etc. in counseling bodies that make it easy to ask for counseling; appropriate advice, support, etc. will be provided for youth who have various problems and their parents, etc.; and support will be provided for the

improvement of educational counseling setups, including school counselors and school social workers.

(Prevention of drug abuse)

Efforts will be made to further expand activities toward eradicating drug abuse by youth and raising norm consciousness to reject drug abuse. In order to expand and strengthen guidance and education for the prevention of drug abuse in schools, etc., the holding of drug abuse prevention classes will be promoted in elementary, junior high, and senior high schools and efforts will be made to strengthen enlightenment in universities, etc.

In addition, for youth and people engaged in the education of youth, publicity activities regarding the harmfulness and danger of drug abuse, guidance methods for the prevention of drug abuse, etc. will be promoted even more actively.

(Guidance activities and investigation and survey of incidents)

In cooperation with families, schools, and local communities, related organizations will collaborate and strengthen street guidance activities.

In addition, continued guidance will be given to young people receiving juvenile counseling if it is deemed to be especially necessary in order to prevent delinquency.

Regarding the investigation and survey of incidents, consideration will be given to the special qualities of juveniles and speedy and correct responses will be promoted that arouse the juvenile's awareness of the crime and take the juvenile's rehabilitation into account.

Furthermore, through the necessary investigations and surveys in accordance with the nature of each incident, efforts will be made to fully investigate the incident and to contribute to the early detection of problems faced by the juvenile and early response. Related organizations, such as the Public Prosecutor's Office, the police, child counseling offices, etc., will engage in necessary cooperation and endeavor to realize appropriate collaboration with family courts.

(Consideration for victims)

From the perspective of giving consideration to victims, efforts will be made to provide appropriate information in accordance with the requests of victims, etc. while taking account of the offending juvenile's privacy, the impact on the juvenile's sound development, the nature of the incident, etc.

(Delinquent group countermeasures)

Efforts will be made to arrest members of motorcycle gangs and other delinquent groups involved in incidents, to control the organized criminal groups, etc. behind them, to prevent juveniles from joining such groups, to support members who leave the groups, and to weaken and dissolve delinquent groups.

In particular, in order to eradicate motorcycle gangs, measures will be promoted to

thoroughly control such gangs utilizing all laws and ordinances available, to dissolve them, to prevent juveniles from joining them, and to support juveniles who leave them. In order to raise awareness in the community as a whole concerning the need to banish motorcycle gangs, comprehensive measures will be implemented, included appeals to local governments to enact motorcycle gang eradication (expulsion) ordinances, etc. and cooperation in their operation, etc.

(Treatment inside facilities)

Efforts will be made to improve the setup in juvenile reformatories, juvenile prisons, etc., and corrective education, improvement guidance, etc. for delinquent juveniles will be improved. In particular, after understanding the problems, development history, etc. of individual juveniles, from the perspective of preventing a recurrence of delinquency, treatment plans in response to the special characteristics and educational needs of individuals will be compiled and the individualization of treatment will be promoted, including amendments whenever necessary.

In light of the fact that the minimum age for detention has been lowered following partial revision of the Juvenile Law, etc., while attention will be given in juvenile reformatories to a reformatory approach providing experiences and discipline guidance befitting the age of the inmate, efforts will be made toward the effective implementation of corrective education. Also, in organic cooperation with related organizations, groups, etc., the strengthening of comprehensive efforts in conjunction with the local community will be promoted.

In juvenile classification facilities, efforts will be made to improve and strengthen classification of the personalities of delinquent juveniles, etc.

In child independence support facilities, with the aim of supporting independence so that children can adapt smoothly to society, efforts will be made to strengthen guidance capabilities by expanding the assignment of specialist staff, etc. and to enhance guidance in accordance with the conditions of individual children.

(Support for social readjustment, independence, and rehabilitation)

Regarding social participation activities in which juveniles under probation take part in care and community service activities and recreation, etc., efforts will be made to diversify the kinds of activities and activity content in accordance with the special qualities of juveniles and conditions in the community and implement even more substantial social participation activities.

In addition, by making juveniles aware of the seriousness of the crimes they committed and deepen their sense of remorse, efforts will be made to fortify their determination not to commit crime again and to improve such treatment as guidance on atonement aimed at encouraging them to respond sincerely to victims, their families, and bereaved families while taking the wishes of the latter into consideration.

Regarding juveniles who require special consideration in probationary treatment, various kinds of treatment will be actively conducted, including direct treatment by probation officers, the practical effectiveness of treatment will be increased, and effective treatment will be

implemented for each type according to the special qualities and problems of the juvenile concerned.

Furthermore, the activities of rehabilitation workers and private volunteer groups will be promoted, and efforts will be made to strengthen cooperation with these groups.

In order to support the independence of juveniles who have difficulty returning to their families after leaving juvenile reformatories or child independence support facilities, efforts will be made to improve social readjustment facilities, independence support homes, etc.

In order for delinquent juveniles to rehabilitate themselves in the local community and not commit delinquent acts again, efforts will be promoted to provide diverse rehabilitation support in cooperation with related organizations, schools, private-sector cooperators, people in the community, etc. In particular, in order to promote the establishment of places that promote rehabilitation, efforts will be promoted to discover opportunities for new social activities and to build arrangements for the support of rehabilitation by the local community as a whole.

