

# **JAPAN**

## **Improvement of Educational Practice and Environment for Students with Intellectual Disabilities –for active participation in society through employment**

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### **1. School System in Japan**

Modern school system in Japan was established in 1872.

The present school system is based on the School Education Law (established in 1947) and mainly comprises four systems: elementary schools (6 years), lower secondary schools (3 years), higher secondary schools (3 years) and universities (4 years). In addition, there are kindergartens for preschoolers, secondary education schools (6 years) for children after they graduate from elementary school, and colleges of technology for lower secondary school graduates, as well as special schools (schools for the blind, schools for the deaf and schools for the other disabled). Moreover, there are specialized training schools and miscellaneous schools, which function as educational facilities but are not stipulated in Article 1 of the School Education Law.

Compulsory education is for nine years – from the age of six, when children enter elementary school, to the time they graduate from lower secondary school. Figure 1 shows organization of the school system in Japan. Table 1 shows the number of schools, enrollment and full-time teachers as of 2005 (all preliminary figures).

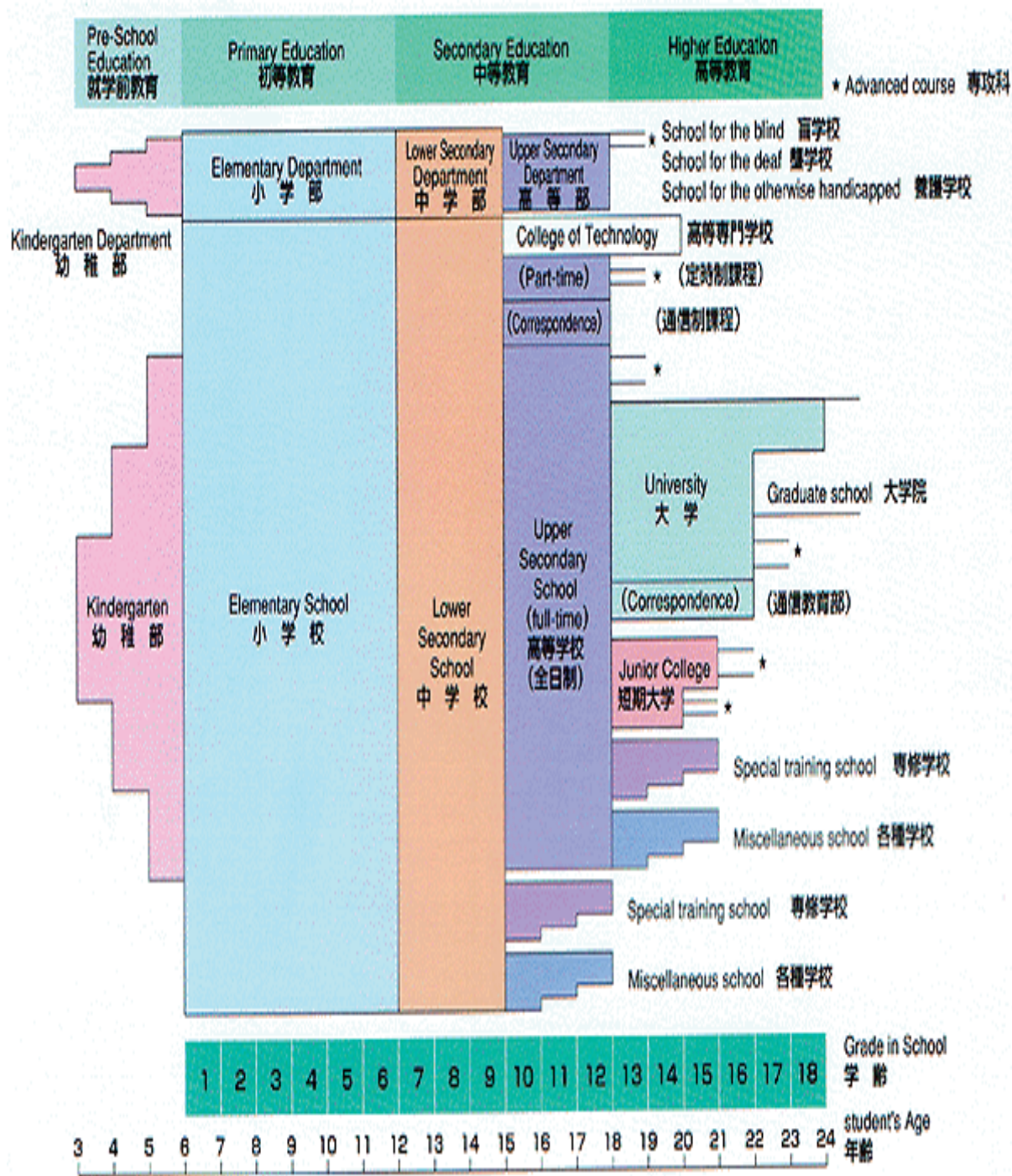


Figure 1 Organization of the School System in Japan

**Table 1 The Number of Schools, Enrollment, Regular Teachers (as of 1 May 2005)**

<b>Types of institution</b>	<b>No. of schools</b>	<b>Enrollment</b>	<b>No. of teachers</b>
<b>&lt;Schools under Article 1&gt;</b>			
Kindergartens	13,949	1,738,836	110,412
Elementary schools	23,124	7,197,460	416,789
Lower secondary schools	11,035	3,626,416	248,688
Upper secondary schools	5,418	3,605,243	251,413
Secondary education schools	19	7,456	560
Schools for the blind	71	3,809	3,382
Schools the deaf	106	6,639	49,74
Special schools	825	91,164	55,275
Colleges of technology	63	59,160	4,469
Junior colleges	480	219,357	11,964
University	726	2,865,067	161,713
Graduate (redisplay)	569	254,483	91,668
<b>&lt;Schools not in Article 1&gt;</b>			
Specialized training schools	3,438	783,651	41,761
Miscellaneous schools	1,830	163,966	11,042
<b>Total</b>	<b>61,084</b>	<b>20,368,224</b>	<b>1,322,442</b>

## **2. Present State of Special Education in Japan**

### **2.1 Increase in the Number of Children Receiving Special Education**

In Japan's special education, to cultivate the ability children with disabilities need to be able to participate independently in society, in accordance with the type and extent of their disabilities, we provide carefully planned education services and instruction at special schools (the kindergarten department, the elementary school department, the lower secondary school department and the upper secondary department) as well as in special classes and *tsukyu* classes( resource rooms). Special schools provide special education based on five disabilities – blindness, deafness, intellectual disabilities, physical/motor

disabilities and health impairments – and multiple disabilities. Special classes provide special education based on seven disabilities: intellectual disabilities, physical/motor disabilities, health impairment, visual impairment, hard of hearing, speech and language disorders, and emotional disturbance. *Tsukyu* classes provide special education based on above six disabilities excluding intellectual disabilities.

