

## Part 2

# Implementation Status of Countermeasures against Declining Birthrate (Summary)



## Key Challenges

### Section 1

### Further enhancement of child care support measures

#### 1 Smooth implementation of the children and childrearing system

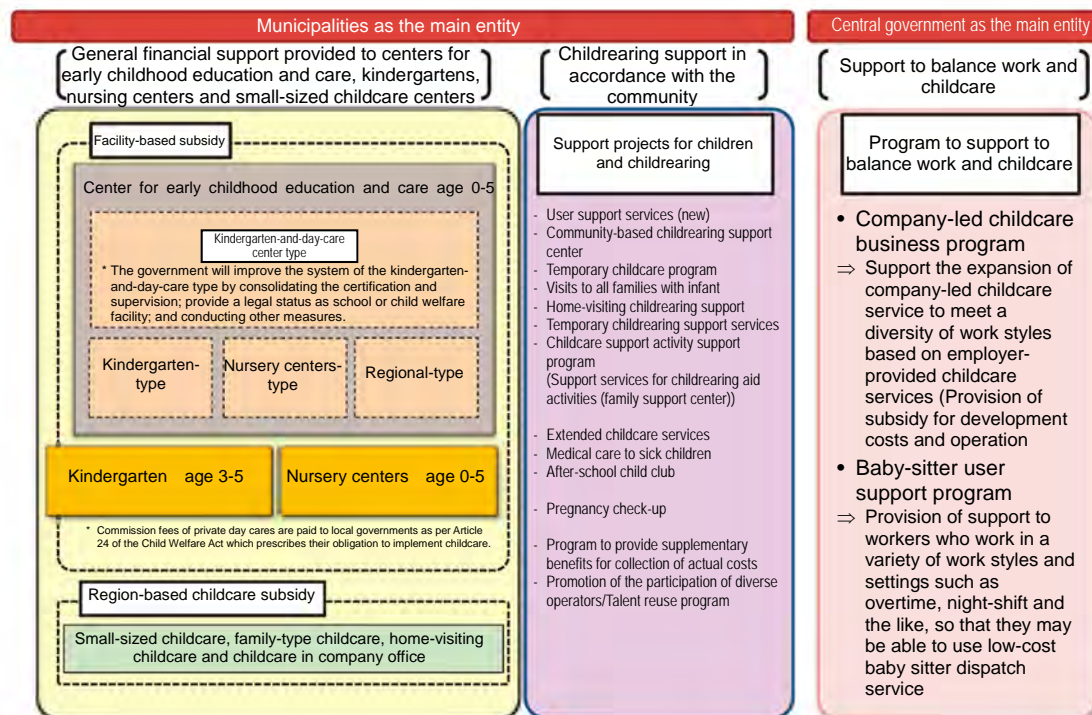
##### Qualitative and quantitative improvement in child education, nursing and childrearing according to regional situations

The Comprehensive Support System for Children and Childrearing (hereinafter referred to as “new system”) based on the Act on Children and Childrearing Support (Act No. 65 of 2012) was fully implemented in April 2015. Under the basic recognition that “parents have a primary responsibility for childrearing,” the new system

promotes comprehensively school education and childcare in early childhood as well as local child and childcare support. (Fig. 2-1-1) Specifically, the new system will focus on the creation of common benefits to (1) centers for early childhood education and care, kindergartens and nursery centers (“facility type benefits”), and of benefits to small-sized nursing care (“community-type childcare benefits”), (2) the improvement of the system of centers for early childhood education and care, and (3) the enhancement of child and childcare support according to local circumstances.

Fig. 2-1-1

Outline of the Comprehensive Support System for Children and Childcare Support (April 2016)



Source: Cabinet Office

The implementing entity is municipalities as the basic administrative entity and will implement school education and childcare in early childhood as well as provision of benefits required for local child and childcare support according to the actual circumstances of each area.

In the wake of the increase in the target number of centers for childcare from 400,000 to 500,000 children by the end of FY 2017 based on the “Acceleration Plan for Elimination of Wait-listed Children” in November 2015, in addition to the creation of the program aimed to provide subsidy and support to establishers of facilities for employer-provided childcare services (Company-led childcare business program), the Act on Children and Childrearing Support was revised including raising of the upper limit of the contribution rate collected from ordinary industrial corporations in the ordinary sessions of the Diet in 2016 (190<sup>th</sup> Diet). Through the Company-led childcare business program started in April 2016, the development of further centers for childcare is underway.

#### **Improvement of various childcare supports according to regional needs**

- **User support**

In addition to providing support such as consultation, information provision, advice etc. in near-by areas so that childrearing families and pregnant women are encouraged to make use of education/childcare facilities and institutions related to regional child and childcare support programs, health, medical care, welfare and the like, we have newly launched the “User Support Project” designed to develop systems for communication, adjustment, coordination and cooperation with related institutions in line with the enforcement of the new system.

This project has mainly two functions of “user support” in which individual needs of childrearing households are grasped in order to collect and provide information, provide consultations and provide assistance and support for the use of education/childcare facilities and region child and childcare support programs and of “regional collaboration” in which systems for communication, adjustment, coordination and cooperation with institutions related to child care support are created to foster regional childcare support resources, discover and share regional problems and develop social resources required for the region. This project is divided into three types: the “basic type” that implements both functions; the “specific type” that implements only “user support”

to provide information on childcare centers and a variety of childcare services and provide assistance to users for their use; and the “maternal and child health type” in which professionals such as public health nurses perform both the “user support” and “regional collaboration” for all maternal women in order to provide support to a variety of needs from pregnancy to childrearing. In FY 2015, this project has been implemented in 344 places with the basic type, 291 places with the specific type and 295 places with maternal and child health type (subject to national treasury subsidy). (Fig. 2-1-2)

- **Regional childcare support centers**

In order to reduce feelings of burden and feelings of anxiety of childrearing families, we implement the “Regional childcare support center program” which provides opportunities for childrearing parents for casual meeting and exchange, provides consultation and assistance on childrearing as well as information related to regional childrearing, and provide seminars on childrearing and childrearing support.

This program was implemented in FY 2015 in 6,818 places (subject to national treasury subsidy). In addition, based on the actual condition of the community and in response to requests of parents, in order for kindergartens to play a role as the education center in early childhood in communities, for example, we provide assistance for when childrearing support activities are implemented, such as the implementation of parenting consultation, provision of information on childrearing, attending kindergarten of prekindergarten children with their parents, provision of opportunities for exchanges among parents, opening of kindergarten’s gardens and buildings, holding of open seminars on childrearing, exchange with childrearing circles with other communities and the like<sup>1</sup>.

- **Temporary nursing and education by kindergartens**

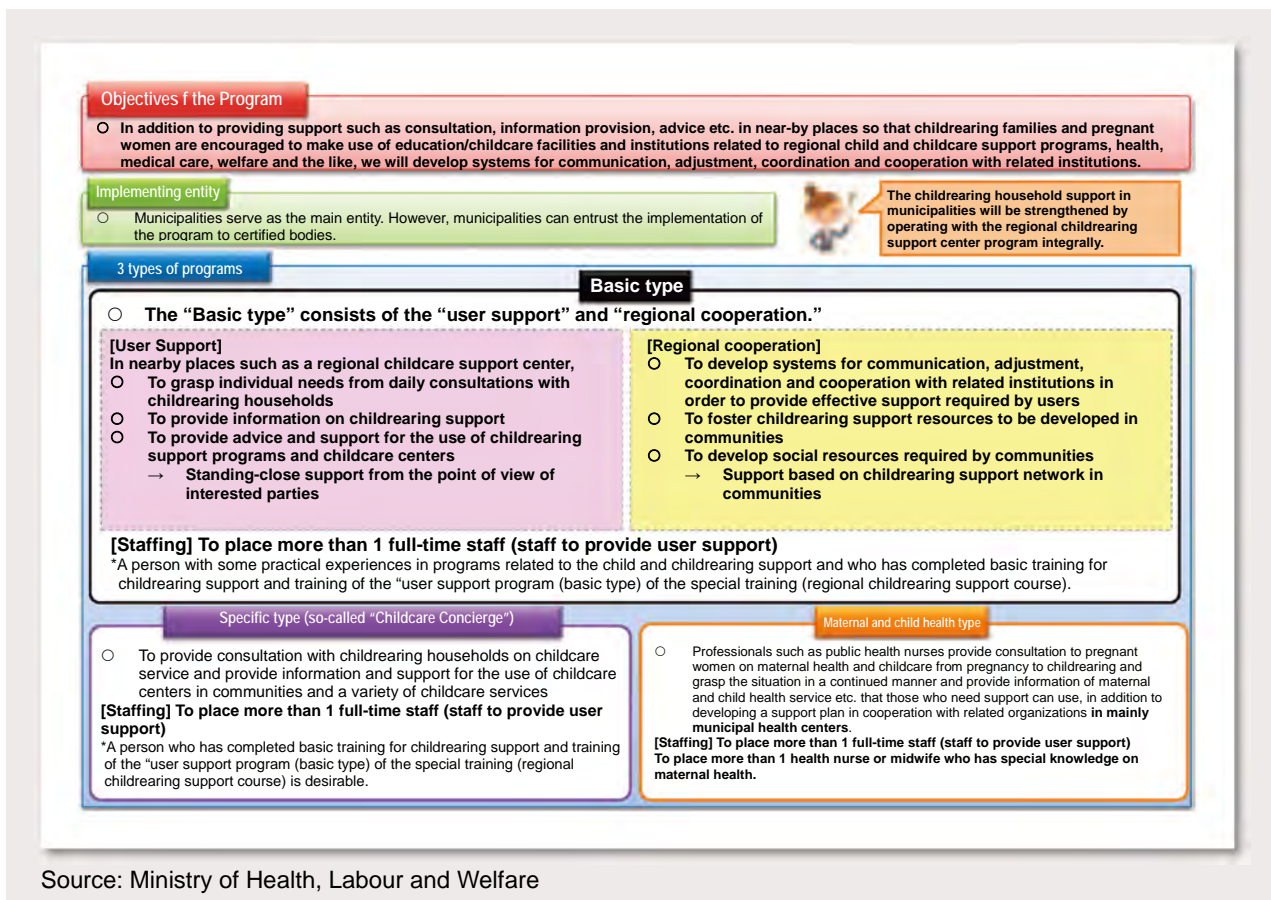
The temporary nursing project has been conducted to meet the demand to temporary nursing in response to various work arrangement and the urgent requests from non-working mothers. (In FY 2015, the project was carried out in 9,781 locations.)

The subsidies have been provided for kindergartens, which carry out “temporary nursing” before or after the ordinary education hours (standard four hours) or during long holidays, in response to people who desire or regional situations.

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<sup>1</sup> As of FY 2013, about 87% of kindergartens implement such childrearing support activities.

Fig. 2-1-2 Support project for users



Since demands for “after-hours childcare” are increasing due to diversified needs of parents following the expansion of women’s social participation in recent years, urbanization, nuclear familiarization etc., the government revised “Course of Study for Kindergarten” in 2008 to provide appropriate education activities<sup>1</sup>. Furthermore, in the budget for FY 2017, the subsidy for long-hours childcare has been enhanced in order to promote the acceptance of wait-listed children in kindergartens.

#### • Family Support Center

The government is promoting the installation of

family support centers with enrollment of workers and housewives with infants and elementary school children as their members to provide mutual aid activities such as transfer and after school custody. (In FY 2015, 809 centers were installed). In addition, as from FY 2009, services such as custody of sick and convalescent infants and emergency custody in early morning and late night have been implemented (In FY 2015, 142 services were installed). Incidentally, as of the end of FY 2015, the number of the members of the family support center program who need support is 520,000 and who provide support is 130,000.

1 As of June 2014, the proportion of kindergartens which implement “after-hours childcare” is about 83%.

## Provision of a Variety of Childcare Services

In order to satisfy a variety of childcare needs, we continue to promote the extension childcare project, the nighttime nursing project, and the childcare businesses for children with diseases and convalescent children. Based on the enforcement of the new system, extension childcare and childcare for children with disease have been incorporated in “the regional children and childrearing support project.” As municipalities’ approval projects, “Family-style day-care services and childcare within institution services” are aided by the regional childcare benefits, while nighttime nursing is aided by the facility-type benefits.

- **Extension childcare**

To meet the demand for extension childcare due to parent’s various working styles, some nursing centers are operated more than ordinary 11 hours. Out of such centers, private nursing centers are provided with necessary subsidies. (In FY 2015, extension childcare was carried at 20,738 nursing centers [5,742 public centers and 14,996 private centers].)

- **Nighttime nursing**

Necessary subsidies are provided for nighttime nursing centers which open until around 10:00 p.m. (In FY 2015, nighttime nursing was carried out at 82 nursing centers.)

- **Childcare for children with disease**

There are cases where childcare cannot be provided at home when a child falls sick or a child is convalescent in the case in which parents work. In order to respond to such childcare demand, the government provides the sick-child care services whereby sick children are provided with care temporarily at hospitals and childcare centers, and children who fall sick during childcare are provided with emergency measures including the visit to sick children for temporary custody with a view to developing environment where children are raised safely and improving welfare of children. (The number of implemented places in FY 2015 were 2,226.)

In addition, as from FY 2016, ① in order to reduce the initial cost for starting the services, we subsidize expenses for facility development required for newly implementing sick-child care services in addition to conventional operating costs are subsidized, and ② expenses to employ nurses in sick-child care centers and to transfer children who

fall ill during childcare to hospitals and temporarily provide custody from the financial resources obtained by raising the business operator’s contribution.

- **Municipal-level childcare services**

In light of the enforcement of the new system and responding to an increased childcare demand, four projects have been covered by the Child Welfare Act and become municipalities’ approval projects, which include “Small-scale childcare services” for 6 to 19 children, “Family-style day-care services” for 5 children or less, “Childcare within institution services” for employees’ and other regional children, and the other.

(As of April 1, 2016: 3,719 cases, including 2,429 cases of small-sized childcare services, 958 cases of home-based childcare services, 323 cases of employer-provided childcare services, and 9 cases of home visit type childcare services.) (Fig. 2-1-3)

- **Employer-provided childcare**

The employer-provided childcare services newly established in FY 2015 are services subject to approval of municipalities (community-led childcare services) and are subject to regional-type childcare benefits.

(As of April 1, 2016: 323 cases)

In addition, in order to expand childcare services to respond to a diversity of work styles, the company-led childcare were implemented in the work-childcare balance support services newly established through the revision of the Act on Children and Childrearing Support, and a part of expenses for the development and operation of employer-provided childcare facilities installed by companies is subsidized since FY 2016<sup>1</sup>. Since the installation site of facilities is not limited to within the premises of the companies, the services are provided with originality and ingenuity using facilities provided jointly by small to medium sized companies as well as facilities installed around stations in consideration of convenience of employees and children using them to meet the needs of employees and each company.