Regarding methods of effective guidance, advice, etc. for the parents of juveniles in juvenile reformatories and the building of a new framework as the premise for this, surveys and research will be conducted, etc., and efforts will be made to improve and strengthen appropriate measures for parents.

For the parents of juveniles under probation, meetings with guarantors will be implemented. If there are recognized to be problems concerning family relations or the educational attitude of the parents, efforts will be made to make them aware of their responsibilities regarding the custody of the child and to improve their custodial capabilities.

(Bullying and violence countermeasures)

In order to promote measures to counter bullying, violent acts, etc., efforts will be made to promote firm guidance for children and students who engage in problematic behavior and appropriate treatment for juveniles who perpetrate incidents and prevent the recurrence of incidents, as well as the promotion of effective efforts that lead to early detection and early response, efforts in cooperation with related organizations, and efforts from the standpoint of bullied children and students. In doing so, delinquency prevention classes will be held and effective utilization will be made of school problem solving support teams consisting of school supporters, support teams, outside specialists, etc.

In addition, support will be provided for the improvement of school counseling arrangements, including the utilization of school counselors, school social workers, etc.

(iii) School non-attendance and social withdrawal countermeasures, etc.

(Response to mental problems)

In response to mental problems that are frequently seen in youth in the elementary school and adolescent periods, such as school non-attendance, social withdrawal, eating disorders,

sexually deviant behavior, etc., counseling in specialist organizations, etc. will be expanded and support will be provided for the improvement of school counseling arrangements, including the utilization of school counselors, school social workers, etc.

In addition, in cooperation with related organizations, efforts will be made to promote the early detection of problems and improve appropriate responses to individual needs.

(School non-attendance countermeasures)

In order to promote countermeasures for school non-attendance, etc., effective measures that lead to prevention, early detection, and early response and efforts in cooperation with related organizations will be promoted.

Efforts will be made to support educational opportunities for children who stay away from school, etc., including the improvement of counseling arrangements inside and outside schools for children and students who do not attend school.

In addition, in order to foster sociability, etc. among youth who require support for independence, such as youth who stay away from school, youth who withdraw from society, NEETs, etc., opportunities will be provided for them to continuously take part in experience activities, such as nature activities, living experience, social experience, etc.

(Senior high school dropout countermeasures)

In order to study effective support for senior high school dropouts, in cooperation with schools, etc., efforts will be made to grasp the condition of dropouts after they have dropped out of senior high school.

In addition, senior high school job supporters will be appointed in Hello Work public employment security offices, and job support will be promoted for senior high school dropouts by identifying such persons through cooperation with schools, implementing employment counseling, etc.

(Social withdrawal countermeasures)

In order to respond to the problem of social withdrawal, counseling and support will be provided in mental health welfare centers, public health centers, municipal health centers, child counseling offices, etc.

(iv) Support for the independence of young people facing disadvantageous conditions in the job market

(Support for unemployed young people, etc.)

For young people such as NEETs, the “local young people’s support station” project will be promoted to provide a diverse job support menu through professional counseling in response to the conditions of each individual, guidance utilizing networks of local young people’s support

organizations, etc. In addition, for young people who have lost the confidence to work for a variety of reasons, the “young people’s independence college” project will be implemented to give young people the confidence and desire to work through daily life training, work experience, etc. carried out in training-camp-style groups, and occupational independence support for young people such as NEETs will be promoted.

For young people without jobs, etc., consistent, one-on-one, fine-tuned job support, etc. will be implemented from job-search activities to settlement in the workplace.

On the basis of the Employment Countermeasures Law and the Guidelines for Employers to Respond Appropriately with Regard to the Ensuring of Employment Opportunities for Young People, Etc., support, such as counseling and advice, will be provided for employers, etc. who make efforts toward the expansion of job-application opportunities for young people, etc.

Regarding the worker dispatch system, efforts will be made toward the permanent hiring of dispatch workers, the improvement of their working conditions, etc., and the mechanism for protecting workers will be strengthened.

(Support for disabled persons, etc.)

In order to realize the occupational independence of disabled persons through the expansion of employment opportunities for them, efforts will be made to further promote the employment of disabled persons, including youth, centered on the disabled employment ratio system, and consistent support will be provided from the preparatory stages of employment to settlement in the workplace through support by disabled persons’ job support teams in cooperation with welfare and educational organizations and centering on Hello Work public employment security offices.

In addition, skill development measures will be promoted so that people can receive occupational training in accordance with their disability in familiar environments.

Furthermore, efforts will be made to improve career education in accordance with the state of individual disabilities, etc., to discover new work areas and expand workplace practice, and to promote the understanding of local companies, etc. with regard to special support education.

(Support for delinquent youth, etc.)

As a part of treatment in juvenile reformatories and juvenile prisons, efforts will be promoted to make inmates prepared for work, arouse their enthusiasm for work, and encourage them to acquire qualifications.

In addition, for young people scheduled to be released from juvenile reformatories or juvenile prisons, juveniles under probation, etc., in cooperation with related organizations, such as correctional institutions, probation offices, and public employment security offices, job support programs will be promoted, such as the implementation of job counseling and job introductions, utilization of the trial employment system for released prisoners, etc.

Furthermore, in cooperation with related ministries, efforts will be promoted to expand job opportunities in the agricultural, forestry, and fishery industries, a wide range of industries areas, including manufacturing, and the public sector.