Figure 2 shows the percentage of children who are receiving special education services at the compulsory education stage. Since instruction by *tsukyu* was institutionalized in FY1993, that percentage has increased year after year, reaching 1.65 % in FY2004. Particularly, in the past five years, the number of children with disabilities receiving education services not only in *tsukyu* classes but also in special schools as well as the number of children in special classes have tended to increase significantly.

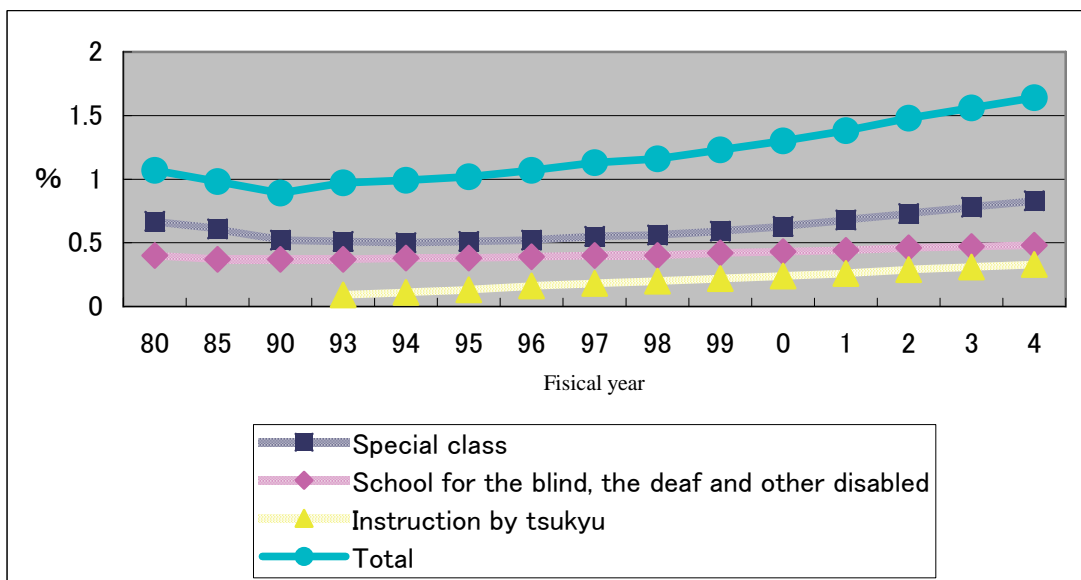


Figure 2. Ratio of Children Receiving Special Education at the Compulsory Education Stage

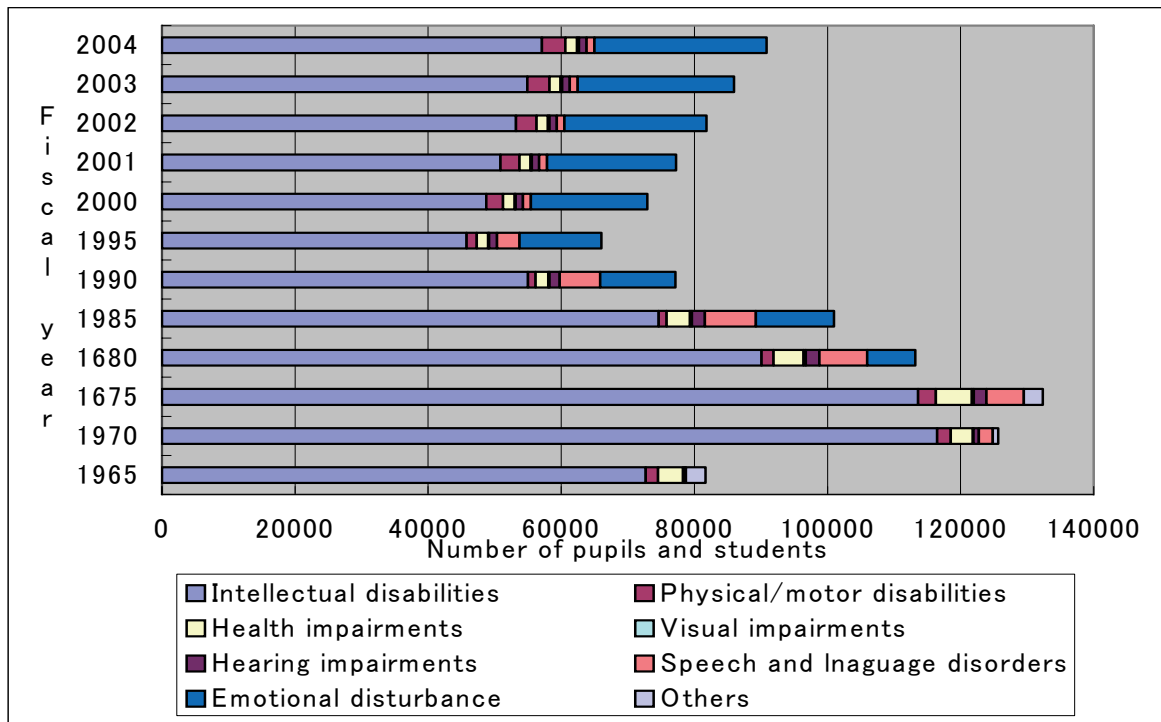


Figure 3 Trends in Enrollment in Special Classes at Elementary and Lower Secondary Schools