(Number of employer-provided childcare services with subsidy: 871 facilities with capacity for 20,284 children as of March 30, 2017)

In the work and childcare balance support program, in addition to the above, when workers with a variety of work styles use a the babysitter dispatch service for work, a part of the cost is subsidized since FY 2016 as employer-provided babysitter support services. (Fig. 1-2-13)

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1 See the Special Topic “Further development of the child and childcare new support system”

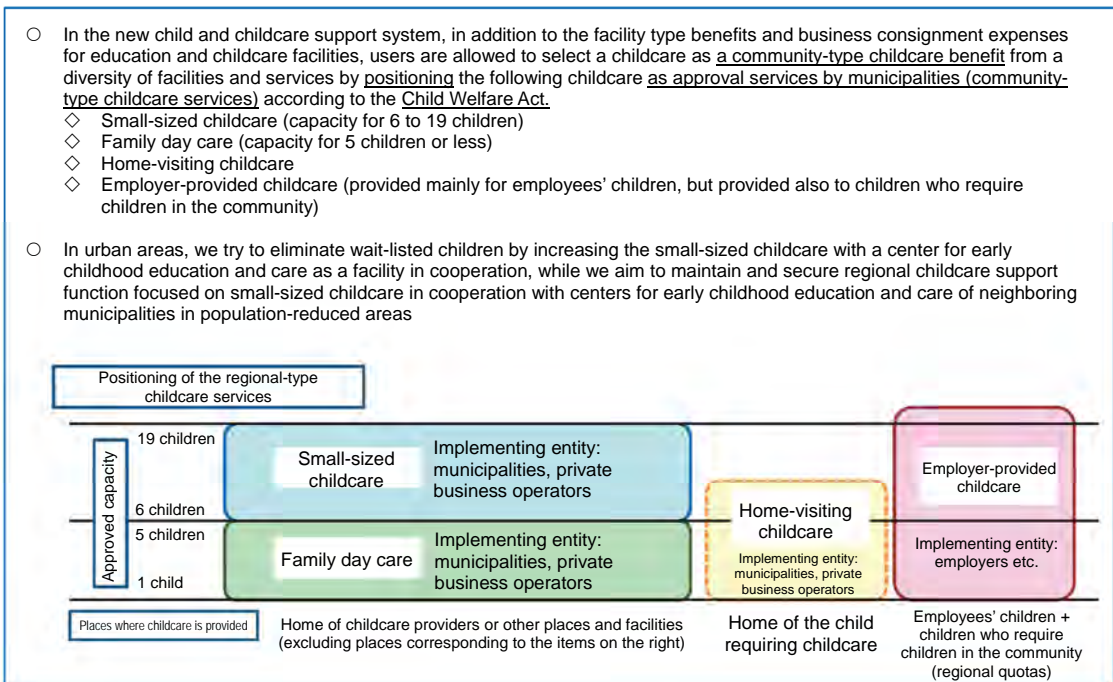
In addition, in order to balance work and childcare of employees, a part of costs for the installation, expansion and operation of childcare facilities for workers that are established and operated as well as expanded in the workplace is subsidized to employers or operating entities that provide such facilities.

(Installation of employer-provided childcare facilities and operation support subsidy: 626 cases of subsidized services in FY 2015. From FY 2016,

however, with the start of “Company-led childcare business program,” provision of new subsidies is stopped.)

In some employer-provided childcare facilities in the urban areas, various novel ideas are carried out including laundry service used in conjunction with flextime or stagger commuting hours to reduce burden of laundry during commuting in order to take off burden from parents and children.

**Fig. 2-1-3** Municipal-level childcare services



Source: Cabinet Office

## 2 Reduce Wait-listed Children

### Current situation of wait-listed children

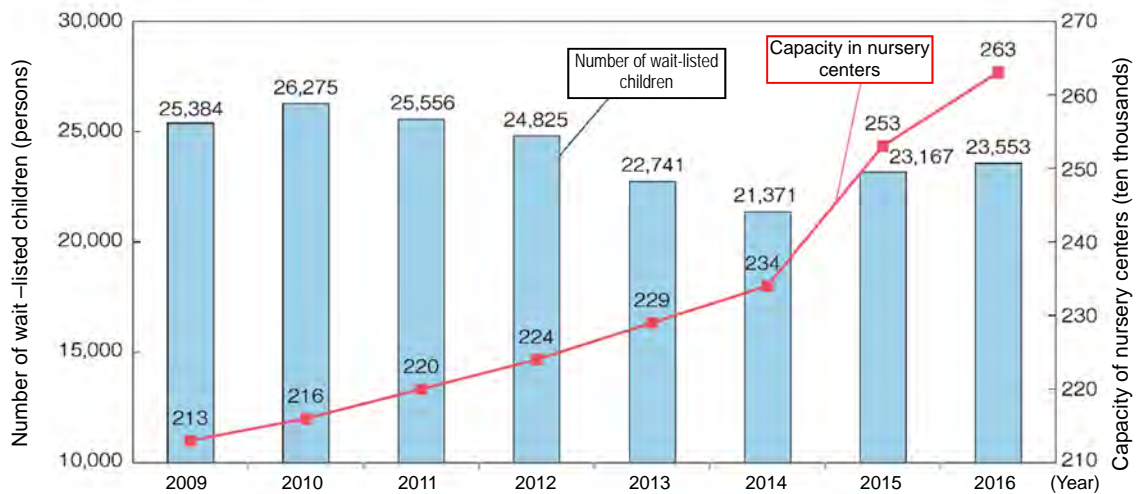
In April 2016, the capacity of nursery schools and other centers reached 2,634,510, which account for 39.9% of preschool children (number of children using the facilities divided by the number of

preschool children). The number of wait-listed children stands at 23,553 (386 more than the previous year). The number of applications for childcare has increased with an increase in women's employment and an increase in the use of childcare and thus, the number of wait-listed children as of April 2016 has increased in comparison with the previous year. (Fig. 2-1-4 and Table 2-1-5)

**Fig. 2-1-4 Current Statuses of Wait-listed Children**

- The number of wait-listed children is 23,553 as of April 1, 2016 (up 386 from the previous year)
  - Young children (age 0-2) account for approximately 86.8% (20,446)
  - The total capacity of nurseries and others\*1 is 2,634,510 as of April 1, 2016
  - 386 municipalities have wait-listed children (account for approximately 22.2% of 1,741 municipalities)
    - ⇒ 116 municipalities have 50 wait-listed children or more, and 65 have 100 wait-listed children or more
  - Approximately 74.3% live in cities\*2 (17,501)
  - Changes in the number of wait-listed children and the capacity of nursery schools and other centers
- \*1 Include nurseries, centers for early childhood education and care, special regional type childcare projects (small-sized childcare project, family-type childcare project, childcare in company office and home-visiting childcare)
- \*2 The total number of prefectures in Tokyo Metropolitan area (Saitama, Chiba prefectures, Tokyo and Kanagawa prefecture) and Kinki area (Kyoto, Osaka and Hyogo prefectures); ordinance-designated cities; and heartland cities

**Trend of the Number of Wait-listed Children and Capacity of Nursery Centers**



\* As from 2015, kindergarten-type centers for early childhood education and care, local discretionary type centers for early childhood education and care and specific-area type childcare services (small-sized childcare services, family day care services, employer-provided childcare services and home-visiting childcare services) are included.

Source: Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare

**Table 2-1-5 Number of Wait-listed Children by Age**

As of April 1, 2016

	Children using the service		Wait-listed children	
Young children (age 0-2)	975,056 persons	39.7%	20,446 persons	86.8%
Zero-year-old-children	137,107 persons	5.6%	3,688 persons	15.7%
1-year old and 2 year-old children	837,949 persons	34.1%	16,758 persons	71.1%
3 year-old or older children	1,483,551 persons	60.3%	3,107 persons	13.2%
Total of all children	2,458,607 persons	100.0%	23,553 persons	100.0%

Source: Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare

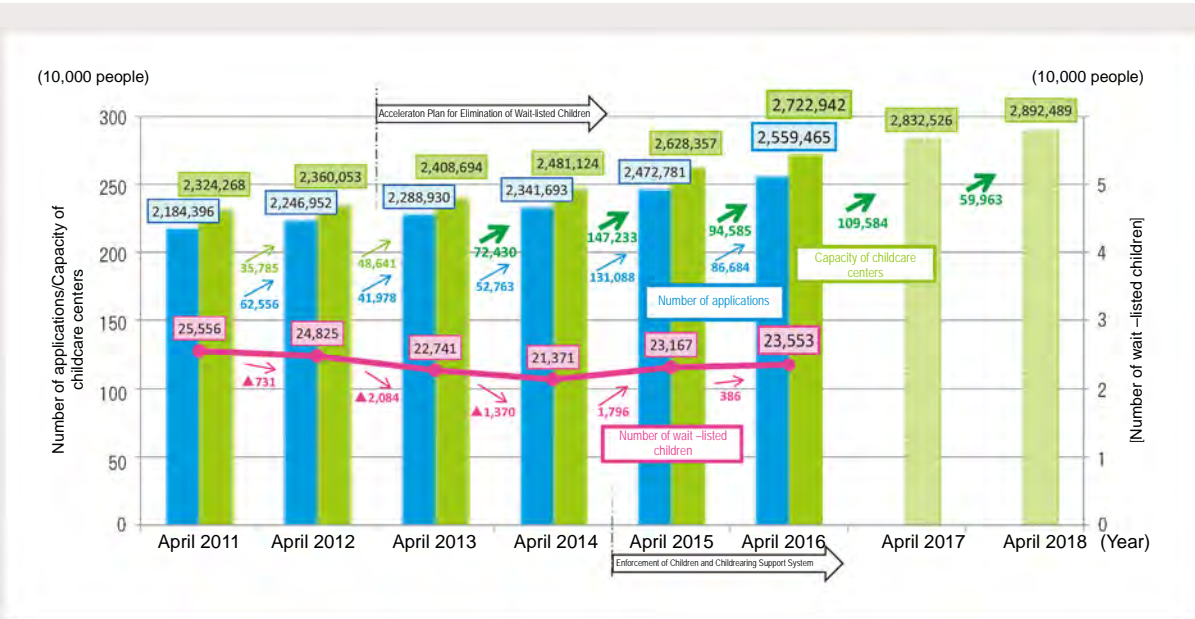
**Acceleration Plan for Elimination of Wait-listed Children**

The Abe Cabinet announced in April 2013 the Acceleration Plan for Elimination of Wait-listed Children based on the securing of childcare centers for about 400,000 children by the end of FY 2017 by positioning the issue of wait-listed children as a top priority. In light of the subsequent increase in the number of wait-listed children, however, the Cabinet Office increased the number to 500,000 in the “measured to be urgently implemented towards

the realization of a Society in Dynamic Engagement of All Citizens” published in November 2015. In the three years from FY 2013 to FY 2015, childcare centers for a total of about 314,000 children were obtained and it is estimated that childcare centers for a total of about 483,000 children will be obtained in the five years by FY 2017. Moreover, it is intended to obtain further childcare centers for about 50,000 children through the company-led childcare serviced implemented since FY 2016. (Figs. 2-1-6 and 2-1-7)

**Fig. 2-1-6**

**Current situation of wait-listed children and the status of the Acceleration Plan for Elimination of Wait-listed Children**



Source: Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare

Fig. 2-1-7

Acceleration Plan for Elimination of Wait-listed Children

Expansion of childcare centers towards the elimination of wait-listed children

- ◆ The Cabinet office formulated the “Acceleration Plan for Elimination of Wait-listed Children” in April 2013 and intends to eliminate wait-listed children by newly securing childcare centers for **500,000 children in the five years between FY 2013 and the end of FY 2017**.
  - ※ In consideration that the employment of women aged between 25 and 44 years will be increased in the future, the target was increased based on the “measured to be urgently implemented towards the realization of a Society in Dynamic Engagement of All Citizens” published in November 2015 (from for **400,000 children to for 500,000 children**)
- ◆ **Through initiatives of local governments**, childcare centers for a total of about **314,000 children** were obtained in the three years from FY 2013 to FY 2015, and it is estimated that childcare centers for a total of about **483,000 children** will be obtained in the five years by FY 2017.
- ◆ Moreover, it is intended to obtain further childcare centers for about **50,000 children** through **the company-led childcare serviced** implemented since FY 2016.

Tally result (FY 2016) of The Acceleration Plan for Elimination of Wait-listed Children

◇ Current Status of “Acceleration Plan for Elimination of Wait-listed Children” (FY 2016)

FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	5-year total
72,430	147,233	94,585	109,584	59,903	483,795
(Total 314,248 children)			(Total 169,547 children)		

Initiatives towards securing childcare centers

○ FY 2016 supplementary budget (to move up a part of the scheduled plan for FY 2017)

○ FY 2017 initial budget (to allocate the budget corresponding to required childcare centers excluding the budget moved up (for 46,000 children))

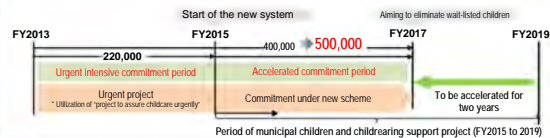
- ▶ To support the introduction of the “admission reservation system” of zero-year old children after the termination of childcare leave
- ▶ To support the establishment of “satellite-type small-sized childcare center” for 3-year old or younger children at the base childcare center specialized in 3-year-old or older children
- ▶ To develop childcare concierge to meet the needs of parents
- ▶ To strengthen the function of “regional cooperation coordinator” for consensus building with local people when installing a childcare center.

Changes in the use of childcare centers of 1 to 2 year-old children

	(April 2014)	(April 2016)	End of FY2017
1 to 2 year-old children:	35.1%	42.2%	48.0%
	Use rate when the capacity for 500,000 children is secured		
	<(Reference) Women's employment rate: 70.8% (2014) → 77% (2020)>		

(Note) Use rate: Number of children using childcare / Number of preschool children  
The use rate as of April 2014 does not include the small-sized childcare services.

<Overview of The Acceleration Plan for Elimination of Wait-listed Children>



Source: Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare

In March 2016, the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (MHLW) published “Measures to urgently eliminate wait-listed children” in order to implement measures such as the promotion for the development of facilities with a view to securing childcare centers and human resources for municipalities that are actively engaged in expanding them. As part of the measures, MHLW is promoting temporary childcare services and small-sized childcare services in kindergartens in order to deal with the issue of wait-listed children actively.

In “The Japan’s Plan for Dynamic Engagement of All Citizens” decided by the Cabinet in June 2016<sup>1</sup>, the government aims to eliminate wait-listed children by the end of FY 2017 through comprehensive initiatives in combination with measures to secure childcare personnel, and further to engage in securing childcare centers in view of

various initiatives, including a further increase in women’s employment from FY 2018 onwards, progress in work style reform, and promotion of the taking of childcare leave which serves as a seamless support for childcare.

In September 2016, MHLW wrapped up the “Measures for seamless childcare.” MHLW is also poised not only to further push forward the development of facilities and securing of childcare personnel, but also to provide further support for the efforts of municipalities to eliminate wait-listed children, by providing support to the introduction of the admission reservation system of zero-year old children after the termination of childcare leave and of childcare concierge that meet the needs of parents, as well as the clarification that fixed property tax is reduced when a land is rented for childcare purposes, etc.