(v) Prevention and protection of youth victims

(Measures to prevent child abuse)

In order to prevent the outbreak of child abuse, from the perspective of preventing the isolation of parents raising children, child-raising support in the local community will be improved and efforts will be promoted to visit households with babies and infants, provide information relating to child-raising support, understand the child-raising environment and so on, provide appropriate assistance for families in need of child-raising support, etc. Also, in order to ease the worries and uncertainty of parents raising children and build an environment to support child raising in the community, efforts will be promoted to provide information and learning opportunities to parents, etc. relating to child raising, and fine-tuned family education support will be implemented, including the improvement of counseling arrangements.

In order to detect and respond to child abuse at an early stage, efforts will be made to promote the establishment of local networks (local councils on countermeasures for children in need of protection) in municipalities that cooperate with related organizations, etc. and protect children and to strengthen their functions.

In order to protect and support youth who have suffered abuse and to strengthen family reintegration and the child-raising functions of families, support in accordance with conditions will be improved, a setup, etc. will be established so that related organizations can collaborate and provide long-term support to families, and housing support will be strengthened.

In addition, efforts will be made to conduct research, development, and dissemination relating to treatment and methods of guidance for youth who have suffered abuse and parents who have engaged in abuse.

Furthermore, the following efforts will be made in related organizations:

(a) Human rights protection organizations

In cases where victimization by child abuse is recognized, investigations of them as violations of human rights will be commenced, and appropriate measures to assist the abused children will be adopted in cooperation with child counseling offices, local councils on countermeasures for children in need of protection, and other related organizations.

(b) Child counseling offices

In order to make speedy and accurate responses to counseling, efforts will be made to improve the assignment of child welfare commissioners and, in cooperation with medical, legal, and other professional organizations and occupations, to ensure setups enabling high-level expert judgments. In addition, efforts will be promoted to improve and strengthen counseling arrangements so that responses to counseling can be made at all times, including nighttime and

holidays.

(c) Police

Through the investigation and survey of incidents, street guidance, counseling activities, reporting, etc., efforts will be made toward the prevention and early detection of cases of child abuse and priority will be given to confirming and ensuring the child's safety by making definite reports to child counseling offices, etc., conducting rigorous investigations, offering support to abused children, responding properly to requests for assistance, such as temporary protection provided by the directors of child counseling offices, etc. Cooperation will also be provided for the employment of former police officers, etc. in projects to support measures for the prevention of child abuse.

(d) Schools and boards of education

Efforts will be promoted to make school teachers, because of the nature of their jobs, aware that they are in a position that makes it easy to detect child abuse and to facilitate early detection and early response in school education. Boards of education will provide appropriate guidance and advice in response to inquiries, counseling, etc. from local schools relating to child abuse.

In addition, support will be provided for the improvement of educational counseling arrangements, including the utilization of school social workers, school counselors, etc., so that children can receive appropriate counseling.

(Other responses for children in need of care)

In special care facilities for children, etc., for children who do not have parents, children who cannot receive appropriate guardianship from their parents, etc., small group care by full-time staff that realizes fine-tuned care will be promoted; while maintaining an appropriate environment with residents in the neighborhood, the establishment of local small group children's care facilities will be promoted with the aim of facilitating social independence through care in a family-like environment; and care patterns will be reduced in scale.

In addition, efforts will be made to expand the foster parent system, which provides care in a family-like environment, and to strengthen support arrangements for foster parents.

In child counseling offices, efforts will be made to expand the assignment of child welfare commissioners in order to strengthen counseling and support arrangements.

(Measures against crimes that harm the welfare of youth)

In order to prevent youth from becoming the victims of crime, etc. relating to child prostitution and child pornography, efforts will be made through schools and related organizations to provide information and enlightenment to youth, their parents, and society as a whole concerning sexually deviant behavior, the present situation, and various regulations in related fields and, on the basis of related laws and ordinances, conduct rigorous investigations and appropriate treatment with consideration for reducing the psychological burden on youth

who have suffered.

Necessary appeals, including the thorough propagation of related laws and ordinances, will be made to Internet-related business organizations, movie-related organizations, etc. so that no harm is done to the welfare of youth.

(Other measures against crime)

Efforts will be made to bolster arrangements to watch over the safety of children by the local community as a whole and to continuously promote school safety, including support for the holding of crime-prevention classes that organize crime-prevention drills, first-aid training, etc.

Support will be provided for the collection and provision of community safety information relating to schools and classes for the prevention of delinquency and the prevention of injury from crime; introduction of the school supporter system, in which retired police officers, etc. are assigned in police stations so that a response to juveniles facing problems can be made through cooperation between the police and schools; and support will be provided for “Children’s Emergency Home” activities, which offer temporary protection for children along school-commuting routes, etc. and enable them to contact the police.

The National Police Agency and the Ministry of Justice will share information on the release from prison of violent sexual offenders who have committed crimes against children, and the police will take measures to prevent the recurrence of crimes by released offenders, etc.

Efforts will be made to promote preventive enlightenment in order to prevent youth from becoming the victims or the perpetrators of violence against women, and a fact-finding survey of youth will be conducted to ascertain the state of victimization, conditions of support, etc.

(Measures for youth who are the victims of crime and their families, etc.)

Continuous support activities by specialized staff, etc. will be promoted so as to provide treatment and reduce the psychological burden for youth who are the victims of crime and to assist their recovery. Also, young victims support networks will be built; in cooperation with boards of education and related organizations and groups, counseling, home visits, environmental coordination, etc. conducted through the cooperation of related organizations, etc. will be supported; and the improvement of school counseling arrangements, including the utilization of school counselors, school social workers, etc., will be supported.