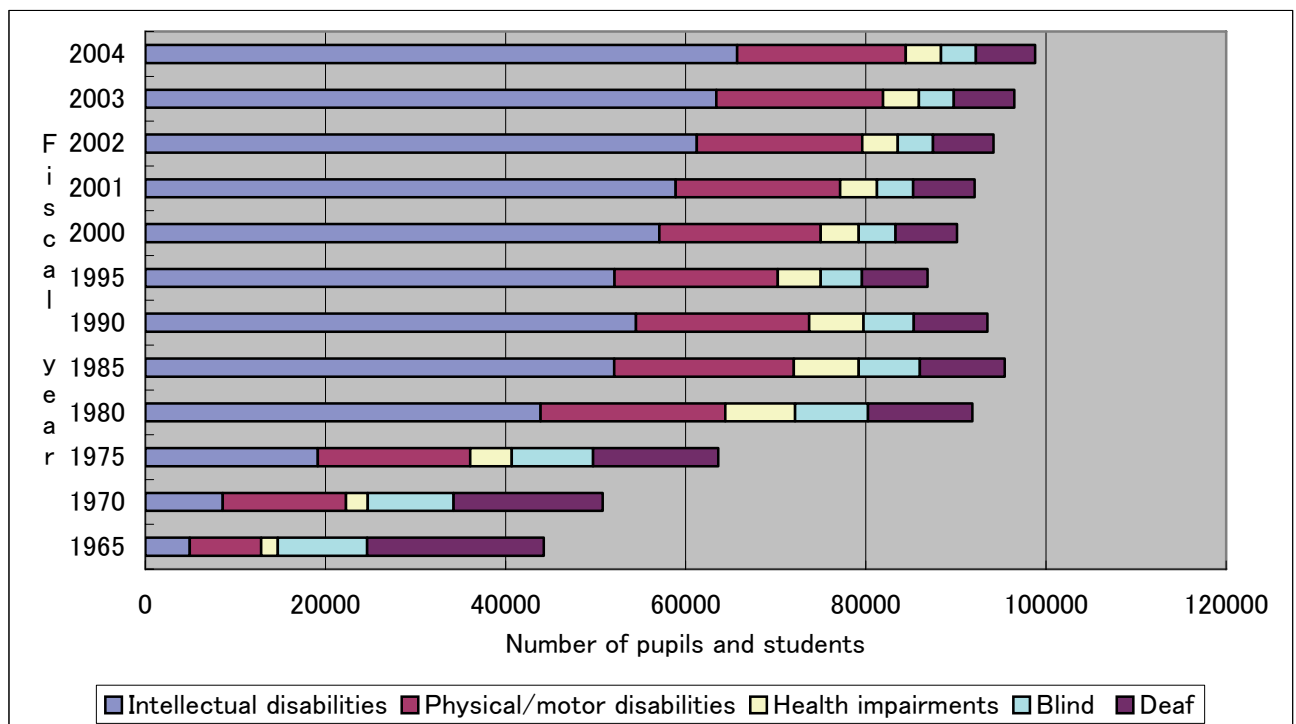


Figure 4 Trends in Enrollment in Special Schools

Figure 3 shows the trends in enrollment in special classes at primary and lower secondary schools, while Figure 4 shows the trends in enrollment in special schools by type of disability. In either case, the trend from FY1980 to FY1995 has been in the direction of smaller enrollment; but since FY2000, despite the strong trend toward decreased number of children in Japan, the enrollment in question has consistently increased. Particularly, in the case of special classes, enrollment has increased significantly in those for children with intellectual disabilities and those with emotional disturbance; in the case of special schools, enrollment has increased significantly in schools for children with intellectual disabilities.

## **2-2 Conversion from Special Education to Special Support Education**

At present, on the basis of the perception of the present state of affairs, a conversion from traditional “Special Education,” in which special guidance is provided in accordance with the type and extent of the disability in question, to “Special Support Education,” in which children with disabilities are provided with proper support in accordance with their individual educational needs

- (1) The number of children with disabilities receiving special education continues to grow.
- (2) The trend toward a quantitative rise in the number of children being targeted for special education and introduction of greater diversity in the types of disabilities targeted.
  - The ratio of children with profound and multiple disabilities is on the rise in special schools.
  - It is estimated that around 6 percent of children in regular classes need special education services such as Learning Disability (LD), Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and High Function Autism (HFA).
- (3) A higher level of professionalism is needed to provide support to children with a diversity of disabilities
  - There is a serious lack of expertise as evidenced by the fact that only about a half of those teaching in special schools possess one or the other special education certificates,
  - To raise the level of expertise, it is indispensable that experts in the field be fully utilized and there be coordination between relevant departments and between education institutions.
- (4) In the field of educational methodology, there is a strong demand for a

shift toward supporting children's autonomy and participation in society by understanding the educational needs of each of them

(5) In light of the severe financial circumstances in recent years, it is essential that a new system be established.

- Revise the existing way in which human and physical resources are distributed.
- Give adequate consideration to decentralization of authority.

Based on this perception of the present state of affairs, in FY2003, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) launched a special support education system targeting all prefectural and city governments a project for promoting. In FY2003, in order to establish a comprehensive special support education system for children with LD, ADHD or HFA, MEXT implemented a number of initiatives including establishment of school committees and teams of experts, training of special support education coordinators, and provision of circuit training. In FY2004, in addition to the above operations, MEXT established the Special Support Education Coordination Association as an organization that cuts across administrative departments in prefectures, cities and regions, formulated individual education support plans, and conducted a study on how special schools should function as centers for providing special support education services. Moreover, in FY2005, in order to strengthen our coordination with the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare and promote consistent provision of educational guidance and counseling from pre-school to the time one enters the work-force, the target of the operation to include kindergarten to upper secondary school education.

At present, the government's Central Council for Education, deliberation is continuing on what the response of the legal system should be to the needs of special support education including a review of the existing system of special schools or the strengthening of the system of special classes in the lower secondary schools.