1 “Acceptance of wait-listed children in kindergartens” (Cabinet Office Counselor for Child and Childcare Support, April 22, 2016), Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, Elementary and Secondary Education Bureau, Early Childhood Education Division, and Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, Equal Employment, Children and Families Bureau)

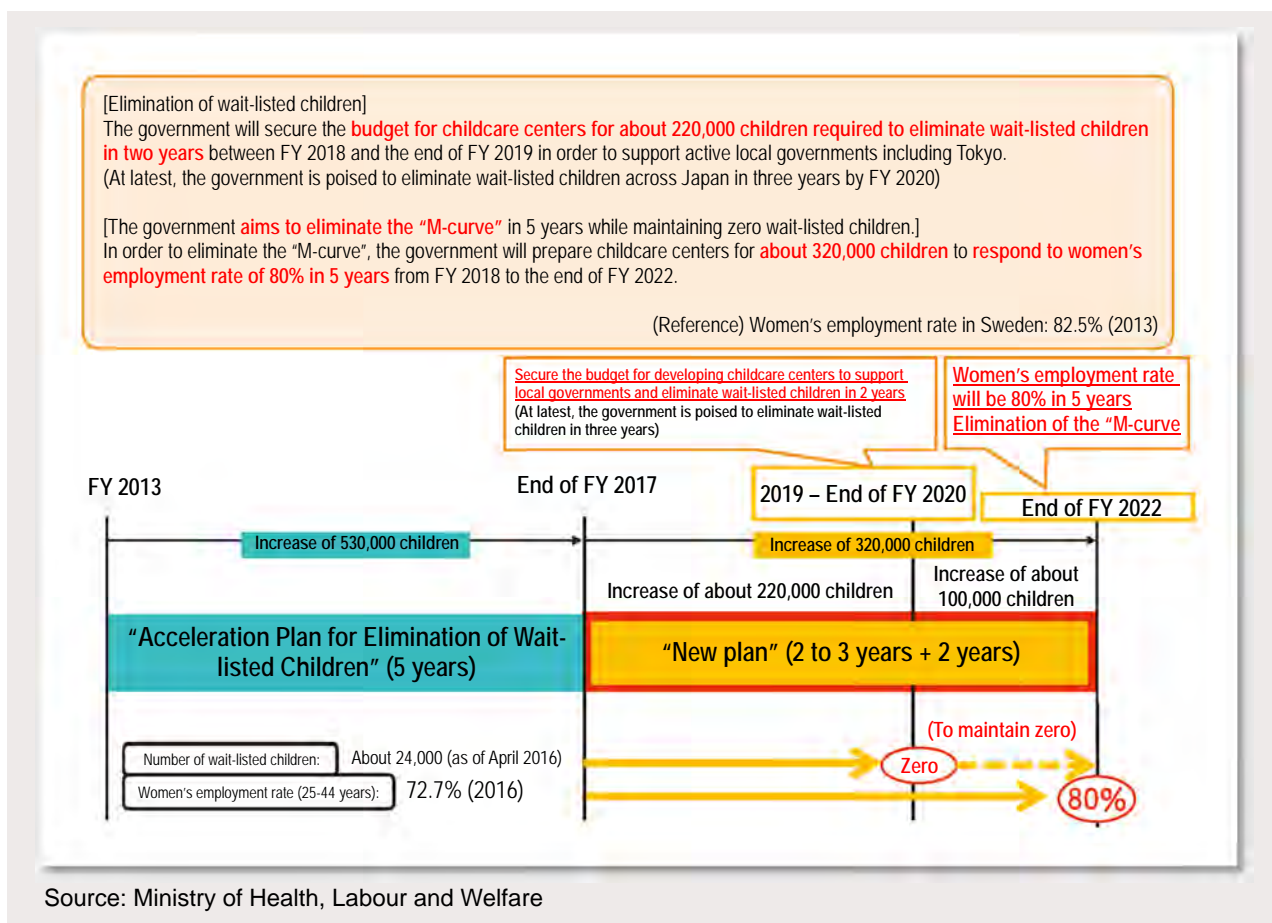
While it is expected that the women’s employment rate will continue to rise and the number of people who wish to use childcare will increase in the future, the government published in June 2017 the “Plan to rear children with peace of mind” to secure the budget necessary for childcare centers with the capacity of about 220,000 children in order to eliminate wait-listed children in two years by the end of FY 2019, and eliminate wait-listed children across Japan in three years at latest by the end of FY 2020. Moreover, the government is poised to develop centers for childcare for about 320,000 children in the five years until the end of FY 2022 to cope with women’s employment rate of 80%. (Fig. 2-1-8).

In addition, since it is pointed out that each municipality handles differently the case when a specific childcare center is desired, etc., when grasping the number of wait-listed children, MHLW established the “Study Group for the Survey of the Number of Wait-listed Children to use Childcare Centers” in September 2016 to study the matter. Based on the summary of the study results of March 2017, the MHLW provided each local government with the guidelines for the survey

of the number of wait-listed children to use childcare centers, which show that it is necessary to check continuously that when the child is admitted to a nursery school, the person in childcare leave goes back to work, and when the return to work is verified, the child is treated as a wait-listed child, etc.

Incidentally, in addition to the measures mentioned above, UR Rental Housing is making efforts to establish childcare support facilities (nursing centers, kindergartens, after-school day-care centers, etc.) in cooperation with local governments, by making use of developed sites created by the housing complex regeneration project and others as well as existing vacant stores. As of the end of FY 2016, 584 centers were created. In addition, due to the revision of the Urban Park Act (Act No. 79 of 1956) in April 2017 (enforced in June 2017), the special case for occupancy in the urban parks within the National Strategic Special Zones was put into common use and it became possible to establish nursing centers by making use of part of urban parks. It is expected that the number of nursing centers will be increased by this measure.

**Fig. 2-1-8 Plan to rear children with peace of mind**



Source: Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare

## Promotion of “human resources securing measures”

The government is poised to implement comprehensive measures in a continued manner, including improving treatment, securing new childcare qualifiers, supporting continued employment, and supporting reemployment of unemployed persons in order to secure childcare personnel who will be responsible for nursery care in conjunction with the expansion of childcare centers. (Fig. 2-1-9)

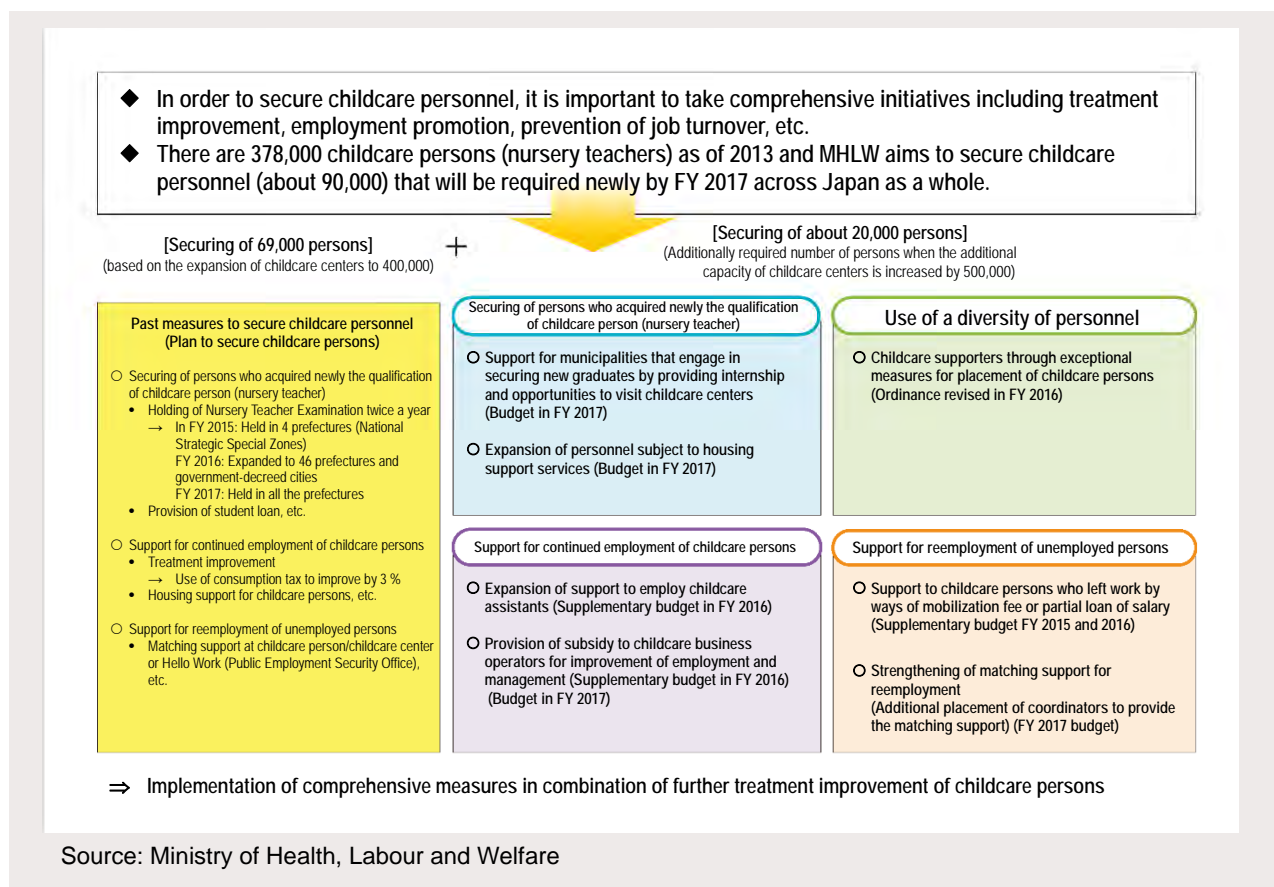
Especially, the government improves treatment for childcare persons every year and the treatment of all personnel will be improved by 2% in the FY 2017 budget. Moreover, in addition to the uniform treatment improvement, the government will build a career improvement system based on skills and experience, where efforts are evaluated and people can look forward to the future. According to this measure, treatment improvement of 40,000 yen per month for mid-level employees with about 7 year

experience and that of 5,000 yen per month for employees with about 3 year experience will be made.

In the second supplementary budget for FY 2016, the government did not only expand and improve the loan for employing childcare assistants for relieving work burden of childcare persons, but also expanded and improved the loan for mobilization fee for reemployment support of unemployed persons, in addition to the establishment of loan for fees for the use of childcare support service by childcare persons with preschool children, as a support of their continued employment.

In addition, in the initial budget for FY 2017, the government is poised to secure further personnel by not only expanding the range of persons subject to housing support services for childcare persons, but also by establishing childcare personnel employment support services that support the initiatives of municipalities to secure personnel including internship for students at childcare training facilities.

**Fig. 2-1-9 Comprehensive measures towards securing childcare personnel**



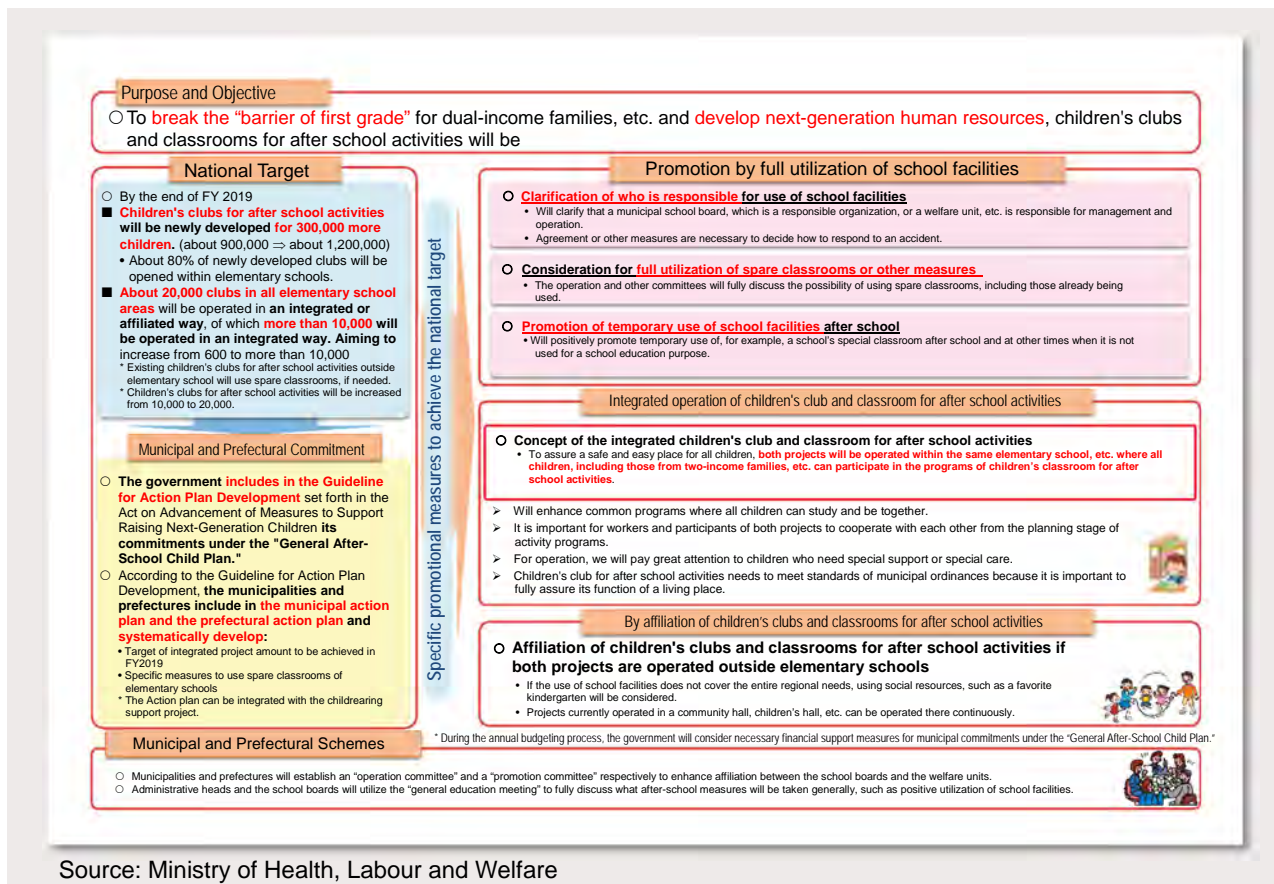
### 3 Breaking “the barrier of elementary-school first-grade children”

#### Promotion of Comprehensive After-School Plan for Children

In order to break down the so-called “the barrier of elementary-school first grade children” of dual-income households and foster human resources who are to bear the destiny the next generation, and so as to allow all school-aged children to safely spend their time after school, and have various experiences and perform activities, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) and MHLW published jointly on July 31, 2014 the “Comprehensive After-school Plan for Children” with the aim to thoroughly make use of school facilities (spare classrooms and classrooms not in use temporarily) to promote initiatives centered on After-school Classes for Children and After-School Children’s Clubs. According to the plan, the capacity of the clubs for after school activities for children (After-school Children’s Clubs) will be newly increased by about 300,000 by the end of FY 2019 to secure the capacity for about

1.22 million children. The Ministries aim to implement both clubs for after school activities for children and After-school Children’s clubs in an integrated and collaborated manner in all elementary school districts (about 20,000 districts) and to implement them in more than 10,000 districts in an integrated manner. (Fig. 2-1-10) Furthermore, according to “The Japan’s Plan for Dynamic Engagement of All Citizens” (decided by the Cabinet on June 2, 2016), it is proposed to study measures to prepare additional after-school facilities by the end of FY 2018 ahead of schedule in order to accelerate the initiative. In light of the proposal, the proportion of treasury subsidy for the development costs of clubs for after school activities for children has been increased and the development of facilities for After-School Children’s Clubs is underway. In addition, when clubs for after school activities for children and After-School Children’s Clubs are newly developed, it is aimed to thoroughly make use of school facilities and about 80% of clubs for after school activities for children to be newly opened will be implemented within elementary school site.

Fig. 2-1-10 Overview of Comprehensive After-School Plan for Children



Source: Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare

The “After-School Children’s Clubs” that provides all children with opportunities for learning, sports, cultural and artistic activities, and exchange activities with local residents with their participation is implemented in 16,027 places of 1,097 municipalities as of October 2016.