Regional Public Prosecutor’s Offices throughout the country will assign victim supporters who will respond to inquiries from youth and other crime victims and their families, etc., and assist with information on the courts, accompanying persons, and procedures in the Public Prosecutor’s Office, as well as engaging in support activities, such as introducing related organizations, groups, etc. that provide support on the psychological, daily life, and economic sides, etc. in accordance with the conditions of the youth or other crime victims and their families, etc.

(Measures for the victims of bullying)

In response to the problem of bullying in schools, effective efforts that lead to prevention, early detection, and early response, efforts in cooperation with related organizations, etc., and efforts taken from the standpoint of the bullied children will be promoted. In doing so, effective utilization will be made of school supporters and “school problem solving support teams” comprising outside experts, etc.

In addition, in order to provide mental care to children and students who have suffered from bullying, support will be provided for the improvement of school counseling arrangements, including the utilization of school counselors, school social workers, etc.

Through the investigation and survey of incidents, counseling activities, etc., as well as efforts toward the early detection of bullying and assistance for victims in accordance with the case, the police, in cooperation with related organizations, etc., will provide fine-tuned and continuous support in accordance with the personality, etc. of the victimized youth to youth who are the victims of bullying and their parents.

In cases where victimization by bullying is recognized, human rights protection organizations will commence investigations of them as violations of human rights and, in cooperation with schools and other education-related organizations, adopt appropriate measures to assist children and students who have suffered from bullying.

(Suicide countermeasures)

Since support for the maintenance and promotion of mental health among youth and for good character formation will lead to the appropriate prevention of suicide, efforts will be made to promote enlightenment projects in “suicide prevention week,” improve mental health building and counseling arrangements in the community, etc., and otherwise enhance the setup for preventing suicide.

In addition, education and dissemination and enlightenment that contribute to the prevention of suicide among children and students will be implemented for children, students, and teachers, and mental care will be provided to children, students, etc. in the event of suicides or attempted suicides occurring at school, home, etc.

(Measures to prevent natural disasters and accidents)

Information will be supplied and enlightenment activities conducted in order to prevent unforeseen accidents involving babies and infants and water and mountain accidents involving youth.

In addition, disaster-prevention education and traffic safety education in accordance with each age group will be promoted so that youth do not suffer injuries in natural disasters or traffic accidents.

(vi) Support for foreign youth

Efforts will be promoted to realize a society in which foreigners can adapt smoothly to the living environment in Japan and enjoy the same residential services as Japanese as members of Japanese society. In doing so, consideration will be given also to people who face difficulties as a result of cultural and language differences in international marriages.

Efforts will also be made to promote school attendance for foreign children and to improve the arrangements in schools for accepting foreign children, students, etc.

In order to effectively implement counseling activities for foreign youth and their parents, efforts will be made to share information among related organizations and to improve counseling arrangements, including the utilization of foreign cooperators. In addition, human rights protection organizations will open human rights counseling offices with interpretation services in regional Legal Affairs Bureaus, etc. in major cities in Japan on designated days.

In order to promote employment among foreign youth, including descendants of Japanese, who have settled in Japan, job support guidance for people of Japanese descent will be implemented in local ethnic Japanese communities through Hello Work public employment security offices with jurisdiction over areas where Japanese descendants are concentrated, and individual job support, including guidance on work attitudes and job guidance, will be provided for people who attend such guidance.

In addition, for ethnic Japanese, etc. with a high degree of work zeal, in order to realize early employment, thorough support will be provided bearing in mind the needs of individual job seekers through an individual counselor system.

(2) Efforts to comprehensively support youth who are facing difficulties

(Efforts to comprehensively provide support toward the independence and social participation of youth)

For youth who face difficulties in achieving independence and social participation, such as NEETs and social recluses, public- and private-sector organizations will cooperate and adopt the following measures bearing in mind the need to respond by various means from an early stage.

(i) Efforts will be made to study methods, including new legal measures, to promote the establishment in local communities of support networks by public- and private-sector related organizations; the establishment of a mechanism for the smooth sharing of information relating to youth in need of support among related organizations; the implementation of home-visit support (“outreach”) for youth and their parents; the establishment in the central government of a setup for the comprehensive promotion of related measures; etc.

(ii) Efforts will be made to continuously grasp the situation relating to youth facing difficulties; to carry out research on effective means of support and disseminate the results; to develop training programs for the fostering of human resources involved in support; etc.

(iii) The conditions of youth facing difficulties in certain age groups will be grasped overall and, through the appropriate utilization of this information, a mechanism will be considered for providing support speedily in response to individual circumstances.

(iv) Regarding responses in local governments, etc., support will be provided for pioneering efforts, etc. by collecting, arranging, and supplying information, etc.

V. Basic Direction of Measures for Improving the Environment for Society-wide Support of the Healthy Development of Youth

1. Rebuilding relationships among homes, schools, and local communities

(1) Foster an open environment in households to give support to parents/guardians

Supportive home visits (outreach), advice and guidance for parents/guardians, and other efforts will be actively carried out in accordance with the stages of development of the youths involved and their troubling circumstances and so on (refer to Part IV above for the specific course of action to be taken). Additionally, proactive efforts will be made from the perspective of the nurturing of youth in cases when parental/guardian or family circumstances themselves are problematic due to economic difficulties or other troubles.