### **3. Present State in the Education of Children with Intellectual Disabilities**

#### **3-1 The Number of Children with Intellectual Disabilities in Japan**

Under the existing legal system in Japan, children with intellectual disabilities can receive education either in special schools for intellectual

disabilities or in special classes in elementary and lower secondary schools. Table 2 shows the number of children with intellectual disabilities and its ratio to the total number of children with disabilities by type of school.

In special schools, 60 percent or thereabouts of all pupils and students with disabilities are children with intellectual disabilities. At the compulsory education stage, there are a total of 90,546 pupils and students with intellectual disabilities, or 0.83 % of all school aged-children. This is equivalent to about half of all children receiving special education.

**Table 2 Number of Children with Intellectual Disabilities**

Type of school	Enrollment (pupils/students)	% of ID/all disabilities
Schools for intellectual disabilities		
Kindergarten departments	5 9	3. 5
Elementary departments	1 8, 9 7 0	6 1. 3
Lower secondary departments	1 4, 4 5 7	6 6. 1
Upper secondary departments	3 2, 2 0 4	7 2. 7
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Special classes for intellectual disabilities		
Elementary schools	3 7, 9 0 5	6 0. 1
Lower secondary schools	1 9, 1 7 8	6 9. 1
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Temporary exemption from school enrollment	3 6	3 2. 4
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Total	1 2 2, 8 0 7	5 4. 5
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### **3-2 Curriculum for children with Intellectual Disabilities**

Article 71 of the School Education Law stipulates that in Japan, special schools shall educate children in accordance with the education provided in regular kindergarten, primary schools, lower secondary schools and upper secondary schools. At the same time, the said article stipulates that school education shall aim to enable children with disabilities to improve and overcome



their difficulties resulting from their disabilities. Consequently, the curriculum used in special schools consists of the same subjects as regular school education (e.g., in elementary schools, Japanese [or national language], Social Studies, Arithmetic, Science, Daily Living, Music, Drawing and Manual Arts, Homemaking, Physical Education), Ethnics, Special Activities, Integrated Period of Learning, and Activities to Promote Self-Reliance, which is an area unique to special education. Curriculum design in schools for intellectual disabilities is basically the same, but differ on two points. The first difference has to do with academic subjects. In schools for intellectual disabilities, the same education is provided and the same subject names are used as in regular schools, but the contents, as well as the form, of the educational guidelines differ. For example, in elementary departments, the contents of individual subjects are indicated in three stages in accordance with the degrees of intellectual disability. The second difference has to do with the actual teaching plans. In schools for intellectual disabilities, although, like the education provided in regular schools and for children with disabilities other than intellectual disabilities, subject-based classes, like Japanese and Arithmetic, are taught, classes tailored to individual subjects in all or part of the areas covered, that is, Instruction Combining Learning Areas and Academic Subjects is emphasized even more. This is because we have adopted, as our educational philosophy, a form of education that stresses the importance of living experience. This school believes that, since most children with intellectual disabilities are at an undifferentiated stage of development, it is more effective to stimulate their appetite for learning and sense of achievement by supporting their daily activities that include details of various academic subjects and learning areas in an undifferentiated form, than by having them acquire knowledge through textbooks that are systematized by subject matters, thus making them self-reliant in the future. Since this line of argument is also reflected in subject-based teaching, emphasis is placed on guiding activities adapted to daily living in incremental steps so that children with intellectual disabilities will be able to avoid acquiring knowledge that does not have a direct bearing on life.

Today's course of study is illustrated by the following four types as a form of Instruction Combining Learning Areas and Academic Subjects:

(1) Guidance in Daily Life Activities

Proper guidance is provided on various activities undertaken in daily life to make children's lives richer and more satisfactory as well as guide them to develop, and basic lifestyle habits necessary for collective living such as

eating, putting on and taking off clothes, relieving oneself, behaving with proper etiquette, being punctual, and abiding by the rules. The basic characteristic of Guidance in Daily Life Activities involves repeatedly providing guidance developmentally in actual daily life situations while keeping up with the flow of school life with the view to helping children with intellectual disabilities not only acquire skills but also develop desirable living habits

#### (2) Guidance in Play Activities

Play is placed at the center of learning activities to guide children with intellectual disabilities to become more energetic in their physical activities and more involved with their peers. Their learning activities thus include individual Academic Subjects, Ethics, Special Activities, and Activities to Promote Self-Reliance.

#### (3) Experience-Centered Unit Approach

Guidance is provided to help children with intellectual disabilities cope with and solve various problems that they face in their school life. By experiencing in an organized way a series of purposeful activities that have become part of their daily life and have been divided into units, in a practical and comprehensive way, these children learn how to handle matters necessary for independent life. In some cases, a single unit is completed in two or three days; in other cases, it may take a whole semester or even a whole year.

#### (4) Work-Centered learning

Work activities are placed at the center of learning to foster a desire to work. Through these activities, children with intellectual disabilities will develop the skills they will need in their future occupation and social life. Guidance is provided by integrating Academic Subjects, Ethics, Special Activities, and Activities to Foster Self-Reliance.

Generally speaking, curriculums in schools for intellectual disabilities consist of these four types of learning activities. In the lower grades of elementary departments, Guidance in Play Activities and Guidance in Daily Life Activities are provided mainly. But in the upper grades, in addition, children with disabilities receive Experience-Centered Unit Approach, and when they advance to secondary departments, Guidance in Play Activities are replaced by Work Centered Learning, when they advance to upper secondary departments, weight is placed more and more on Work-Centered Learning.