The “After-school Classes for Children,” which provides places to live and play for school children whose parent/s are absent during daytime due to work, has been operated at 23,619 places in 1,606 municipalities, by using school’s spare classrooms or Children’s House, and 1,093,085 children are registered. (Table 2-1-11)

#### **Enhancement of After-school Children’s Clubs**

Since April 2015, it has been established that children qualified to be enrolled in the “After-school Children’s Clubs” based on the revised Child Welfare Act (Act No. 65 of 2016) have been changed from children “under 10 years old” to children “who are enrolled in elementary school,” and in order to assure the quality of the class, the “Guidelines for the facilities and operation of after school children’s sound development program” (Ordinance No. 63 of the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare in 2016) in which the qualification and the number of staff, facilities and the like are set out. Based on these guidelines, the municipalities establish an ordinance on standards concerning facilities and operation to implement the after school children’s sound development program in accordance with the ordinance.

In addition, while taking into consideration the diversified operation of the After-school Children’s Clubs, the “Guidelines to operate the After-school Children’s Clubs” (March 2015) was formulated with the aim to clarify the standards of play and living environment to be guaranteed to children in group in the After-school Children’s Clubs as well as the operational details, and to secure stability and continuity of the program with a view to securing and improving a certain level of quality as a life place where children can spend their time with peace of mind.

Furthermore, in the budget for FY 2016, in order to achieve the goal of the “Comprehensive After-school Plan for Children,” not only that the proportion of treasury subsidy for the development costs of clubs for after school activities for children has been increased, but also the amount of subsidy for services to repair existing facilities, develop and repair fixtures as well as purchase of equipment has been increased. In addition, in order to eliminate wait-listed children, subsidies for expenses incurred in the renting of land and transfer of After-school Children’s Clubs have been expanded and improved.

#### **Promotion of the After-School Classes for Children**

MEXT promotes the “After-School Classes for children” to provide children after school with opportunities for learning as well as various experiences and exchanges with the cooperation of parents and local people from FY 2007.

MEXT promotes the “Community Cooperation Activities for Learning and Education” across the country designed to support the growth of children that will bear the future by the whole community and revitalize communities based on the report of the Central Council for Education in December 2015 and the Plan for the Creation of “Next Generation Schools and Communities” of January 2016, wherein in order to foster the sound growth of children in communities, learning and experiencing programs at the After-School Classes for Children are enhanced.

In addition, in the budget for FY 2016, in order to achieve the goal of the “Comprehensive After-School Plan for Children,” support for the development of equipment and fixtures has been enhanced to develop the After-School Classes for Children integrated or collaborated with the After-school Children’s Clubs in a planned manner, enrich the program and accelerate the implementation of the integrated class.

**Table 2-1-11**

**Implementation status of After-school Children’s Clubs and After-School Classes for Children**

	After-school Children’s Clubs (As of May 2016)	After-School Classes for Children (As of October 2016)
Number of places with implementation	23,619 places	16,027 places
Number of municipalities with implementation	1,606 municipalities	1,097 municipalities
Number of registered children	1,093,085 children	—

Source: Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology and the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare

## Section 2

## Development of environment in which hope for marriage and childbirth can be realized

## 1

## Stable economic basis

**(Stable employment of young people)****Employment Support for Young People**

- **Employment support for new and former graduates.**

According to “the Act for Employment Promotion etc. of Youth” (Act No. 98 of 1970, hereinafter referred to as “Youth Employment Promotion Act”) revised in FY 2015, MHLW does not only spread information actively on ① a system to provide information on workplaces by enterprises that recruit new graduates, ② no acceptance of recruitment by recruiters for the violation of certain laws related to work by the Hello Work, and ③ a certification system of small and medium-sized enterprises whose employment management of young people is outstanding (Youth Yell Certification System), but also promotes its initiatives.

In addition, in order to support employment of new graduates and earlier graduates, in the nationwide Hello Works for New graduates in 57 places around Japan, job supporters have been carrying out detailed employment supports and visiting schools to provide consultations in collaboration with universities.

Furthermore, in order to promote employment of earlier graduates within 3 years after graduation, the Ministry establishes that when recruiting new prospective graduates from schools, school graduates are eligible for recruitment at least for 3 years after their graduation in the guidelines based on the “Youth Employment Promotion Act” and spreads information to the effect. In addition, in

order to expand opportunities for earlier graduates to apply for recruitment as news graduates, and promote their job retention, MHLW established a subsidy system for earlier graduates and college dropouts to promote the expansion of their application for recruitment by making use of the subsidy as from February 2016.

**(Promotion of economic support for young generation by older generation)****System of gift tax exemption in relation to collective donation as marriage and childrearing funds as well as education funds**

In light of the fact that financial anxieties in the future are among the major factors that discourage young people from marriage and childbirth, a system to exempt gift taxes has been introduced as from April 2015 (applicable to March 31, 2019) when grandparents or parents make a collective donation to children and grandchildren as marriage and childrearing funds through early transfer of their assets with a view to supporting their marriage, childbirth and childrearing. The items subject to tax exemption under the system were clarified in the tax system revision of FY 2016. To promote the transfer of financial assets between the generations and to support the childrearing generation, a system to exempt gift taxes for collective donation given by grandparents to grandchildren as an educational fund to support the childrearing generation, has been introduced as from April 2013 (applicable to March 31, 2019). In the tax system revision of FY 2017, it was decided that receipts can be submitted also by way of electromagnetic records in addition to written forms.

### (Government's support for municipalities and the Chamber of Commerce and Industry which provide marriage support)

#### Development of momentum across Japan

The “National Forum on Marriage Support” was held with the participation of companies and academic experts, including staff in charge of the issue of local governments, local chambers of commerce that provide marriage support activities in the area and others across Japan with the aim to enhance marriage support, exchange information and build the momentum (April 2016). In the forum, in addition to the delivery of keynote lectures on the social background of unmarried people and introduction of initiatives for marriage support by leading local governments and chambers of commerce, a panel discussion was held by academic experts and practitioners for providing an effective support for marriage.

In addition, in the wake of the holding of the forum, various local governments held similar forums in order to build the momentum to support marriage in their local areas and as of the end of March 2017, a total of 27 forums and events were organized for marriage support. (Fig. 2-1-12)

Incidentally, main forums and events organized in various areas for marriage support include the following.

In Ibaraki Prefecture, in commemoration of the fact that the “Ibaraki Encounter Support Center” celebrated its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the opening and that the number of married couples reached 1500, the “Forum on Nationwide Marriage Support in Ibaraki” was held to spread community-wide circles for marriage support and disseminate activities across Japan (July 2016).

In Kagawa prefecture, the “Kagawa Marriage Support Center” was opened to provide a meeting place for single men and women wishing to get married, and to provide detailed individual support from meeting to dating. In order to hold the “opening celebration of the center” and “accreditation of marriage mediators,” the “Marriage support center opening celebration campaign” was held (October 2016).

In Fukuoka Prefecture, the “Marriage Support Declaration Conference” was held true with the cooperation of the business circles (Kyushu Economic Federation, Kyushu Economic Association, etc.) in which companies and groups declared the development of required environment and support contents so as to make the dreams of single men and women wishing to get married come (December 2016).

In Tokyo, the “TOKYO Match-Making Day 2017,” an event to support marriage consisting of providing a variety of information to people wishing to marry and opportunities to think of marriage, and of building a movement to support marriage, was held for the realization of “diversity” where everybody can make a lively and active life (March 2017).



“Forum on Nationwide Marriage Support in Ibaraki” held by Ibaraki Prefecture

Fig. 2-1-12 List of the holding of “Forum on Marriage Support”



Source: Cabinet Office

**Utilization of Grants for Priority Promotion of Measures for Declining Birthrate in the Regions**  
 Support was provided to pioneering initiatives for marriage support by local governments including the development and sophistication of the matching system in marriage support centers and the holding of forum for marriage support, as well as similar application of best practices through the provision of grants for priority promotion of measures for declining birthrate in the regions.

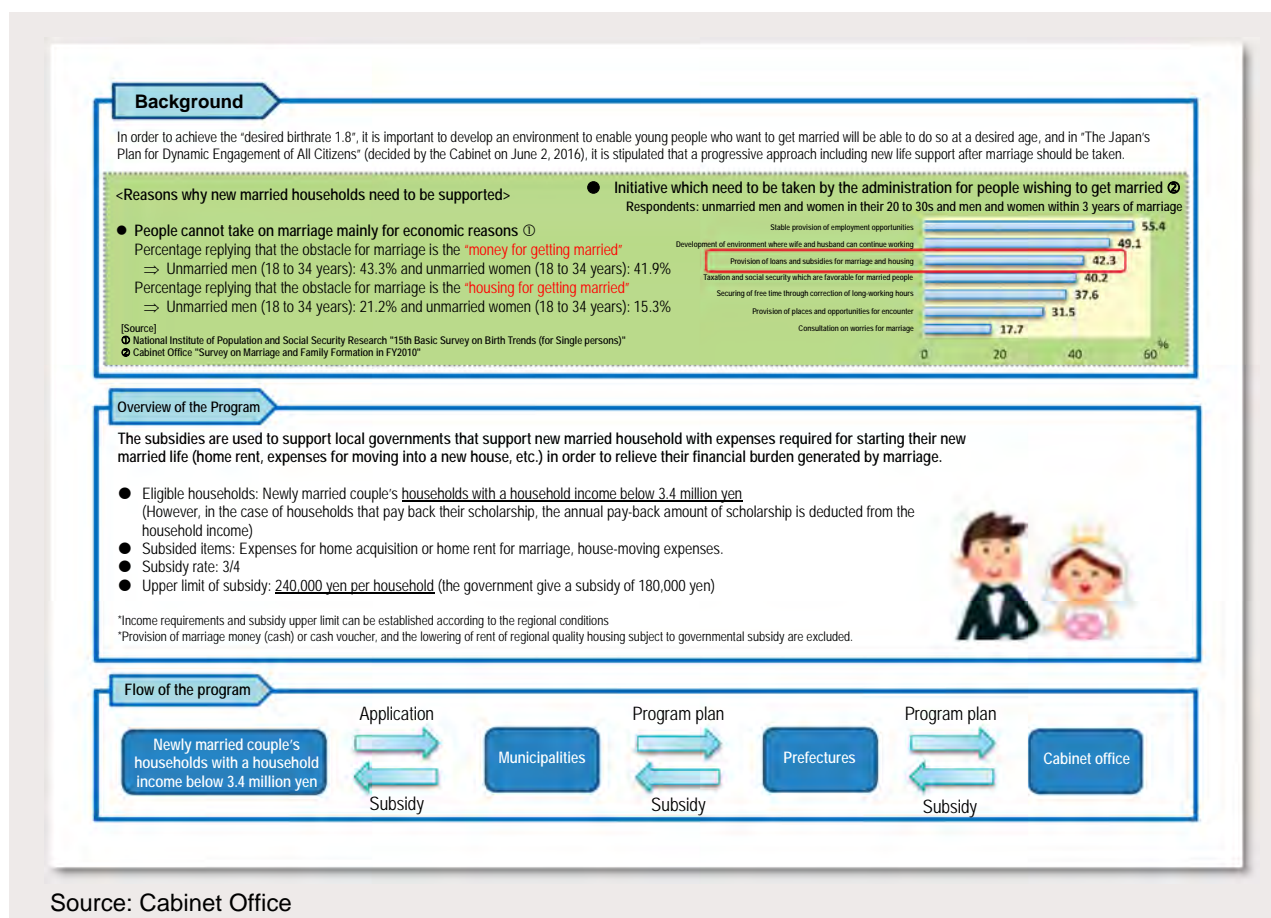
In addition, in order to promote “The Japan’s Plan for Dynamic Engagement of All Citizens” (decided by the Cabinet on June 2, 2016), a comprehensive marriage support in communities and initiatives for marriage in cooperation among local governments are supported by the grants budgeted in the secondary supplementary budget of FY 2016. In addition, they support voluntary initiatives of companies, groups and schools in cooperation with local governments, such as the provision of a

variety of opportunities for exchange to contribute to the promotion of work-life balance.

**Utilization of subsidies for support services for new marriage life**

The subsidies for support services for new marriage life budgeted in the supplementary budget of FY 2015 were used to support local governments that support new married households with an income below a certain level with expenses required for starting their new married life (home rent, expenses for moving into a new house, etc.) (Fig. 2-1-13) They were also budgeted in the supplementary budget of FY 2016. The subsidies budgeted in the supplementary budget of FY 2017, however, are aimed at the promotion of measures against regional declining birthrate. In addition, the income requirements for eligible households are were lowered and the upper limit of the subsidies was increased.

**Fig. 2-1-13 Subsidies for support services for new marriage life**



Source: Cabinet Office

## Section 3

## Promotion of Work Style Reform of Men and Women

## 1 Reforming men's consciousness and behavior

**(Promotion of men taking childcare leave immediately after their spouse giving birth)****Encouraging men to take Childcare Leave**

It is necessary to promote work-life balance for both men and women. It is further required to encourage men to participate actively in childcare while they realize the joy of childcare and being aware of their responsibility for it. Currently, the fact that men are not sufficiently involved in childcare and housework makes it difficult for women to continue working and contributes to the declining birthrate.

For these reasons, in the Act on the Welfare of Workers Who Take Care of Children or Other Family Members Including Child Care and Family Care Leave (Act No. 76 of 1991, hereinafter referred to as "Child Care and Family Care Leave Act"), the act was revised to introduce (1) the "Mom & Dad Child Care Leave Plus" which allows an extension of childcare leave periods when both father and mother take childcare leave, and (2) the system to promote father taking childcare leave within 8 weeks after the spouse giving birth, and (3) to abolish the system to disallow men/women to take childcare leave in the case where their spouse is a full-time housewife (husband) or in childcare leave and enforced in 2010.

MHLW supports the development of an environment in which both men and women can continue working while raising children by keeping everyone informed of these systems. In the FY 2017 budget, MHLW will develop a workplace culture friendly towards men taking childcare leave and continue the implementation of the "subsidies to support work-life balance / Work-life balance support course on childbirth."

## 2 Work-life balance and women's advancement in the workplace

**(Improvement of environment toward work-life balance)****Well-established work-childcare balance for childcare leave and short-time work**

Since it is particularly difficult for women to balance work and family during childcare and nursing, it is necessary to primarily promote measures for supporting work-home balance in order to allow workers to continue their work. In the most recent survey, women's childcare leave taking rate is 81.8% (2016) and we can see that the childcare leave system is becoming steadily established. If we look at the ratio of the continued employment of women after the first child is born, the continued employment rate of women who gave birth between 2010 and 2014 is 53.1% (2015), which is a significant increase compared with the previous survey. On the other hand, although in the Outline of Measures against the Declining Birthrate it was targeted to increase their leave-taking rate to 13% by 2020, the leave-taking rate stands at 3.16% (2016). In addition, the time the men spend for childcare and housework remains at the lowest levels in developed countries.