(Support for education in the home)

The organizations concerned will be encouraged to take a coordinated and comprehensive approach to education in the home. This approach will encompass the provision of information and learning opportunities related to bringing up children as well as counseling and the cultivation of specialized human resources. In addition, individuals with child-raising experience, community welfare officers, child welfare volunteers, hygienists, and other local specialists will be urged to coordinate their efforts so that fine-tuned support for education in the home is available in the immediate area.

(Support for single-parent families)

Businesses that offer child-raising support and household support services will be promoted in order to give peace of mind to single working parents. This will apply, for example, to enterprises that provide temporary child-care services in children's institutions and elsewhere when parents/guardians are ill, have to work after hours, and so on. Other applicable businesses will be providers of such services as dispatching housekeeping assistants to homes when, for instance, parents/guardians enroll in courses in order to acquire qualifications or are ill.

Moreover, various employment support measures will be promoted so that single mothers are able to find jobs that are compatible with their home environment and suit their aptitude and abilities and can thus lead self-sufficient lives. These measures for single mothers will include career counseling and employment assistance workshops, the provision of job information, and the payment of benefits for acquiring knowledge and skills.

Single mothers will also have access to maternal and child welfare loans, child-raising allowances, and survivors' pension benefits through the public pension system. In addition, reinforcement of the consultation system for securing funds to help with child-raising expenses will be promoted, and awareness-raising activities will be carried out.

Additionally, when single-mother households are subjected to domestic violence at the hands of spouses or other men, in many cases this abuse results in psychological damage not only to the women but also their offspring. Support on the psychological front will therefore also be implemented for both mothers and children.

(Support for families facing economic difficulties)

Support measures, such as scholarships, will be promoted so that talented students with a desire to receive education do not have any worries on the economic side and can study without anxiety. In addition, prefectures and municipalities will be encouraged to implement appropriate subsidies for school expenses as well as high school scholarship programs.

(2) Foster an open environment in schools through mobilization of outside as well as inside forces

(Re-energizing schools that join forces with families and communities)

Proactive efforts to support schools through volunteer activities by local residents and so on will be promoted in order to facilitate community-wide undertakings to bring up schoolchildren and thereby boost communities' educational abilities. These efforts will include the widespread establishment throughout Japan of regional headquarters for school support.

The formation of a "community school" system (a school administration council system) to advance the development of schools that are trusted and open to the community will also be promoted. Under this system, parents/guardians and other local residents will participate, with a certain degree of authority and responsibility, in the running of schools.

In addition to action aimed at improving and advancing school management through verification of the results of educational activities and so on, other efforts will seek to enhance school evaluation systems in order to promote coordination and cooperation with parents/guardians, local residents, and others. Specifically, self-evaluations by school personnel will be implemented in all schools, and individual schools and boards of education will be encouraged to ensure that evaluations of school officials by parents/guardians, local residents, and others are implemented for all schools insofar as possible. Active provision of information, including the results of the evaluations, will also be promoted.

(Enhancing education and consultation systems and functions)

With the system for the certification of educational personnel serving as the basis, systematic measures for each individual stage, that is, teacher cultivation, hiring, and training,

will be enhanced. Competent teachers and others who feel called to their profession, have an area of expertise, display originality, and are capable of responding appropriately to problems in the classroom will be secured.

Moreover, through the smooth implementation of the teaching credential renewal system starting in fiscal 2009, teachers will be equipped with up-to-date knowledge and skills that correspond to rapid changes in Japan's social structure and so on. There will also be efforts to preserve and improve those qualifications.

Improvement and enhancement of educational counseling systems will be undertaken in order to deal with bullying, acts of violence, and other problem behavior as well as school non-attendance and also in order to contribute to mental health care for schoolchildren and others who are victims of disasters, accidents, and other incidents. Steps in this regard will include posting guidance counselors in schools and also utilizing social workers who are professionals with expertise in the field of education and are also capable of providing support by approaching the different settings in which children are placed. For instance, drawing on their specialized knowledge and skills in the area of social welfare and so on, these social workers would be able to mobilize networks that encompass the organizations concerned and other contacts.

(Thorough safety management)

Efforts for the purpose of school safety management characterized by close coordination among families, people in the community, and the organizations concerned and so on will be promoted on an ongoing basis. Other efforts will advance the implementation of crime-prevention classes designed to equip individuals with know-how related to practical strategies and other aspects of dealing with situations such as child abductions and trespassers on school property.

(3) Initiatives for an extensive variety of experiences and exchange

(Creating places for various experiences and exchange activities)

There will be efforts to promote the improvement of places for experiential activities by youth, including educational facilities and other entities that enable youth to engage in nature activities, group stays, and so on. Along with that, coordination among youth education facilities, local governments, schools, youth groups, and other local organizations concerned will serve to boost communities' educational abilities.

Moreover, opportunities for overall sports activities will be enhanced by fostering integrated community sports clubs and improving city parks where youth can enjoy nature and engage in sports and recreational activities and other pastimes. In addition, highly qualified instructors who match the needs of residents and so on will be cultivated and secured.

Natural parks, waterfront locations along rivers and the seacoast, and woodlands will be

preserved and developed as places that can be utilized for various experiential activities, such as environmental studies and nature activities. Community-wide activities will also be promoted.

Opportunities for interaction with nature will be encouraged, and relevant information on enjoying nature will be made available. This information will cover, for instance, experiential nature events in different locations around Japan and facilities for coming into contact with nature.