## 4. Trends in career options after graduation

### 4-1 Graduates of lower secondary special classes

Figure 5 shows the average of five years in the trend in the number of graduates of special classes in lower secondary school by career option. The figure indicates not only the number of graduates of special classes for intellectual disabilities but also for all disabilities. But, as noted earlier, children with intellectual disabilities account for a large percentage of the total children with disabilities. Indeed, children with intellectual disabilities account for anywhere from around 70 to 90 percent of the total number of graduates during the term indicated in Figure 5. Of the career categories, “Go on to higher schooling” refers to those who went on to upper secondary schools or the upper secondary department at special schools. Of this number, in 1978, about 60 % went on to study in the upper secondary departments. But in 2004, their number increased to around 70 %. “Training” refers to graduates who went on to occupational skills development facilities, specialized training facilities, and other higher educational institutions. “Finding employment” refers to graduates who found employment in ordinary business establishments. And “Institutions, etc.” refers to graduates who, among other things, make use of welfare facilities, medical facilities and small workshops, as well as those who remained home.

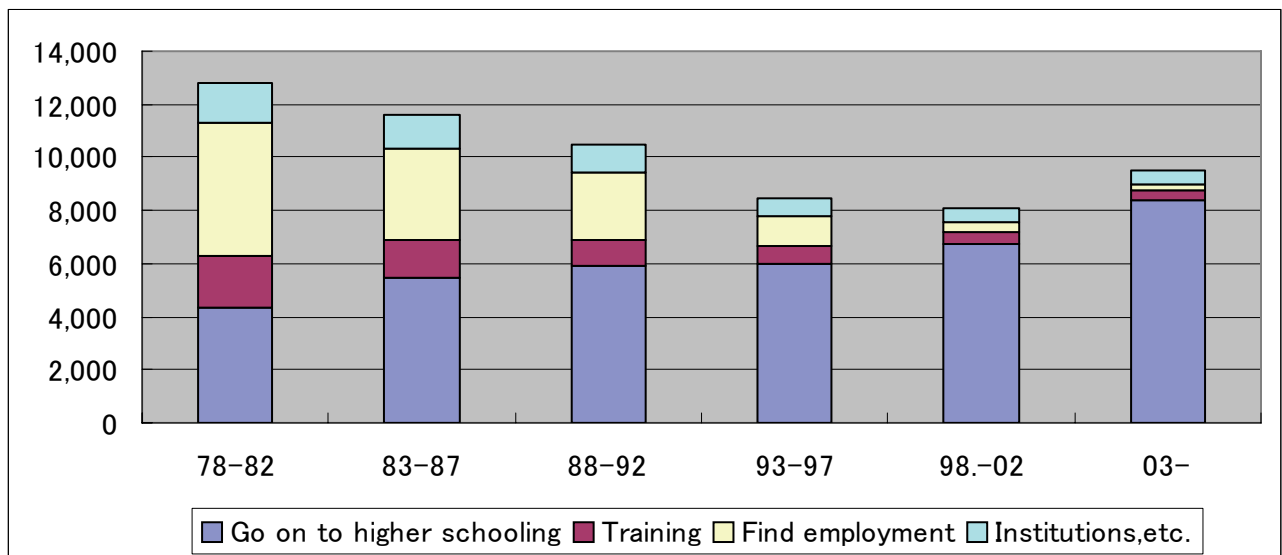


Figure 5 Trends in the Number of Graduates of Special Classes in Lower Secondary School by Career Option

Figure 5 shows that career choices children with intellectual disabilities make after they graduate from special classes in lower secondary schools have changed significantly over the past quarter century. The main changes are discussed below.

- The number of graduates has consistently decreased, from about 13,000 around 1980 to about 8,000 around 2000. However, in the past few years, as the trend toward lower fertility continues, the number of graduates has rebounded to nearly 10,000 in 2004.

- Graduates who found employment numbered around 5,000 (about 40% of the total number of graduates; hereinafter the same) around 1980, but their number has decreased sharply since then. In 2004, only 240 (about 2.5%) found employment.

- The number of graduates who proceeded to vocational training facilities and the like decreased from around 2,000 (about 15%) in 1980 to only 332 (about 3%) in 2004.

- In the meantime, the number of graduates going on to higher schooling was around 4,000 (about 34%) in 1980, but continued increasing sharply since then, to 8,700 (about 90%) in 2004. There is a strong tendency to opt for higher schooling even after completion of compulsory education,

#### **4-2 Trends in Career Options of Graduates of Lower Secondary Departments of Schools for Intellectual Disabilities**

Figure 6 shows the career option situation of graduates of lower secondary departments in schools for intellectual disabilities. Figure 6, like Figure 5, shows the career option situation of graduates of lower secondary departments in schools for intellectual disabilities. The data collected for the period until 1986 include those on graduates of schools for physical/motor disabilities and schools for health impairments.



Figure 6 Trends in the Number of Graduates of Lower secondary departments of Schools for Intellectual Disabilities

Figure 6, as in Figure 5, shows that major changes have taken place over the past quarter century. These changes are described below:•

- With the 1979 implementation of a system to make special schools for intellectual disabilities part of compulsory education (establishment of special school facilities by prefectural and city governments and enforcement of school attendance), the number of graduates increased sharply. For about 10 years after the mid-1980s, the number tended to decrease, but over the past five years, it has continued to increase again.

- The percentage of graduates, who go on to higher schooling has increased gradually, with around 96 percent of graduates choosing this route in 2004. There is a strong tendency to opt for higher schooling even after completion of compulsory education

- The percentage of graduates who found employment, proceeded to vocational training facilities or made use of welfare facilities numbered 60 (1.1% of total number of graduates), 24 (0.4%) and 2,078 (37.8%), respectively, in 1987. But these numbers have decreased year after year since then. In 2004, only 1 found employment, none proceeded to vocational training facilities, and 199 made use of welfare facilities. These career paths are now being chosen by only a limited number of graduates.

#### 4-3 Trends in Career Options for Graduate of Upper Secondary Departments in schools for intellectual Disabilities

Figure 7 shows trends in the number of graduates of upper secondary

departments in schools for intellectual disabilities by carrier option. Until 1986, as in Figure 6, the figures included graduates of schools for physical/motor disabilities and those for health impairments.