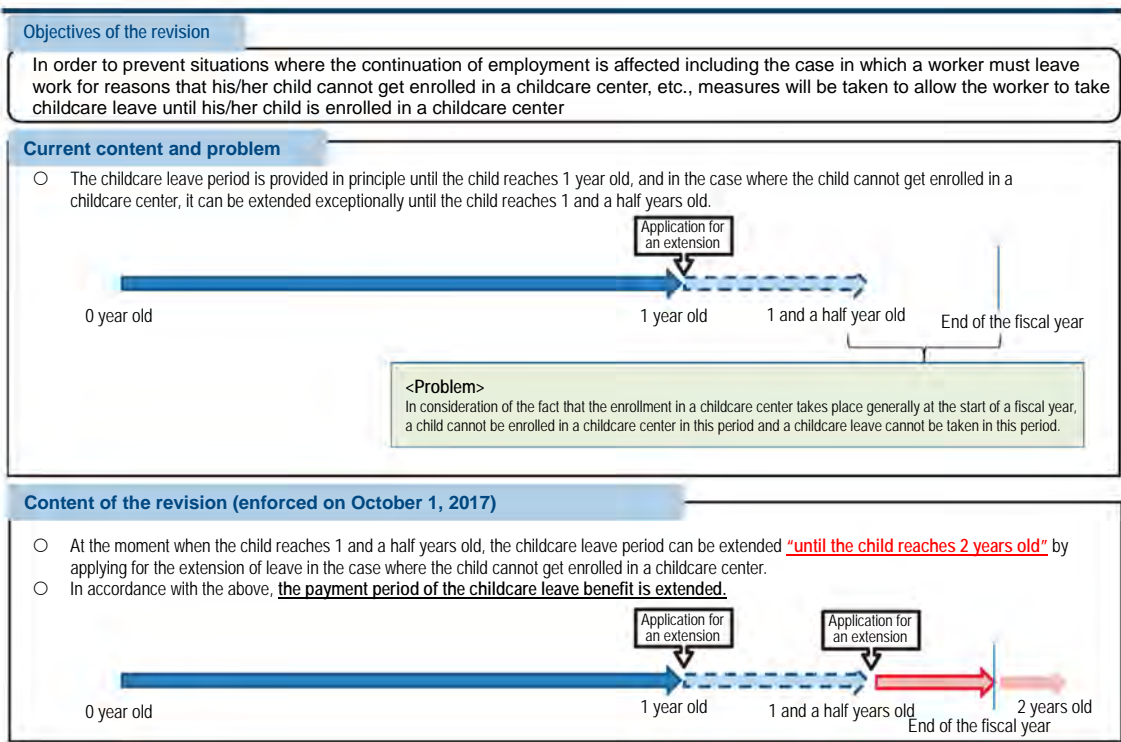
Under these circumstances, in order to develop an environment where both men and women can continue working while raising children, the Child Care and Family Care Leave Act provides the compulsory implementation of the short hour working system and restriction of overwork as well as the system to promote father taking childcare leave, including the extension of childcare leave periods when both father and mother take childcare leave ("Mom & Dad Child Care Leave Plus"). MHLW does not only aim to keep everyone informed of the Child Care and Family Care Leave Act, but also support the development of a work environment where the system to support work-life balance can be made use of with peace of mind, including childcare or nursing care leave and short working hours stipulated by the law. In addition, the amendment of the Child Care and Family Care Leave Act has been enforced since January 1, 2017 aimed to relax the requirements for when fixed-term contract workers take childcare leave. MHLW is keeping everyone informed through a variety of media such as the government bulletins so that the revised contents such as work-life balance support

system including the childcare and family care leave and short hour working system, etc. The Employment Environment and Equalization Department of the Prefectural Labour Bureau provides administrative guidance towards the implementation of the systems stipulated in the Child Care and Family Care Leave Act, including regular visits to business establishments to check whether the necessary systems are provided in their employment regulations, etc. In addition, with the aim to allow workers who took childcare leave to continue working, 67% and 50% of the wage before the start of the leave is paid as a childcare leave benefit between the start of the childcare leave and 180 days after the same and in the period thereafter, respectively. In addition, in view of the fact that a certain number of people stop working inevitably because their children cannot be enrolled in childcare centers even if they take a childcare leave until their children reach one and a half years old due to the existence of many wait-listed children mainly in

urban areas, the Act on Partial Amendment of the Employment Insurance Act (Act No. 14 of 2017) including the amendment of the Child Care and Family Care Leave Act aimed to allow the extension of childcare leave up to 2 years until children reach 2 years old was enacted in the ordinary session of the Diet of 2017 for the case where children cannot be enrolled in childcare centers even if parents take a childcare leave until their children reach one and a half years old, as an emergency safety net. (Fig. 2-1-14) In addition, in order to develop a workplace environment friendly to worker taking childcare leave, when the business operator becomes aware that a worker or his spouse is pregnant or has given birth, the business operator must make best efforts to keep the worker individually informed of the system and to develop a leave system aimed at childcare which can be used until the child reaches the preschool age. The amended Child Care and Family Care Leave Act will be enforced on October 1, 2017.

Fig. 2-1-14

**Extension of childcare leave periods (related to the Child Care and Family Care Leave Act and Employment Insurance Act)**



Source: Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare

## (Promotion of women's participation and advancement)

### Promotion of women's participation and advancement in the workplace

In order to prevent workers from being discriminated on the ground of gender and to develop an employment environment where working women are respected for their motherhood and can fully demonstrate their abilities, not only that information and guidance are provided for ensuring equal treatment of men and women in line with the Act on Securing, Etc. of Equal Opportunity and Treatment between Men and Women in Employment (Act No. 113 of July 1, 1972), and when a dispute arises between the business operator and workers, support is provided to smoothly and quickly solve the issue, but also the diffusion of the "Guidelines for Supporting Efforts by Labor and Management Aimed at Reducing the Gender Pay Gap" is promoted to urge understanding of gaps between male workers and female workers and awareness of the actual circumstances within the company.

Furthermore, in order to further promote the success of women in their occupational lives, The Act on Promotion of Women's Participation and Advancement in the Workplace (Act No. 64 of 2015) was passed in August 2015 and fully enforced on April 1, 2016, whereby national and local government agencies as well as private-sector corporations with more than 300 regular workers are required to gain an understanding of the situation of the recruitment and appointment of women and analyze its problems, and devise and disclose an action plan including the setting of a numerical target based on the analysis results, and to announce information on women's advancement and information contributing to women's occupation selection.

In September 2016, the "website to visualize The Act on Promotion of Women's Participation and Advancement in the Workplace" which lists mainly the initiatives of both the government and local governments based on the same act was opened. Furthermore, support was provided to initiatives undertaken on the promotion of women's participation in work developed by each local government based on the same act through grants

for the promotion of women's advancement in the region. Action plans have been developed in full (100%) by the government, prefectural governments and municipalities and the announcement of information on the status of women's participation in work has been also made in full (100%). MHLW has not only provided the "Supporting Tools for Establishment of General Business Owner Action Plans" which allows understanding of the status of their women's participation in work, analysis of problems and formulation of action plans stipulated by the law to private business operators, but also implemented the "Projects on Promoting Women's Participation and Advancement in Small-and-Medium Enterprises" aimed to support their initiatives based on the law. In addition, further support was provided to their initiatives through the payment of subsidies to business operators that have achieved the target formulated actually in their action plans and the provision of information on women's advancement in workplace as well as "Database of Companies Promoting Women's Participation and Advancement."<sup>1</sup>

In addition, the "Company Award for Equal and Balanced Promotion" which recruits and awards those companies that promote positive actions (an active efforts on a voluntary basis by companies to eliminate the gap that actually exists among workers between men and women) was implemented.

Furthermore, the reporting rate of large companies with more than 300 regular workers that are obliged to devise and disclose their action plan stands at 99.9% as of March 31, 2017. In addition, 291 companies were accredited with the certification mark "L Star=Eruboshi" as of March 31, 2017. In addition to ensuring the effectiveness of the implementation of the law by implementing advisory guidance and others so that efforts are made in line with the formulated action plans, and to disseminating and enlightening as many companies as possible on efforts towards the accreditation with the certification mark, MHLW will also provide support for the development of action plans to small and medium enterprises that are obliged to make effort to formulate and report their action plan.

<sup>1</sup> <http://positive-ryouritsu.mhlw.go.jp/positivedb/>

**Support for regional measures by taking advantage of their strength**

Support was provided to pioneering initiatives including not only marriage support, initiative to promote the participation of men in housework and childcare, experience to be in touch with infants, childcare support passport service and others undertaken by local governments, and excellent cases were rolled out through the provision of grants for priority promotion of measures for declining birthrate in the regions.

In addition, through the grants budgeted in the second supplementary reserve for 2016, a comprehensive marriage support in the region and support of pioneering initiatives for the development of systems and human resources are provided in order to promote “The Japan’s Plan for Dynamic Engagement of All Citizens.” In addition, MHLW supports initiatives through voluntary participation of companies, groups and schools in cooperation with local governments including the provision of opportunities for a variety of exchanges contributing to the promotion of work-life balance.

# Promotion of Precise Measures against the Declining Birthrate

## Section 1

### Support for each different stage of marriage, pregnancy, childbirth and childrearing

#### 1 Pregnancy and childbirth

##### **(Construction of seamless support systems from pregnancy to childrearing)**

##### **Improvement of “the comprehensive childrearing support centers”**

In FY 2014, comprehensive support model services for pregnancy and childbirth to provide a seamless support from pregnancy to childcare including the postnatal care services to provide maternal and child mental healthcare and childcare support immediately after discharge from hospital, and the prenatal and postnatal support services to provide consultation to pregnant women were implemented in 29 municipalities.

In FY 2015, not only that the childrearing generation comprehensive support centers aimed to provide comprehensive consultation support to a variety of needs from the pregnancy period to the childrearing period were developed, but also postnatal care services and prenatal and postnatal support services were implemented to promote the initiatives to build a system designed to provide a

seamless support from the pregnancy period to the childrearing period.

In FY 2016, in addition to positioning the childrearing generation comprehensive support centers within the Maternal and Child Health Act (Act No. 141 of 1965) through the Act on Partial Amendment of the Child Welfare Act (Act No. 63 of 2016), an investigative research was carried out to prepare the guidelines for the operation of the childrearing generation comprehensive support centers in the FY 2016 research and investigation services for the promotion of support of children and childcare. As of April 1, 2016, the childrearing generation comprehensive support centers have been established in 720 places (296 municipalities). (Fig. 2-2-1)

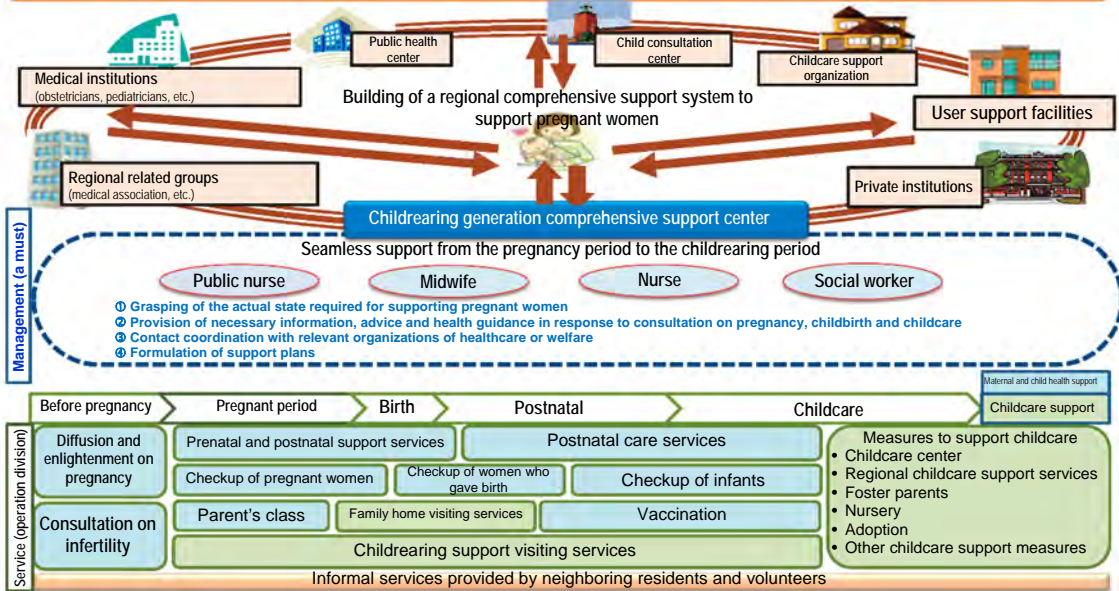
##### **Implementation of prenatal health checkup services**

From the perspective of the prevention of postpartum depression and prevention of abuse of newborn babies, not only that expenses for prenatal health checkup are subsidized, but also support to mother and child in the initial stage after birth is enhanced in the FY 2017 budget.

Fig. 2-2-1

Nationwide development of the childrearing generation comprehensive support centers

- We will provide precise consultation support to allow the "maternal and child health services" and "childcare support services" to be performed in an integrated manner by placing a public health nurse in the childrearing generation comprehensive support center in order to provide a seamless support from the pregnancy period to the childrearing period.
- The Maternal and Child Health Act was revised to legislate the childrearing generation comprehensive support center (enforced on April 1, 2017) (Comprehensive support centers for maternal and child health in law).
- Number of municipalities that implemented the services: 296 (720 places) (As of April 1, 2016) ➢ We aim to achieve nationwide development by the end of FY2020.



Source: Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare

### (Reduction of childrearing and educational burdens in expenditure)

#### Child Allowance System

Pursuant to the Child Allowance Act (Act No. 73 of 1971) revised in March 2012, cash benefits for childrearing households are paid in the form of child allowance from April 2012 as follows;

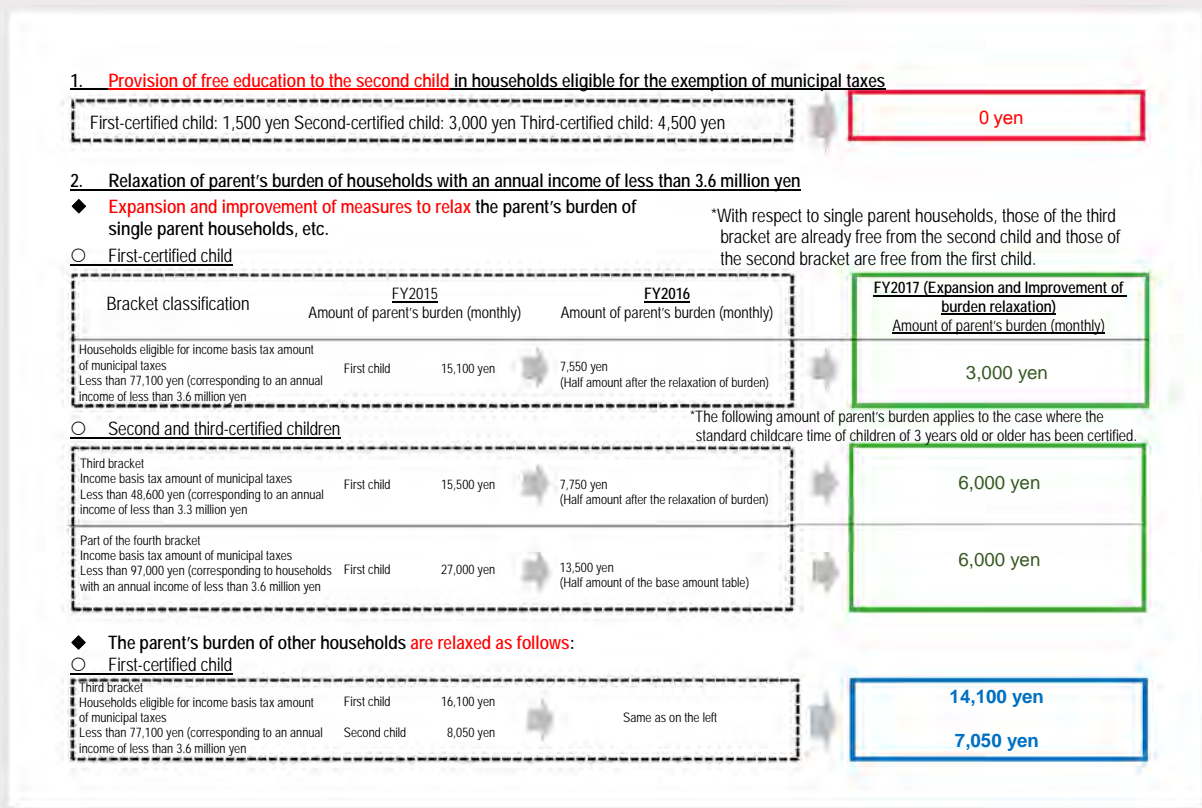
- Eligible people
  - People who are raising children until the completion of middle school (up to the first March 31 after reaching the age of 15 years)
- Payment amount (monthly amount per child)
  - In the case of people with an income inferior to the limit
    - Child under 3 years of age    15,000 yen uniformly
    - Child from 3 years of age to the completion of elementary school    10,000 yen (15,000 yen after the third child)
    - Junior high school student    10,000 yen uniformly
  - In the case of people with an income superior to the limit
    - 5,000 yen uniformly (As a special benefit for the time being)
- Income limit
  - 9.6 million yen or less (based on income)
    - \* Husband and wife with 2 children
    - \* Income limit is applied from June 2012
- Total benefit amount
  - About 2,198.5 billion yen (based on FY 2017 budget)