Additionally, people will be encouraged to enjoy the abundant nature of rural communities engaged in farming, fishing, and forestry, the various forms of life found there, and exchanges with local people. Efforts in this regard will focus on promoting the improvement of acceptance arrangements in rural communities engaged in farming, fishing, and forestry, the improvement of exchange and experience facilities, the opening of lodgings in rural communities engaged in farming, fishing, and forestry, etc.

(Promoting reading activities)

Initiatives such as Japan's new Basic Plan Concerning the Promotion of Reading Activities by Children (approved by the Cabinet in March 2008) and the Diet resolution designating 2010 as the National Year of Reading will serve as the basis for action aimed at facilitating independent reading activities by children. Effective measures for the purpose of promoting children's reading activities, such as the improvement of systems for this age group's reading pursuits, will be implemented throughout society. Other efforts will support the activities of the organizations concerned, groups in the private sector, businesses, volunteer readers, and other parties while endeavoring to coordinate with them.

There will also be efforts to promote the improvement of library environments so that libraries are facilities that serve as community knowledge bases and are convenient and readily accessible for local residents.

For schools, the enhancement of opportunities for children to enjoy reading as well as the appointment of qualified teacher-librarians will be encouraged.

Fulfillment of the functioning of school libraries will also be addressed.

(4) Municipal development that minimizes the likelihood that youth will become victims of crimes and other acts

(Municipal development that minimizes the likelihood that youth will become victims of crimes and other acts)

Safety inspections will be conducted in schools and along routes to and from schools. Safety-oriented urban development will also be promoted in an effort to eliminate potential hazards through the installation of security lighting and security cameras as well as landscaping maintenance that does not impede visibility.

(Developing an environment conducive to going out and playing outside with peace of mind)

Efforts will be made to promote a barrier-free environment that is conducive to anyone, including youth, being able to go out comfortably with peace of mind. This barrier-free policy will apply to roads, off-street parking places, parks, government offices, public transportation, buildings, and traffic signals.

Additionally, safety inspections of playground equipment in parks and other measures will be carried out in order to maintain an environment in which children can play safely.

2. Comprehensive network building

(1) Promoting coordination with local governments and groups in the private sector

(Promoting action undertaken through coordination and cooperation between the public and private sectors)

Efforts will include working on the development of an atmosphere in which administrative officials, academic experts, and individuals in the private sector, particularly those who are involved in activities related to the nurturing of young people, can work on youth development in a coordinated and cooperative manner. Support will be given to national campaigns and other activities (see Exhibit) that are carried out for the purpose of arousing the awareness of parents/guardians and others with regard to various topics, such as a regular lifestyle and normal eating habits, exposure to mass media and so on, and ensuring safety and security in communities. In order to advance national efforts oriented toward youth development, opportunities will be provided so that individuals from all walks of life and all levels of society can exchange information and opinions pertaining to the nurturing of youth. Opportunities for other necessary forms of coordination will also be created.

(2) Strengthening the functionality of the organizations concerned and creating a framework for accessible services

(i) Cultivating and securing specialists

(Medical and healthcare professionals)

Survey research pertaining to securing and nurturing pediatricians and obstetricians will be promoted. In addition, a clinical training system that makes a pediatric rotation mandatory for all medical interns and provides them with training that covers basic medical care skills related to childhood illnesses will be administered.

As for hygienists, midwives, and other nursing personnel, measures related to securing human resources will be carried out in a comprehensive matter. These will include measures to prevent nursing personnel from leaving their jobs, to support their re-employment, to assure the ability to cultivate them, and to enhance qualifications.

Action oriented toward curriculum enhancement in individual universities will be promoted in order to nurture medical specialists who have excellent communication skills and practice patient-centered medicine.

(Child welfare professionals)

Moves will be made to ensure necessary staffing structures with regard to children's nurses and other child welfare service workers as well as child guidance center staff members. There will also be efforts to enhance training and enrich expertise.

Moreover, the improvement of educational counseling systems will be supported through such means as the utilization of social workers who are professionals with expertise in the field of education and are also capable of providing support by approaching the different settings in which children are placed. For instance, using specialized knowledge and skills in the area of social welfare and so on, these social workers would be able to mobilize networks that encompass the organizations concerned and other contacts.

(Specialists in adolescent psychology)

Doctors, hygienists, nurses, psychiatric social workers, clinical psychologists, and so on will be the focus of endeavors for the cultivation, training, and so on of specialists who are capable of handling mental health problems that occur during childhood and adolescence.

Efforts will be made to strengthen the professional expertise of mental health workers in correctional facilities through the enhancement of various forms of training. This training will cover interview techniques, psychological testing, and other areas, including how to handle guidance activities that involve ordinary citizens and other parties (general juvenile delinquent classification).

Support will also be given for the utilization of school guidance counselors and other steps to improve educational counseling systems and thereby enable schoolchildren to receive appropriate guidance.

(Professionals in the area of juvenile corrections and dealing with juvenile delinquents)

Action will be taken to ensure that Japan has an appropriate number of juvenile corrections officers to staff facilities. Along with that, training will be enhanced, and efforts will be made to improve qualifications and nurture specialists in youth guidance and other areas.

As for law instructors of the Ministry of Justice, there will be an effort to secure the qualified individuals who are needed for vocational training and other undertakings. Additional efforts will focus on the enhancement of on-the-job training and the improvement of leadership capabilities.