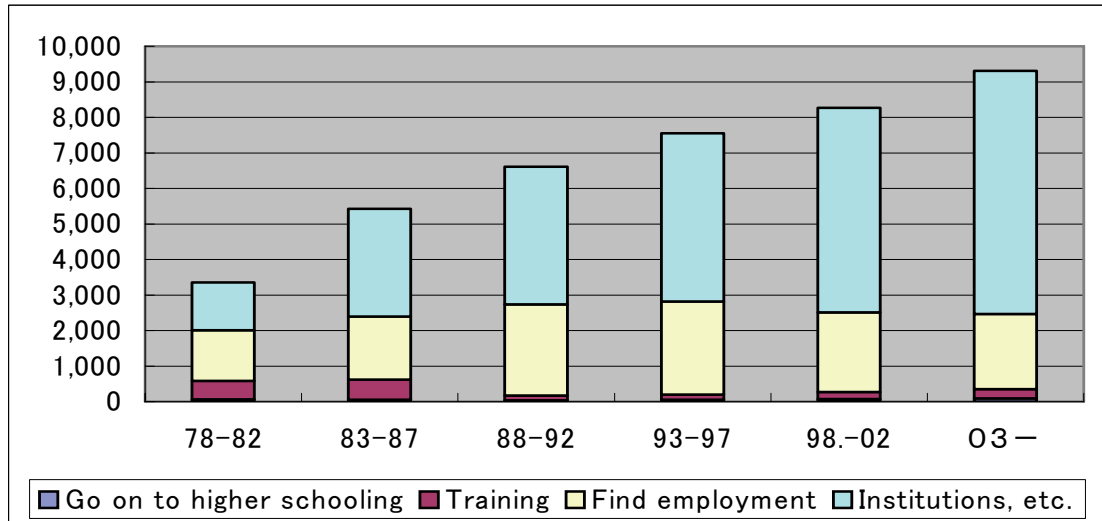


Figure 7 Trends in Career Options for Graduate of Upper Secondary Departments of School for Intellectual Disabilities

Figure 7, liken Figures 5 and 6, shows that major changes have taken place over the past quarter century. These changes are described below:

- The total number of graduates has tripled since around 1980, when there were about 3,000, to about 9,000 as of the present. The rise in the number of students who go on to upper secondary departments after completing their compulsory education has led directly to an increase in the number of upper secondary department graduates. This indicates that upper secondary departments have become a safe career option that assures graduation for those who enter them.

- The number of graduates who found employment increased from around 1,500 (about 43% of all graduates) in 1980 to around 3,000 (about 39%) at the beginning of the 1990s, but since then, the number has decreased year by year to 2,180 (23%) in 2004.

- The number of graduates who proceeded to training facilities averaged around 550 from 1978 to 1987, but fell below 100 in the 1990s. In the last three years, the number rebounded to around 250.

- The bulk of those who went on to higher schooling entered course in the upper secondary departments in schools for intellectual disabilities that offered

majors. In Japan, only a few choose this path, as only seven private schools for intellectual disabilities offer majors.

- Accompanying the increase in graduates, a growing number of them are proceeding to institutions. There were around 1,400 such graduates between 1978 to 1982, but 10 years later, between 1988 to 1992, the number rose to around 3,900, and 20 years later, between 1998 to 2002, the number increased to 5,800. As of March 2004, 6,893, or 73 percent, of the graduates proceeded to institutions.

#### 4-4 Occupations that the Employed Engage in

Figure 8 shows the 2,180 students by occupation of upper secondary departments in schools for intellectual disabilities who graduated in March 2004 and went on to find employment. The largest number, 1,070 (49.1 %), found employment in industrial operation or as laborers. This was followed by 620 (28.4%), who found employment in the service industry, followed by 201 (9.2%) who found employment in sales. These three occupations account for 87 percent of the 2,180 who found employment after graduation.

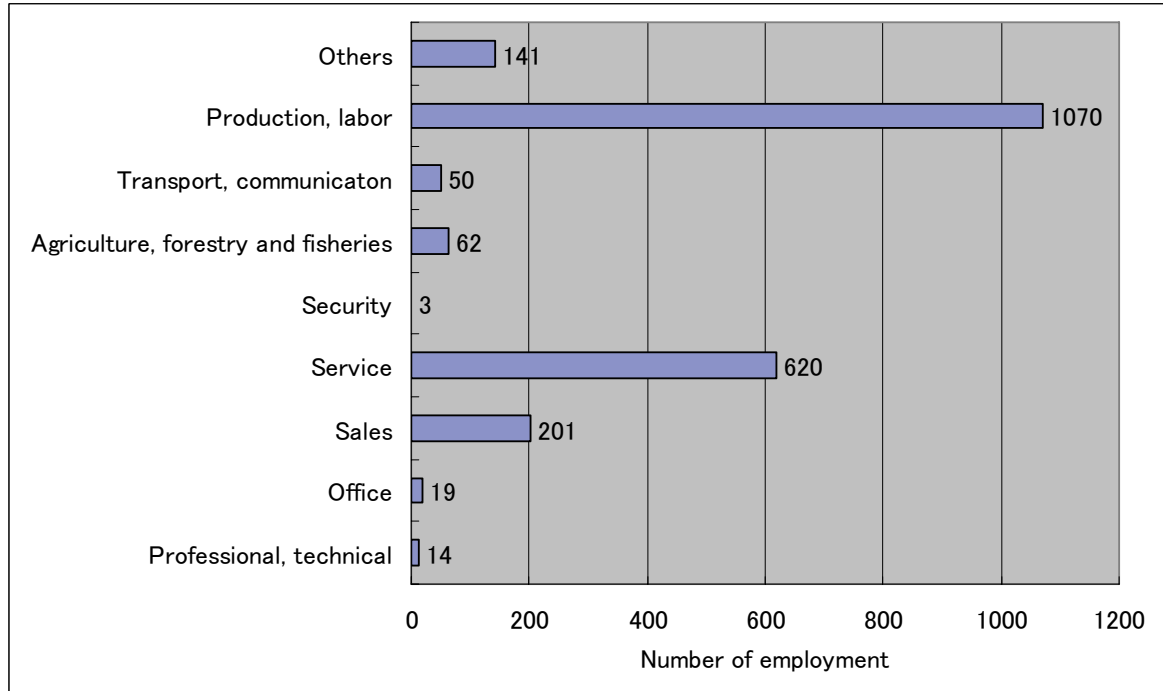


Figure 8 Number of Graduates of Upper Secondary Departments in Schools for Intellectual Disabilities Who Are Employed by Type of Trade (March 2004)

Compared with the data that were first presented in 1987, the percentage of those finding employment in industrial operation or as laborers decreased by 20 percent, while those in service and sales increased by 11 percent and 6 percent, respectively. This means that graduates of upper secondary departments in schools for intellectual disabilities, whose employment has been skewed towards production and manual labor, are now finding employment in industries that more closely resemble the general employment pattern.