#### Incremental Efforts toward Free Access to Early Childhood Education

With respect to kindergartens, in order to relax the financial burden of parents with children going to kindergartens and correct disparity in parents' burden among public and private kindergartens, MEXT subsidizes part of necessary expenses to local governments which implement the "kindergarten enrollment encouraging programs" designed to reduce or eliminate childcare fees. In addition, with respect to centers for early childhood education and care, kindergartens and nursery schools in the new child and childrearing system, the Ministry pays the official price less the childcare fees. In FY 2015, in order to reduce the burden of parents of low income households, in addition to reducing the childcare fee of kindergartens of households exempt from municipal taxes from the monthly amount of 9,100 yen to 3,000 yen, subsidies to municipalities were expanded and improved. In FY 2016, the system was expanded and improved with respect to childcare fees of kindergartens, childcare centers and others as measures to reduce the burden of households with many children in such a manner that while when the age of the eldest child was in a certain range, the fee for the second child was halved and that for the third child was made free before, regardless of the age of the eldest child, now (1) the fee for the first child in single-parent households is halved and that for the second child and subsequent children is made free and (2) that of the second child is halved and that of the third child and subsequent children are made free in households other than (1). Furthermore, from FY 2017, (1) in addition to making the fee completely free for the second child of households exempt from municipal taxes, (2) when the income of households is less than a certain amount, measures are expanded and improved to reduce the burden of single-parent households. (Fig. 2-2-2)

Fig. 2-2-2

**Promotion of stepwise provision of free early childhood education in FY 2007**



Source: Cabinet Office

**Supporting the Learning of High School Students**

With regard to the system to make the high school tuition fee free, in order to raise financial resources to support students of low-income households and to correct disparities in educational expenditure between public and private schools, the system was revised as from FY 2014 to introduce the income limit (the municipal income basis tax amount of parents is 304,200 yen or lower (about an annual income of 9.1 million yen) as the requirement to qualify for the benefit. A total of 118,800 yen is paid annually to parents who qualify for the benefit and households with a child who goes to a private high school are paid by a maximum of 2.5 times (297,000 yen per year) according to the respective household income. In addition, in order to reduce the burden of low income households of educational expenses other than the tuition fee, the amount of benefits for the scholarship benefit system for high school students established in FY 2014 has been increased for tax-exempt households in FY 2016. In addition, subsidies are provided to high school students in remote islands without a high school through the “school attendance support

services for high school students of remote islands”.

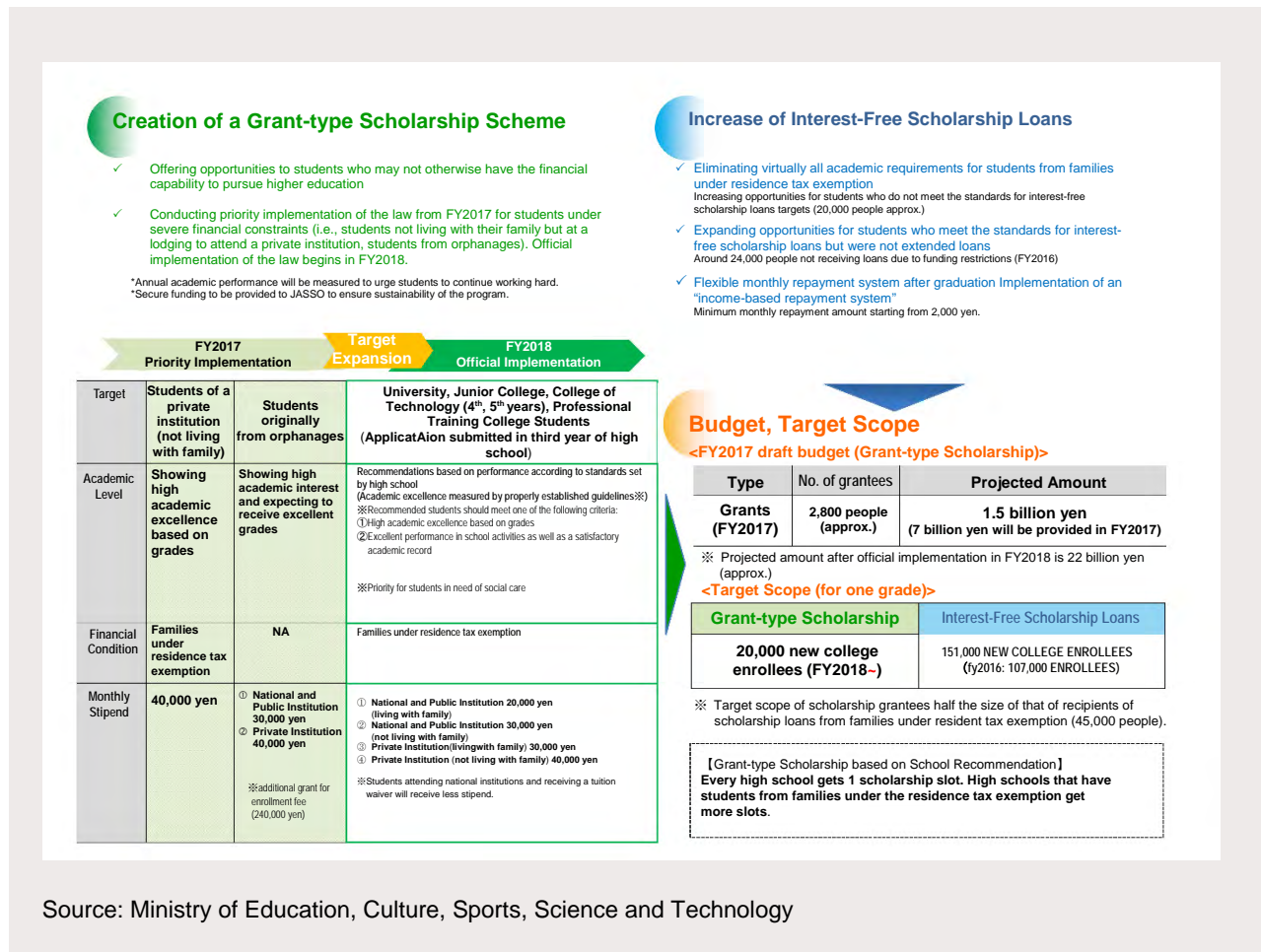
**Measures for educational expenses reduction for higher education**

It is important to develop an environment where students with motivation and abilities can engage in studies with peace of mind without abandoning higher education for economic reasons. For this reason, MEXT is making efforts to enhance the university scholarship programs implemented by the Japan Student Services Organization. In the budget for FY 2016, MEXT is accelerating the flow of scholarship from “interest-bearing to interest-free” by increasing the number of new scholarship loan receivers by 6,000 with the aim to achieve the provision of loans to all who satisfy the loan criteria for the interest-free scholarship loans. In addition, in order to reduce the burden of repayment of scholarship and to apply the new income-based repayment system to students entering university from the FY 2017, MEXT is improving and expanding the scholarship system through its development and renovation. In

In addition, the grant-type scholarship will be established by the budget for FY 2017. (Fig. 2-2-3) In order to assure opportunities to receive education, all national and public universities are in the process of developing the tuition fee waiver scheme to allow students who are in difficulties in

paying the tuition fee for economic reasons, etc. to continue their studies. In addition, private universities are making efforts to reduce or waive their tuition fees for students with financial difficulties.

**Fig. 2-2-3 Enhancement of university scholarship program**



**(Support for various people who help raise children and grandchildren)**

**Support by grandmothers/grandfathers**

In the “Urgent Policies to Realize a Society in Dynamic Engagement of All Citizens -Toward a Positive Cycle of Growth and Distribution-” compiled by the National Conference for Dynamic Engagement of All Citizens, a variety of measures were proposed including the “an environment enabling three generations of a family to live under one roof or nearby each other for mutual assistance in childcare will be improved.” As a result, efforts are underway to provide a subsidy to the development and reform work of a house facility so that the house can accommodate a plurality of

households, and deduct income tax when a reform work is done.

In the UR rental housing, schemes such as preferential treatments in terms of the ratio for winning the lottery for the application for a newly built rental housing unit as well as application of discount of the rent for a certain period for households that newly move into the housing in the application for existing rental housing (on a first-come, first-served basis) are provided to child-rearing households that meet certain requirements and supporting households that wish to live close to child-rearing households. As from February 2016, in the case where family households that support a childrearing house live near a UR rental housing (roughly within a radius of around 2 km,

or in another area such as a New Town, one housing may be other than a UR rental housing), the households that newly move into the housing (households with a monthly income of less than 259,000 yen) are given a discount of 20% for their rent for 5 years.

### **(Improvement of environment where children grow healthy and safe)**

#### **Support for Homeownership through Loans and Tax reduction (system)**

In order to promote the acquisition of quality houses, not only that the interest on the long term fixed rate loan on housing (Flat 35 S) that is excellent in durability and variability which is a securitization support program by the Housing Finance Support Organization has been reduced, but also interest has been lowered through the long term fixed rate loan on housing (Flat 35 S of childcare support type) by the cooperation between local governments which actively support childcare and the Housing Finance Support Organization in conjunction with financial support by local governments. In addition, tax measures are also provided to reduce taxes on the housing loan.

#### **Promoting a Supply of Good Quality Rental Houses for Family Use**

Various policies promote an adequate supply of public rental housing and a smooth transition into private rental housing for those living in child-rearing households, and this should be done in an integrated manner so as to provide quality rental housing for families.

When local governments provide subsidies to expenses required for the development of rental houses based on the regional rental quality housing scheme, the government also provides assistance (as of the end of FY 2014, about 160,000 houses have been provided with subsidies). The rental housing scheme designed to support private supply of the Urban Revitalization Organization provides support for the construction and supply of quality rental housing for families by private operators by providing them with land sites developed by the organization (As of the end of FY 2015, about 10,800 houses).

In addition, support aimed to smoothly rent detached housing owned by elderly people and others to childrearing households that need a large housing as well as housing support such as the provision of information on private rental housing that accepts child-rearing households are provided. Furthermore, through the amendment of the Housing Safety Net Act (the act to partially amend

the act on the promotion of supply of rental housing to persons for whom considerations need to be taken to secure housing (enacted on April 19, 2017 and published on April 26, 2017), a new housing safety net scheme design to register housing that does not prevent persons for whom considerations need to be taken to secure housing from moving into by making use of private rental housing and vacant housing units was created, and in the budget for FY 2017, support will be provided including the provision of subsidies for repair expenses to lenders of the registered housing, reduction of the burden of dwellers.

### **(Enhancement of the Healthcare System for Children)**

#### **Enhancement of the Healthcare System for Children**

In terms of pediatric medical care, it is important to develop a system to allow pediatric emergency patients to be accepted throughout day and night from the perspective of protecting and raising young children that will bear the future of Japan and of securing peace of mind parents in childrearing.

Especially, in terms of pediatric emergency medical care, the government supports the development of primary, secondary and tertiary pediatric emergency centers, pediatric emergency healthcare services and pediatric emergency and critical care centers that are in charge of emergency and critical care of early childhood.

Moreover, in order to eliminate the anxiety of the parents when their child suddenly falls ill, the government started to promote the development of the “child emergency telephone consultation # 8000” whereby pediatricians and others give advice to children’s parents as from FY 2004 and the service is provided in all prefectures from FY 2010. Furthermore, an incentive for the pediatric healthcare system has been prioritized in the successive medical fee revisions in recent years. In the medical fee revision of FY 2016, the government introduced an incentive for outpatient pediatrics clinics that provide continuous care from early childhood. In addition, the government enhanced the incentive for insurance medical institutions actively contributing to inpatient and in-home care for critically ill pediatric patients.

#### **Immunization**

Vaccination is an extremely effective means of protecting the public from the outbreak and epidemic of infectious diseases and has played a major role in preventing infectious diseases in

Japan. It is important to secure wider opportunities for vaccination and implement vaccination policies appropriately through revision and improvement of the system in the future in a continuous manner. Based on the revision of the Immunization Act (Act No. 68 of 1948), in March 2013, three vaccines ---haemophilus influenza type B vaccines, pneumococcal vaccine for children and human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccines---have been adopted as routine vaccination. In addition, initiatives such as the formulation of the National Immunization Plan, legalization of the adverse event reporting system, established of immunization and vaccines subcommittee in the Welfare Science Council were carried forward. Furthermore, in order to solve the problem of the so-called “vaccine gap” where the number of vaccinations in National Immunization Program is smaller than that in developed countries, Zoster and pneumococcal vaccines have been adopted as routine vaccination from October 2014 and Hepatitis B vaccines from October 2016.

### **(Children’s sound growth)**

#### **Development of an educational environment for preschool children**

In terms of kindergarten education, a revision of the “Course of Study for Kindergarten” was carried out in March 2017. In the new Course of Study for Kindergarten, the qualities and abilities that need to be developed in kindergarten education were clearly defined as a “foundation of knowledge and skills,” a “basic abilities of thinking, judgement and expression, etc.” and the “learning dispositions and humanity, etc.” In addition, the specific image of the infant at the age of 5 years old was clearly defined as “the ideal image by the end of childhood.” The connection between kindergarten education and elementary school education was further enhanced by sharing “the ideal image by the end of the infancy period” with elementary school. It is planned to hold briefings and conference to explain about the details of the revision by the government and local governments towards its full implementation in April 2018. In addition, in order to promote school evaluation according to the characteristics of each kindergarten including a third party evaluation, the “School evaluation guidelines for kindergartens” was revised in November 2011. Furthermore, the “Early Childhood Education Research Center” was established at the National Institute for Educational Policy Research in FY 2016 as the investigation and research base of the government aimed to collect and analyze basic data for the development of policies and measures for

the promotion of early childhood education of the government and local governments as the “plan to improve the quality of early childhood education.” MEXT implements model programs to promote the construction of the system to promote early childhood education by local governments, including the establishment of early childhood education centers which will serve as the base for training and others in prefectures and municipalities as well as the placement of early childhood education advisers that visit each kindergarten, nursery center and center for early childhood education and care to provide guidance and advice. In addition, investigation and research was conducted in order to deepen and enrich educational content for early childhood.