(Core human resources within networks)

In order to enable networks as a whole to respond to the complex issues faced by youth,

efforts will be made to nurture core human resources capable of considering appropriate support options that suit specific cases and undertaking coordination in that respect among the organizations concerned.

(ii) Securing and training partners in the private sector that include both the younger and late-middle-aged generations

(Securing and training partners in the private sector)

Efforts to secure human resources of all ages from a wide range of fields will include public announcements pertaining to probation officers, human rights defenders (particularly volunteers who defend the human rights of children), child welfare volunteers, and juvenile law enforcement as well as volunteers to assist with juvenile policing. Local governments and other organizations concerned will also be proactively approached. The training of these human resources will be enhanced, too.

Other efforts will focus on such private-sector partners as maternal and child health promoters and others commissioned by local governments. The securing of human resources of all ages to perform in these capacities as well as the enhancement of their training will be promoted.

Along with public announcements and other efforts to further the securing of human resources for the foster parent system, the training of foster parents and the framework for supporting them will also be improved.

(Peer counseling and support by members of the same and close generations)

Student volunteers can be very approachable for youth since they are either the same age or close in age. Approaches will be made to universities and other organizations concerned in an effort to promote the introduction of this option and to enhance counseling and support services.

Additionally, cooperation will be provided as necessary in order to encourage youth volunteer activities that support the independence of young people who have problems with delinquency or other troubles.

(Experiential activity instructors)

Efforts to cultivate and train experiential activity instructors will be promoted in order to enhance experiential activities conducted both within and outside of schools, such as hands-on activities within communities and programs that elementary schools implement to allow schoolchildren to experience nature firsthand for an extended period of time. These efforts will focus on younger people and retired baby-boomers as well as youth group leaders and others.

Additionally, the cultivation and training of nature program instructors and other types of nature commentators and guides will be advanced in order to secure and nurture human resources to support activities for experiencing nature.

(Promoting autonomous activities led by the private sector)

Efforts will be made to promote frameworks for individuals with the same troubles and concerns, such as parents engaged in child-raising, youth with disabilities or their family members, and youth in socially awkward circumstances or their family members, to come together through community activities, non-profit organization programs, or some other context and provide each other with mutual support by sharing stories of their personal experiences, exchanging information, engaging in collaborative learning, and so on.

3. Adapting to changes in the information and consumer environments

(1) Supporting the acquisition of knowledge and skills for adapting to changes in the information and consumer environments

(Improving media utilization skills)

Activities to be promoted will include endeavors to ensure the media literacy of young people, including their ongoing awareness of the usefulness and role of information as well as the impact of computerization and so on. Namely, they will be equipped with the ability to independently and appropriately sort out information relayed using radio and television programming, computers, the Internet, cell phones, and so on; to differentiate between these different means of conveying information; and to transmit information themselves. Efforts to cultivate information ethics, that is, attitudes and concepts that serve as the basis for engaging in appropriate activities in the information society, will also be advanced.

(Consumer education)

Enhancement of consumer education for youth will be undertaken in order to prevent young people from becoming caught up in consumer-related problems. This will be accomplished by implementing consumer education as part of formal education in schools on the basis of curriculum guidelines. Other activities will include the production and distribution of age-level-appropriate consumer education materials and pamphlets designed for young people as well as the provision of information to teachers and others by using online consumer education portals.

(2) Taking measures to counter harmful environments surrounding youth

(Properly administering the youth Internet environment law and so on)

Based on Japan's law concerning the creation of an environment for safe and secure utilization of the Internet by youth, a council will be set up to consider countermeasures covering online information that is harmful to youth and to promote the improvement of the Internet environment. A basic plan for measures to facilitate safe and secure utilization of the

Internet by young people will also be formulated, and measures incorporating various aspects will then be promoted on the basis of that plan. For example, these measures will cover promoting the spread of filtering (a mechanism that enables restrictions on online access to certain harmful sites and so on), education related to appropriate Internet utilization, public information and awareness-raising activities for parents/guardians, and support for the efforts of private-sector groups and so on.

Moreover, efforts will be made to identify illegal Internet content and to proceed with enforcement focused on heinous criminal activity. Providers, site administrators, and others will be asked to delete this kind of illegal material and so on.

The Law Concerning the Regulation of Acts Inducing Children Using Internet Dating Services and Other Matters has been amended to incorporate the introduction of a notification system and other content designed to strengthen regulation of online dating services. This revised version of the law controlling online dating sites will be administered effectively in order to prevent instances of the victimization of children as a result of the utilization of these Internet sites.

(Addressing problems associated with cell phones and so on)

Efforts will be made to promote assessment of the current status of cell phone usage by youth, clarification of policies for the handling of cell phones in schools, and the establishment of a structure to monitor the situation throughout society.

Moreover, endeavors related to appropriate utilization of cell phones and so on will focus on the enhancement of information ethics education and activities to raise awareness among parents/guardians and others.

(Controlling sex-related amusement businesses and so on)

Aggressive enforcement will be pursued with regard to acts that violate laws and ordinances related to sex-related amusement businesses.

Additionally, entertainment and amusement businesses will be given necessary guidance based on the Law on Control and Improvement of Amusement Businesses. Stringent enforcement will also be carried out in connection with acts that impede the healthy development of youth under the age of 18.

Furthermore, the operators of businesses such as dating-service coffee shops and other enterprises that can potentially lead to child prostitution and so on will be encouraged to institute self-imposed regulatory measures, such as restricting the entry of young people under the age of 18 into places of business. Crackdowns that aggressively utilize relevant laws and ordinances will also be carried out.