#### 4-5 Employment Situation of Persons with Intellectual Disabilities

A survey conducted in June 2001 of the actual condition of employment of persons with physical or intellectual disabilities estimates that 264,000 of Japan's population over 15 years old and under 64 years old have suffer from intellectual disabilities. Of these, 130,000 (49.2%) are employed, as opposed to 132,000 (50.0%) who are not. Figure 9 shows the employment situation of the 130,000 who are employed. Only about 24 percent (23.8%) are employed regularly (i.e., over 20 hours a week, without stipulating the length of employment), while the overwhelming majority work shorter hours. What stands out is that over 50 percent are in a pattern of employment called welfare type employment such as small workshops and vocational aid centers. Indeed, the large number of persons with intellectual disabilities in welfare type work characterizes their employment pattern.

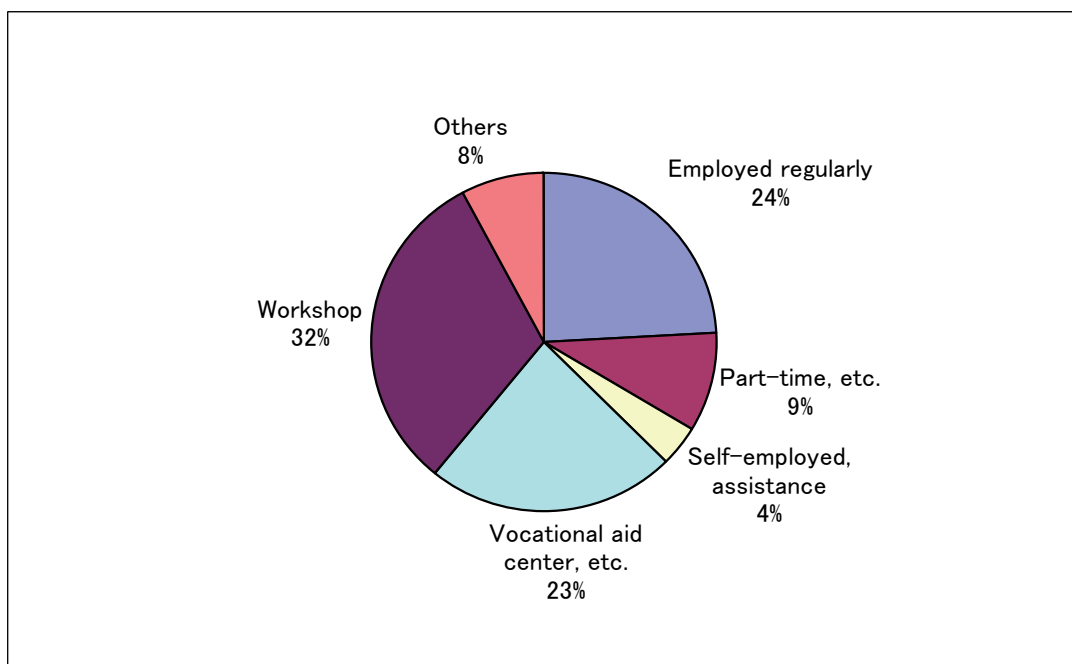


Figure 9 Employment Situation of Persons with Intellectual Disabilities



## **5. Job Assistance in Schools for Intellectual Disabilities**

Job assistance in schools for intellectual disabilities is provided through vocational education and career guidance. Generally speaking, vocational education refers to education to prepare people for specific types of employment by developing necessary knowledge, skills and attitude. However, education for students with intellectual disabilities is designed, not to train the students for a specific line of work, but to help them develop knowledge, skills, and attitude that they will need to be gainfully employed and become full-fledged members of society. In this sense, the concept of vocational training for able-bodied persons differs from that for students with intellectual disabilities.

As noted earlier, in schools for intellectual disabilities, on the basis of the principle of education grounded in life experience, children with intellectual disabilities are guided from the elementary department stage with the view to cultivating their ability to participate independently in all aspects of society in the future. Thus, in a limited sense, vocational education begins from the elementary department stage, but in a broad sense, it is a form of Work-Centered learning that begins from the secondary department stage.

### **5-1 Work-Centered Learning**

Work-Centered Learning in schools for intellectual disabilities, which starts mainly in secondary departments, is placed at the core of curriculums in upper secondary departments. In many schools, Work-Centered Learning is set across the weekly and daily schedules. In upper secondary departments, on average around 9 hours of instructions, or about 30 percent of the total hours of weekly instructions, are devoted to Work-Centered Learning.

In Work-Centered Learning, a wide variety of work exercises are administered. There are unique exercises that individual schools have planned and developed. Others are work exercises that are contracted from outside business establishments. The following requirements are indicated in selecting work exercises:

- Work activities, etc. that have high educational value for students should be included.
- Is grounded in regional characteristics.
- Step-by-step guidance tailored to the actual condition of the student should be provided.
- Work activities students afflicted with a variety of disabilities can

grapple with should be included.

- Work activities students can grapple with jointly should be included.
- Students should be able to experience the joy of participating in work activities and feel the sense of achievement
- Contents of work should be safe and wholesome.
- Raw materials should be easily obtained and durable.
- The flow from production to consumption should be easy to understand, etc.

Work exercises that meet these requirements are dealt with nationwide. Typical ones are presented below.