In terms of childcare centers (nursery schools), in the wake of big changes around childcare including the enforcement of the new child and childcare support system from April 2015 and an increase in the number of children mainly between 0-year to 2-year old using childcare centers, the guidelines for childcare at childcare centers were revised in March 2017. In the “Summary of discussion on the revision of the guidelines for childcare at childcare centers” prepared by the special committee of children’s committee of the Social Security Council (December 2016), it was pointed out that the following matters need to be addressed: (1) detailed description on childcare of infants and children between 1 year and 3 years old; (2) active positioning of early childhood education in childcare at childcare centers; (3) review of the description on health and safety in light of changes in the environment surrounding child growth; (4) necessity of childcare support in cooperation with parents and home as well as the community; and (5) improvement in qualities and expertise of staff. The revision was made based on these recommendations. The new guidelines for childcare at childcare centers will be implemented from April 1, 2018.

In addition, as a result that childcare centers and childcare persons are obliged to make best efforts to make self-evaluation in the guidelines for childcare at childcare centers from 2009 in order to improve the quality of childcare, the “self-evaluation guidelines in childcare centers” were formulated in March 2009. In addition, in order to promote the third-party evaluation on welfare service including childcare, the “addition of third party auditee fee” to support the auditee fee of childcare centers was established in the new child and childcare support system.

In terms of centers for early childhood education and care with the attributes of both the

kindergarten and childcare center, the Cabinet Office, MEXT and MHLW jointly announced the guidelines on education and childcare of centers for early childhood education and care (hereinafter referred to as “Guidelines on Education and Childcare”) in which matters related to educational programs and other contents on education and childcare were stipulated, which were implemented from April 2015. Since it is stipulated in the Article 10, Item 2 of the Act on Comprehensive Offering of Education and Childcare for Preschool Children (Act No. 77 of 2006) that in order to determine the contents of the guidelines on education and childcare, care must be taken to ensure the consistency between the guidelines on kindergarten education and the guidelines on childcare at childcare centers, in light of the review for the revision of the guidelines on kindergarten education and the guidelines on childcare at childcare centers, and in consideration of the discussion of the “review meeting on the revision of the guidelines on education and childcare of centers for early childhood education and care,” the “Guidelines on Education and childcare” was jointly announced in March, 2017.

The basic philosophy of the new “Guidelines on Education and childcare” consists of two points: (1) securing consistency between the guidelines on kindergarten education and the guidelines on childcare at childcare centers, and (2) enriching the description of “the provision of education and childcare in an integrated manner,” “the formulation of the details of education and childcare as well as a comprehensive plan for supporting childcare” and “the consideration towards that parents with a diversity of livelihood forms are present in the center” as matters that need to be taken into consideration in a particular manner as centers for early childhood education and care in which kindergarten and childcare center are linked together.

Towards the implementation of the new guidelines in April 2018, briefings and others will be held in prefectures.

### **Development of an education environment for children and students**

The Central Council for Education deliberated on the revision of the Course of Study with a view to realizing school education for securely developing competencies in children required for a new era with respect to primary and secondary education and compiled in December 2016 the “The Revision and Necessary Measures of the Course of Study for kindergarten, elementary school, junior high school, senior high school and special education school (report).” In response to this, with the aim to improve the quality of understanding of knowledge and develop competencies required for the future while maintaining the framework and educational content of the current Course of Study, the Course of Study for elementary school and junior high school was revised in March 2017. In order to introduce internship at schools for students aiming to become a teacher as an opportunity to learn about the classroom from an early stage for the development and training of teachers, a program is underway for its specific implementation. In addition, school internship including participation in a variety of activities such as After-School Classes for Children, Saturday learning and others.

### **(Improvement of communities’ safety) Prevention of accident and its recurrence in kindergartens and nursery centers**

The operation of the “accident information database 1 in specific education and childcare facilities”<sup>1</sup> was started from June 2015. In light of the “Final report of the review meeting on measures to prevent recurrence of serious accidents at educational and childcare facilities,” it was decided to newly hold an “expert meeting to devise measures to prevent occurrence of serious accidents at educational and childcare facilities” on April 21, 2016, and improvement in accident information database at educational and childcare centers and measures to prevent recurrence of serious accidents are under review.

1 <http://www8.cao.go.jp/shoushi/shinseido/outline/index.html#database>

In addition, not only that the “Guidelines for Prevention of Accidents at Educational and Childcare Facilities and Response at the Time of Accidents” published on March 31, 2016 were made available newly by way of materials and other means for dissemination and enlightenment, but also, initiatives have been taken to remind local governments, facilities and business operators of implementing safe and secure childcare.

### **Protection of Citizens from Becoming Victims of Crimes and Other Measures**

The police are promoting activities focused on identifying offenders at the stage of approach and stalking which are regarded as precursors of sexual offenses, guidance, warning and arrest by the “Juvenile and Woman Aegis Team (team to protect the safety of children and women)” established at the headquarters of each prefectural police. In addition, the police receive information from the Ministry of Justice on those who served a sentence on account of violent sexual offenses such as compulsory indecency to children, visit them for the identification of their location, and if necessary interview them, in order to prevent recurrent offences.

Also, we are working on supporting patrol activities by anticrime volunteer or “Kodomo 110 ban no i-e (*Child shelter*),” and broadcasting and sharing information timely about suspicious persons. In addition, we are promoting damage preventing enlightenment in cooperation with school and other organizations, sending school supporters and others.

To strengthen the system for watching and protecting children on the route to school, MEXT has been promoting measures to prevent children from being involved in crimes, training school-guard leaders to be allocated, and supporting the prefectural education boards’ seminars held for school teachers and staff.

Also, in FY 2016, by developing a mechanism of using school safety volunteers and others effectively so that children can receive an education without worry, we will enhance a system of assuring children’s safety with the whole community.

- Promotion of efforts to protect children from harmful environments on the internet  
We actively cooperate with authorities and organizations concerned to protect children from becoming victims of internet crime. Concretely, we request mobile-service providers to amplify explanations about proper use of online filters and safety measures to parents/guardians. We are also

engaged in educational activities on internet problems for the parents/guardians and online etiquette for children at appropriate occasions such as guidance for admission.

In addition, MEXT also holds participatory, learning-based symposiums to keep parents and others informed of the importance of observing manners on the Internet as well as of making family rules at home, and prepares and distributes materials for dissemination and enlightenment for children and students.

In particular, in order to protect children from crimes resulting from the use of community sites, the National Police Agency and related ministries and agencies are working on the strengthening of voluntary measures of community site operators according to the types of services, in addition to the above efforts.

- Prevention of sexual violence against youth  
As to sexual violence against young women, such as the issue of so-called forced appearance in pornographic materials and “JK business,” the government established the “Inter-ministerial meeting on countermeasures to the issues of so-called forced appearance in pornographic materials and ‘JK business’” in March 2017, chaired by the Minister of State for Gender Equality, and complied emergency countermeasures, which set April 2017 as a month for prevention of victimization and address to implement integrated and intensive needed actions.

### **(Support for single parent families) Economic Support**

In order to contribute to the stability of livelihood and promotion of independence and self-reliance of single-parent households, loans of funds for welfare purposes which are designed to loan funds required for the livelihood of single-parent households and schooling of children are provided to single-parent households, in addition to the provision of childrearing allowance. In the Act on Partial Amendment of the Childrearing Allowance Act of 2010 (Act No. 40 of 2010), motherless households were made eligible for the childrearing allowance (August 2010) and the provision of additional allowance for fatherless families subject to livelihood protection was continued.

Furthermore, in the Act on Partial Amendment of the Act on Advancement of Measures to Support Raising Next-Generation Children of 2014 (Act No. 28 of 2014), a new loan scheme to loan welfare funds was established for motherless households.

With regard to the additional childrearing allowance for households with many children, a particular emphasis was placed on the improvement of single-parent households with economical difficulties, where the additional amount for the second child was increased from 5,000 yen per month to 10,000 yen at maximum per month (an increase for the first time in 36 years), while the additional amount to the third child and subsequent children was increased from 3,000 yen per month to 6,000 yen per month (an increase for the first time in 22 years). The Act on Partial Amendment of the Childrearing Allowance Act (Act No. 37 of 2016) was passed in the ordinary session of the Diet (the 190th Diet) and enforced from August 1, 2016.

### (Prevention of child abuse and enhancement of social care)

#### Prevention of child abuse and early detection before it becomes too late

- Passing of the Act on Partial Amendment of the Child Welfare Act

In order to deal with child abuse, various schematic measures have been implemented, including the establishment of cessation of guardianship through the Act on the Prevention etc. of Child Abuse (Act No. 82 of 2000, hereinafter referred to as “Child Abuse Prevention Act”) enforced in November 2000 and the successive revisions of the Child Welfare Act (Act No. 164 of 1947) and the Act on Partial Amendment of the Civil Code (Act No. 61 of 2011). In the meantime, the number of consultations on child abuse at child consultation centers across Japan has been increasing continuously and it reached 103,286 cases in FY 2015, which is about 8.9 times as high as just before the enactment of the Child Abuse Prevention Act. Serious child abuse incidents such as the deprivation of children’s lives never cease and the prevention of child abuse is an important issue to be addressed by society as a whole. In view of these circumstances, the “Sukusuku Support Project” (nicknamed “Project to realize peace of mind and hope of all children” consisting of the “Project for enhancing child abuse prevention measures” and “Project to support the independence and self-reliance of single-parent households and households with many children”) was decided in the fourth meeting on measures against children’s poverty in December 2015 in order to further strengthen a series of countermeasures for child abuse from occurrence prevention to self-reliance of abused children.

In March 2016, the expert committee on the new way of welfare for households with children of the Social Security Council Children’s Committee compiled a report (recommendations).

In light of these recommendations, the “Bill to revise part of the Child Welfare Act” was submitted to the ordinary session of the Diet (the 190th Diet) which was passed in May and published in June, whereby not only the vision of the Child Welfare Act was clarified by positioning children as the subject of the rights for the first time, but also necessary measures such as the nationwide development of childcare generation comprehensive support centers, strengthening of the system of municipalities as well as of child consultation centers, and promotion of entrustment to foster parents would be implemented. (Fig.2-2-4)

- Strengthening of the system of municipalities as well as of child consultation centers

With the partial amendment of the Child Welfare Act, it was decided as measures to strengthen the system at municipalities that

- ① the development of the base for providing necessary support to children and others (understanding of the current circumstances, provision of information, consultation, investigation, provision of guidance, contact and coordination with related organizations, etc.) should be promoted and experts should be placed at the regional council for implementation of measures for children requiring protection which is a coordination organization who need to receive training which complies with the standards determined by the government, and it was decided as measures to strengthen the system of child consultation centers that
- ② the placement of a lawyer and a child psychologist should be made legally compulsory and child welfare workers need to receive training which complies with the standards determined by the government.

In view of such decision, efforts toward the smooth implementation of these measures are being promoted, including review of the operation, securing of the budget and others.

Furthermore, in order to systematically strengthen the structure and expertise of child guidance centers according to the “plan to strengthen the child consultation center” drawn up in April 2016, various measures are taken such as the increase in the number and improvement in quality of professionals such as child welfare workers, and

the strengthening of cooperation with related organizations.

**Fig. 2-2-4**

**Overview of Act on Partial Amendment of the Child Welfare Act, etc.**

(Enacted on May 27 and promulgated on Jun. 3, 2016)

In order to further strengthen a set of measures against child abuse, ranging from precautions against child abuse to support for their self-reliance, for the sound development of all children, necessary measures will be taken including the nationwide establishment of the comprehensive support centers for Maternal and Child Health, strengthening the organization of municipalities and the Child Guidance Centers, and promotion of entrusting children to foster care, as well as clarifying the basic philosophy of the Child Welfare Act.

**Outline of Revision**

**1. Clarification of basic philosophy of Child Welfare Act, etc.**

- (1) It is clarified that children have the right to proper child care, healthy growth and development, self-reliance, among others.
- (2) The national/local governments shall promote taking care of children in homelike environments as well as support guardians of children.
- (3) The roles and duties of the national, prefectural, and municipal governments are clarified.
- (4) It is specified that parents who have the parental authority over children shall not take disciplinary actions beyond the scope necessary for custody and education.

**2. Prevention of occurrence of child abuse**

- (1) Municipalities shall endeavor to establish the comprehensive support centers for Maternal and Child Health that provide seamless support from pregnancy to childrearing period.
- (2) Medical institutions, schools, etc. that find out about pregnant women that require support shall endeavor to provide relevant information to municipalities.
- (3) It is specified that the national and local governments shall consider the fact that maternal and child health measures contribute to the precautions against and early detection of child abuse.

**3. Speedy and appropriate response in the event of the occurrence of child abuse**

- (1) Municipalities shall endeavor to establish hubs that can provide necessary support to children, etc.
- (2) Municipalities shall staff specialized experts in the coordinating organization of the Regional Council of Countermeasures for Children Requiring Aid.
- (3) The Child Guidance Centers shall be set up in the special wards designated by a Cabinet Order.
- (4) Prefectures shall place lawyers or take equivalent measures as well as assign ① Child Psychologists, ② doctors or public health nurses, and ③ Child Welfare Officers in charge of guidance and education in the Child Guidance Centers.
- (5) Medical institutions, schools, etc. shall provide documents, etc. regarding children who suffer abuse, etc. if requested by the Child Guidance Centers, etc.

**4. Support for self-reliance of child abuse victims**

- (1) It is clarified that stakeholder organizations, such as, foster homes, foster parents, municipalities, the Child Guidance Centers, shall cooperate in supporting the rebuilding of parent-child relationships.
- (2) Prefectures (Child Guidance Centers) shall be assigned to provide coherent support from searches for foster parents to support for self-reliance of children.
- (3) Adoption is legally provisioned and prefectures (Child Guidance Centers) shall be assigned to provide consultation and support regarding adoption.
- (4) Those studying in universities and others shall be eligible to be admitted into the Self-reliant assistance homes until the end of the fiscal year when one reach age 22.

(Provisions to be considered)

- Immediately after the effective date of this Act, consideration shall be given to how courts ought to be involved in procedures related to measures for the protection of aid-requiring children and how the use of the special adoption system ought to be promoted.
- In two years after the effective date of this Act, consideration shall be given to how work of the Child Guidance Centers ought to be, how Children Requiring Aid ought to be notified, and measures for enhancement of qualities of child welfare workers.
- In five-year target period following the effective date of this Act, necessary measures shall be taken to support core cities and special wards to establish the Child Guidance centers, among others.

**The Effective Dates**

April 1, 2017 (Date of promulgation for 1 and 2 (3); October 1, 2016 for 2 (2), 3 (4) (5) and 4 (1))

Source: Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare

**Improvement of Social Protective Care**

Social protective care was a policy focused on children without parents and children who are not raised by parents in the past. However, currently, its roles has been changed to the support of abused children and children with some disabilities, and it is required that its role and functions will be further changed as a social resource capable of providing detailed support to each child.