(Prohibiting the sale and so on of alcohol and tobacco to minors)

Appeals will be made to the industries concerned in order to eradicate the environment in

which minors can easily obtain alcohol and tobacco. In addition, necessary investigations and appropriate punishment will be carried out with regard to violations of the law, such as selling alcohol or tobacco with the knowledge that it is for consumption by minors.

Furthermore, by making the introduction of age-verifying cigarette vending machines a condition for obtaining a license for retail sales of tobacco products, retail tobacco dealers will be required to adopt vending machines that check whether purchasers are adults.

VI. Framework for Promoting the Measures

1. Ascertaining the state of affairs and other aspects related to youth and collecting and sharing information

(Survey research)

Survey research will be promoted so that full and objective utilization of a wide variety of information can be factored into the process of planning, formulating, and implementing measures related to the development of youth. This survey research will cover such aspects as the state of affairs and opinions of youth and their parents/guardians with respect to their physical and mental condition, the environment in which they are brought up, social independence, and other aspects. On that occasion, gender-specific assessments of the status quo will be carried out, and the potential for disparities between the problems that males and females face will be acknowledged.

In particular, given that the nurturing of youth and the resolution of problems are areas that require involvement across a broad spectrum of fields, survey research will be improved by pursuing an interdisciplinary approach that cuts across administrative lines.

(Creating an environment for sharing and utilizing survey data and so on)

In order to facilitate active utilization of the survey data and opinions that are obtained through survey research and so on, the creation of mechanisms for uniform management of the survey data and other information will be encouraged. Proper administration of secondary usage of statistical data will also be addressed.

2. Public announcements, public hearings and so on

(Public announcements, awareness-raising activities, information provision, and so on)

Public announcements, awareness-raising activities, and information provision will be undertaken in order to further public understanding of and cooperation with issues related to the development of youth, such as child-raising support, improvement of physical strength, respect for the human rights of youth, suicide prevention, crime prevention, and support for youth who

have problems associated with delinquent behavior, rehabilitation, and other troubles. These efforts will include the designation of awareness months as well as activities conducted through coordination and cooperation with entities in the private sector. Additional efforts will focus on the dissemination of accurate knowledge about the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Furthermore, the provision of youth-oriented information will also be undertaken so that various types of information will reach young people easily and be readily understandable by them.

In addition to the above, public announcements of information concerning youth development measures will be made in a timely and appropriate manner.

(Public hearings)

Hearings to solicit the opinions of the public, including young people themselves, will be conducted as appropriate. This input will be reflected in the process of planning, formulating, and implementing measures related to youth development.

3. International coordination and cooperation

(1) Cooperating with the activities of international organizations and others

Japan will participate proactively in youth-related conventions, action plans, and other undertakings of the United Nations and other international organizations. Additionally, the public in Japan will be informed of the content of those endeavors, and mutual exchange and other forms of international cooperation will be promoted.

(2) Gathering and sending out information

Information related to the status of other countries' measures concerning the development of youth will be gathered and made available. Japan will also provide other countries with information on its own domestic measures.

4. Promoting measures and so on

(1) Promoting coordination and collaboration among the national government agencies concerned in Japan

Close coordination and cooperation among the administrative agencies concerned will be pursued in order to implement measures based on this National Youth Development Policy in a comprehensive and effective manner. The Headquarters for Youth Development will be at the center of this process, which will take place under the leadership of the prime minister of Japan. Good policy coordination will also be sought.

(2) Examining and evaluating the status of the implementation of the measures concerned

The status of the implementation of youth development measures based on this National Youth Development Policy will be examined and evaluated.

(3) Policy review

A review of this National Youth Development Policy will take place in approximately five years.

(Exhibit)

Examples of national movements and various measures being taken concerning youth development

(Concerning the sound development of youth in general)

- National movements to promote the sound development of youth
- Movements to prevent juvenile delinquency
- The Japan Network for Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (the “Orange Ribbon” movement)
- National movements to protect youth from harmful information environments (“Wait a minute, mobile” initiative, e-Net Caravan, etc.)

(Concerning youth education and support for their social independence)

- Measures such as the “Career Start Week” promotion campaign aimed at promoting career skills education
- Measures to promote reading (the national campaign to promote reading amongst children, the movement for reading books out aloud to children etc.)
- Measures to support the development and rehabilitation of youth through sports, traditional culture and arts etc.

(Concerning lifestyles)

- Food education promotion movement
- The “Early to bed, early to rise, eat your breakfast” national movement
- “No TV days” and “No gaming days” and other such measures concerning excessive exposure to the media, etc.

(Concerning measures at home and in the community)

- The national movement to rekindle family and community ties
- The “Change! JPN” campaign to promote a better balance between life and work
- Various movements to encourage people to talk to and greet each other
- Various movements aimed at protecting children from becoming the victims of crime (such as the activities to keep an eye on children in the community)

Terms

The definition of youth used in this document is as shown below.

Youth: The generic term for both children and young people (from birth until around the end of their twenties)

Adults: People who have grown out of youth

Children: Infants (before compulsory education) and elementary school-aged children

Young people: Adolescents (from lower secondary school to age 18) and young adults (from around age 18 until around the end of their twenties)

* In cases where certain terms are specified in laws to refer to specific groups of young people, those terms are used in this document when appropriate.