Under these circumstances, MHLW has promoted a series of measures ranging from promotion of entrustment to foster parents, improvement of the quality to operate facilities, support of the rebuilding of parent-child relationship, enhancement of support for independence and self-reliance, protection of children’s rights, and so forth in line with the “Problems of social protective care and future vision thereof” compiled by the expert committee on social protective care of the Social Security Council Children’s Subcommittee. “Challenging Issues and Future Vision for Company Care” compiled in 2011 at the Social

**Security Council Children’s Subcommittee Social Protection Committee**

In addition, MHLW did not only clarify the vision of the Child Welfare Act in May 2016 in order to further strengthen a series of countermeasures for child abuse from occurrence prevention to self-reliance of abused children so that all children may be developed in a sound manner, but also the Act on Partial Amendment of the Child Welfare Act (Act No. 63 of 2016) was enacted aim to legalize the childrearing generation comprehensive support center, to strengthen the system of municipalities and child consultation centers and to promote entrustment to foster parents. Based on this, MHLW will study the ideal way of social protective care.

**Promotion of Family-Based Care and Family-Like Care**

It is important for children who need social care, such as children without parents or abused children to be raised in a warm and stable household.

For this reason, in March 2011, MHLW drew up the “Guidelines for entrustment to foster parents” which stipulate the principle of priority of entrustment to foster parents to promote family-based care (foster parents and family homes). Local governments which have been increasing the rate of entrustment to foster parents implements a variety of efforts, including the placement of dedicated staff to foster parents at their child consultation centers, enhancement of organizations to support them, holding of experience presentations, public relations in collaboration with municipalities, verbal communication activities through specific non-profit organizations as well as civic activities. It is also necessary to reduce the scale of facilities and promote their regional diversification with the aim to develop a family-like care environment as much as possible. As a result, based on the “Promotion of reduction in size of child care facilities and promotion of family-like care” (Notification of the director of Equal Employment, Child and Family Policy Bureau”), MHLW drew up the “Prefectural promotion plan” which aims not only to reduce the scale of child care facilities and other facilities, but also to reduce the “percentage of children accepted by main facilities,” “percentage of children accepted by group homes” and “percentage of children entrusted to foster parents and family homes” by roughly 33% in 15 years between FY 2015 and the end of FY 2029 and has started the initiatives for the reduction in size and regional diversification. Furthermore, it was stipulated in the Act on Partial Amendment of the Child Welfare Act (Act No. 63 of 2016) enacted in May 2016 that both the national government and local governments must take necessary measures so that when child care in a household is difficult or is not appropriate, the child may be continuously taken care in “a care environment equivalent to a care environment in a family home,” and when this is not appropriate, “in a good family-like environment as much as possible,” based on the principle that parents are provided with support to allow children to be taken care in a sound manner. Based on this, MHLW is poised to promote further family-based care in the future.

### **(Efforts to Support Children with Disabilities)**

#### **Childcare for Children with Disabilities**

In terms of children with disabilities, MHLW has implemented services to place an increased number of childcare persons at childcare centers in the program for care of children with disabilities since

FY 1974. However, since a considerable number of years have passed since the start of the program and the number of children with disabilities accepted in childcare centers has increased across Japan, the program started to be financed by general revenue resources as from FY 2003, and children eligible for the calculation of tax allocations to local governments were expanded to include children with slight disabilities in addition to children eligible for the special child rearing allowance as from FY 2007 (Number of places with implementation: 15,429 and Number of eligible children: 56,096).

In addition, MHLW implements services to provide barrier-free facilities and training to improve the quality of childcare persons in charge of caring children with disabilities for their acceptance.

In terms of kindergartens, not only that the government subsidizes part of expenses required for the development of a support system such as the designation of a special support education coordinator, but also promotes the development of a system to accept children with disabilities including the placement of supporters for special support education in public kindergartens through local fiscal measures.

Furthermore, children with disabilities are provided with guidance on basic actions in daily life and child development support designed to provide them with support to adapt to group life based on the Child Welfare Act (Act No. 164 of 1947). In addition, participation and inclusion in the local community is promoted so that all children grow together in a growing place such as a childcare center regardless whether children are with disabilities or not by providing visits to childcare centers and other facilities. Furthermore, day care support is provided as usual to temporarily take care of children so that family members may take rest.

#### **Provision of support by strengthening collaboration with related organizations**

In order to support children with disabilities and their families, it is important to establish a regional support structure that can provide seamless according to the life stage including infancy. In addition, a variety of people related to health, healthcare, welfare, education and labor need to provide support to children with disabilities according to circumstances and it is necessary to build a coordination system among related organizations as well as related persons by making use of meetings (established of a subcommittee on children).

From FY 2015, the cooperation between centers that provide professional care, such as child development support centers and childcare centers, elementary schools, companies during work is evaluated in terms of the provision of social work service to children with disabilities by remuneration to strength the cooperation among related organizations.

Through the Act to support comprehensively the daily life and social life of people with disabilities and the Act on Partial Amendment of the Child Welfare Act (Act No. 65 of 2016) enacted in June 2016, the Item 2 of Article 56-2 of the Child Welfare Act was newly established whereby local governments are obliged to make best efforts to promote the cooperation among health, healthcare, welfare and others so that children with disabilities may receive appropriate support. In addition, local governments were obliged to draw up a “welfare plan for children with disabilities” in order to systematically build a system for providing support for children with disabilities.

In addition, so that hearing impairment is discovered and treated quickly, the development of the promotion scheme in the prefectures was newly budgeted in the FY 2017 to aim at the establishment of a council related to neonatal hearing examination, implementation of seminars, diffusion and enlightenment

### **Enhancement of support for children with developmental disabilities**

In terms of support of children with developmental disabilities, in light of the partial amendment of the Act on Support for Persons with Developmental Disabilities (Act No.167 of 2004) in the ordinary session of the Diet (the 190th Diet) and in order to promote a consistent and seamless support to people with developmental disabilities from their early childhood to elderly age, MHLW is engaged in promoting cross-cutting related policies of health, healthcare, welfare, education and labor. Specifically, the “Regional council to support people with developmental disabilities” in which organizations related to health, healthcare, welfare, education and labor participate will be established in prefectures and designated cities in order to achieve closer cooperation among related organizations including the sharing of information

on issued related to the support scheme for children with developmental disabilities in the region.

In addition, not only that regional support managers of children with developmental disabilities that provide advice and others to allow related organizations to provide support tailored to the characteristics of each child with developmental disabilities is promoted, but also the introduction of screening tools that are considered useful for early discovery of children with developmental disabilities will be promoted. In addition, the development and training of parent mentors that provide consultation and advice on childcare of children with developmental disabilities (parents with experience of childcare provide consultation and advice to parents whose children have been newly diagnosed as having developmental disabilities by making use of their experience) is underway.

Furthermore, the support system is being enhanced towards children with developmental disabilities in the region wherein experts with knowledge on developmental disorders visit facilities and places where children and their parents gather, such as childcare centers of municipalities, After-school Children’s Clubs and others to provide support, such as advice on early discovery and early response to developmental disorders to facility staff and parents.

### **Promotion of Special Needs Education**

From the perspective of providing support to proactive efforts towards autonomy and social participation of children with disabilities and with a view to promoting special needs education in light of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities ratified in 2014, appropriate guidance and necessary support have been provided in “diverse learning settings” with continuity, such as regular classes, resource room programs, special needs classes, special needs schools, in accordance with educational needs of each child and the state of their disabilities. While resource room programs have been implemented in elementary and junior high schools, revision of the ministerial ordinance in December 2016 will be put into effect in FY 2018, allowing resource room programs to be provided also in senior high schools.

### Measures to combat child poverty

In order to combat child poverty, the Act for the Promotion of Policy on Poverty among Children (Act No. 64 of 2013) was enacted in June 2013 and enforced on January 17, 2014. The Act aims not only to develop an environment in which children in the state of poverty can grow soundly so that their future may not be affected by their childhood environment, but also to promote comprehensively countermeasures against child poverty to provide equal educational opportunities.

In light of the Act, the government formulated the General Principles of Policy on Poverty among Children (Cabinet decision) on August 29, 2014. The General Principles of Policy provides the basic principles for combating child poverty, the indicators regarding child poverty, key measures to improve the indicators for the time being, and investigation and research on child poverty among other measures as well as the promotion system. In order for single parent households and households with many children with economic difficulties to become independent and self-reliant, it is necessary ① to ensure delivery of public services to those in need of assistance, ② to provide support tailored to each person with multiple difficulties, ③ to provide support to children who spend a lot of time alone, including educational support, and ④ to provide them with opportunities to stable employment. In December 2015, the government devised the Project for the Encouragement of Self-reliance of Single Parent Households and Households with Many Children, a project that incorporate employment programs with complementary measures, such as childcare support and educational support for children.

In addition, in The Japna's Plan Dynamic Engagement of All Citizens (decided by the Cabinet on June 2, 2016), the government envisions the course of development of measures for families and their children to overcome constraints that prevent their children from receiving desired education and difficulties for childrearing.

### Efforts supported by the society as a whole

The Cabinet Office, MEXT and MHLW jointly

promote the Children's Future Support National Movement, a collaborative project that brings together national and local governments, private organizations, and individuals, with the aim of making measures against child poverty into a nation-wide effort.

Major projects include dissemination of various information about various activities to assist children living in poverty, coordination of a match between child supporting organizations and private corporations that aid such activities, and provision of subsidies to NPOs' grassroots activities through the Children's Future Support Fund which consists of contributions from private organizations and individuals.

With regard to the dissemination of information, information on child-support initiatives is aggregated on the portal website that allows users to search by operating region, organizational type, and activity type.

As for the coordination of a match between child support organizations and private corporations, the Forum on Coordinating Sponsors and Recipients for Measures Against Child Poverty was held in various locations in order to help establish a visible network among public and private actors, the purpose of which was to accelerate cross-section collaboration to assure service delivery to those in need. The Conference for Promoting Coordination of Sponsors and Recipients consisting of learning support organisations, food banks and child cafeterias that possess nationwide networks was also founded to be responsible for introducing sponsors to child support organizations in need and vice versa. Furthermore, a website<sup>1</sup> where both resources offered by corporations and needs of NGOs are listed for mutual search has been maintained.

With respect to the Children's Future Support Fund, about 700 million yen has been donated at the end of September 2016, as a consequence of the effort of fostering companies' and individuals' understanding of the issue of child poverty and of asking for their contribution to the fund. In October 2016, the grant was awarded to 86 organizations selected from 535 that had applied in July by the project review board.

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.kodomohinkon.go.jp/>

In addition, the Cabinet Office is supporting the formation and the utilization of local networks consist of related administrative organizations, companies and NGOs through the Grant for Local Public Bodies to Support the Future of Children in order for local governments to promote measures against child poverty according to their circumstances. In order to encourage the use of the grant, in FY 2016, requirements for its application was relaxed to allow local governments spend the grants to the formation and the utilization of local networks without stepwise implementation of the projects if the local government was able to utilize the existing surveys.

### Policy Research

In promoting measures against child poverty in a comprehensive manner, it is necessary to properly grasp the actual situation of child poverty and to promote relevant measures and measures rooted in a sound understanding of the issue. To this end, it is stipulated in the General Principles that research is required to inform the development of improved indicators to allow for more effective policies.

In FY 2016, the Cabinet Office collected existing evidence about child poverty in Japan to form the basis for the systematic selection of statistical data that could capture child poverty, the implementation status of related measures, and the impact of these measures. The relevant statistical data were selected accordingly and their quality and applicability as indicators were investigated. The results of this research was summarized as the direction of revision of child poverty-related indicators.

### Measures against child poverty in Okinawa

In order to urgently deal with problems unique to Okinawa, such as the fact that administrative support does not cover children despite their serious situation, and the fact that there are no places where children can stay not only in daytime but also at night, efforts for the development of places where they can stay and placement of supporters in a trial and concentrated manner from FY 2016, and a total of 105 supports have been placed and 122 places opened within the prefecture (as of February 1, 2017).

## Section 2

## Promotion of Measures against Declining Birthrate through Actions by Society as a Whole

### 1

### Creation of friendly society for marriage, pregnancy, children and childrearing

#### (Improvement of facilities and environment for easy outing of pregnant women, mothers and children)

##### Promotion of Barrier-free Childrearing

- **Promotion of barrier-free policy incorporating the universal design philosophy**

Based on the Act on Promotion of Smooth Transportation, etc. of Elderly Persons, Disabled Persons, etc. on the basis of the concept of the Universal Design “anywhere, anyone, freely, easily to use” (Act No. 18 of 2006), not only the obligation of compliance with the “standards for smooth transportation” of facilities (passenger facilities, vehicles, roads, off-road parking lots, urban parks, buildings, etc.) and the best efforts obligation for existing facilities have been stipulated, but also the “Basic policy on the promotion of smooth transportation” (Notification No. 1/2006 of National Public Safety Commission, Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications

and Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport) stipulates the development targets by the end of FY 2020.

In the basic policy on transportation (decided by the Cabinet in February 2015) based on the Basic Act on Transportation Policy, it is one of its targets to make barrier-free mobility more accessible and the barrier-free is further promoted taking this into consideration.

In addition, based on the fundamental concept created by municipalities, in order not only to promote the provision of barrier-free access facilities in priority development districts in a focused and integrated manner, but also to promote the “barrier-free mind” to deepen public understanding of the barrier-free promotion and seek their cooperation, a stepwise and continuous development of the barrier-free policy is promoted, in addition to the holding of “barrier-free class” in which assistance experience of elderly people and people with disabilities as well as simulated experience are provided.

In the “Universal Design 2020 Action Plan” decided at the relevant ministerial meeting in February 2017, it was decided to promote the development of a town where everybody including

pregnant women and people with children can transit smoothly and live with peace of mind in order to realize a symbiotic community.

### **(Preferential service to persons with children)**

#### **Nationwide campaign of childrearing support passport**

In order to develop an atmosphere conducive to providing community-wide childcare support, the “Childrearing Support Passport Program” to provide support for parents with infants going out and services of a variety of discounts to childcare households is underway.

Regarding the nationwide common use (mutual use of services) started in 41 prefectures in April 2016, further 5 prefectures joined the program in October 2016 and as of April 2017 all prefectures take part in the program to allow mutual use of services.

The Cabinet Office prepared the leaflet “List of Prefectural Passports commonly Used across Japan for the Development of Childrearing Support” which was distributed to each prefecture to keep everyone informed so that the designs of each passport may be understood at a glance, and is poised to expand and enhance the services by increasing supporting companies and stores. (Fig. 2-2-5)

In addition, in October 2016, a talk session by experts entitled “The Future of the Childrearing

Support Passport Program” was held in the “Forum on the Development of Childrearing Support Passport Program commonly used across Japan” with the participation of local governments, companies, organizations, etc., where advanced cases were presented, including the presentation of the “Creation of Childrearing Support Movement from Saitama” of Saitama Prefecture which ranks top currently in the number of supporting store in which it was reported that the emphasis is placed in the passport for households with many children in which most of the households with many children are registered, the presentation of Ishikawa Prefecture on the “Premium Passport Service” for households with 3 children or more, and the presentation of Kyoto Prefecture of the “Kyoto Childcare Support Passport Application Mammopu” in which it was reported that information is provided through the application developed in conjunction with fathers and mothers of childrearing households.

In the meantime, as companies, LAWSON Corporation which lists the coexistence with the local community and sustainable development as its corporate mission presented the “Initiatives of LAWSON on Childrearing Support,” while Mos Food Services, Inc whose basic strategic is to promote corporate social responsibility (CSR) and to make people happy through food presented the “Mos Burger’s Initiatives.”<sup>1</sup>

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1 [http://www8.cao.go.jp/shoushi/shoushika/passport/forum\\_kaisai.html](http://www8.cao.go.jp/shoushi/shoushika/passport/forum_kaisai.html)