- Agriculture: vegetables, cereal, mushroom, etc.
- Gardening: flowers, garden trees, dry flowers, etc
- Woodwork: pot cover, bench, tray, etc.
- Weaving: muffler, vase coaster, etc.
- Ceramics: vase, teacup, plates, etc.
- Paperwork: box , coaster, paper bag, etc.
- Strain Japanese paper: postcard, envelope, letter paper, etc.
- Sewing, dustcloth, carrier bag, apron, etc.
- Cement processing: block, cobble,, etc.
- Printing: business card, calendar, postcard, etc.
- Cleaning: overall, sheet, etc.
- Cooking: confectionary production, curry, cookie, etc.
- Recycle: empty can, old newspaper, etc.

In this way, while various work exercises are dealt with, traditionally, since the objective in Work-Centered Learning is to develop the basics for being a worker and a full-fledged member of society, not much consideration was given to the relationship between work exercises and the work actually done at places of employment. As noted earlier, recently, places of employment for students with intellectual disabilities are still mostly in the manufacturing business, but about 30 percent of workers with intellectual disabilities work in the service industry such as cleaning, or being a Janitor. The challenge now is to select work exercises by taking into consideration this kind of employment situation and changes in the local industry,

Groups for Work-Centered Learning are organized by class, school age, gender, and ability. However, regardless of the kind of group concerned, each student is supported so that he/she will be able to participate in the work being done, relish a sense of achievement through teachers' analyzing the work process, assigning students who have the right aptitude and interest, coming up with the right jig, and providing individual assistance.

Most courses established in upper secondary departments at schools for intellectual disabilities in Japan are on general education (general course), but there has been a gradual increase in the number of schools offered vocational education (vocational course). Vocational courses were first officially offered in schools for intellectual disabilities in 1989. Today, it is possible to set up courses in industry, agriculture, commerce, domestic science, fisheries industry, and courses in other fields established by local educational authorities. Table 3 shows the number of courses and students by course. There are 107 courses in schools for intellectual disabilities, with the number of students still large at 3,734.

Vocational education taught in vocational courses are basically offered in the form of Work-Centered Learning, but the scope of guidance contents is wider than those offered in general courses, and instruction hours are longer (of the 1,050 hours of instruction per year, more than 875), and in order to further enrich vocational education, it is desired that more new vocational courses in schools for intellectual disabilities be built.

Table 3 Number of Courses and Enrollment by Course in Upper Secondary Departments in Schools for Intellectual Disabilities (as of May 1, 2004)

Types of institutions	General course	Related to agriculture	Related to industry	Related to home	Industry	Total
No. of courses	429	19	35	20	33	536
Enrollment	28,307	488	1,104	500	1,642	32,041
(males)	(18,268)	(331)	(885)	(191)	(1,078)	(20,753)
(female)	(10,039)	(157)	(219)	(309)	(564)	(11,288)

## 5-2 Practical Training in Industry Sites, Etc. (on-site apprenticeship)

On-site apprenticeship in education for students with intellectual disabilities is considered part of Work-Centered Learning. However, since it also functions as an experience in business establishments and other places of work and provides information for making decisions on whether a student is employable, on-site apprenticeship also plays an important role in career guidance.

The usual procedure in on-site apprenticeship is as follows:

- Student and parents confirms in writing student's desire to take part in the apprenticeship.
- Student tour in advance the place where he/she is apprenticing and has an interview.
- When the site for the apprenticeship is decided, the school obtains a letter of acceptance.
- Prior to the start of the apprenticeship, the school provides necessary guidance in commuting to the site and other relevant matters to prepare student for the apprenticeship.
- If necessary, the principal will contact a public employment agency or municipal welfare office.
- On-site apprenticeship is implemented.
- After the apprenticeship, the school obtains in writing evaluation of the apprentice from the place of apprenticeship.

The prerequisites for on-site apprenticeship are as follows:

- Since on-site apprenticeship is planned in advanced as part of Work-Centered Learning or as part of subject-based instruction, the curriculum should be sent to the board of education before the apprenticeship.
- No payment or allowance should be accepted.
- Teachers should guide the prospective apprentice.

The commencement time for the on-site apprenticeship will differ from the first year of the lower secondary department to the third year of the upper secondary department, but most schools begin in the third grade of the lower secondary department or the first year of the upper secondary department. In most schools, the term of the on-site apprenticeship is decided in their annual plan, and all members of the targeted grade take part in the training. In case of students whose disabilities make it difficult for them to receive training outside

school, training may be provided in school. Also, instead of fixing the training period, some schools send a number of students to companies to receive on-site apprenticeship throughout the school year. The duration and frequency of on-site apprenticeship will depend on individual schools and school year, but generally speaking, schools implement three to four on-site apprenticeship that lasts for two or three weeks during three years of upper secondary department.

In most schools, on-site apprenticeship undertaken in first or second grade is regarded as a form of on-site training. Through real employment experience at the training site, the problems individual students have in adapting to the workplace are identified. The data thus obtained are used in future Work-Centered Learning and career guidance. Meanwhile, in the on-site apprenticeship that students undergo in their third grade are in most cases regarded as an “employment” test that the company where the student apprenticed uses to decide whether to hire him/her or not. If one training session is not enough to make a determination, the same company will sometimes repeat the original training over and over.

### **5-3 Career Guidance**

Career guidance as a form of job assistance refers to a process of supporting a student to understand his/her own ability and aptitude, deepen awareness of occupational life I at the business enterprise or workshop where he/she will be employed, and while carefully thinking about the compatibility of the self to the workplace, decide on his/her own what career he/she should pursue.

Career guidance can be divided into the following components: providing information and understanding about career, career counseling, career learning as a lesson, activities related to career mediation, and activities involving after graduation support. An annual plan is prepared by scheduling these activities in a timely fashion

#### **5-3-1 Providing Information and Understanding about Career**

Here explanatory meetings, lectures, and round-table discussions on career options are held; tours of business establishment, workshop, facilities, etc., are offered; and a career option newsletter is prepared. Schools from the elementary school stage undertake these activities.

#### **5-3-2 Career Counseling**

Here a career desire survey is conducted and individual counseling

regarding career options is provided based on the survey. In many upper secondary departments, career desire surveys and individual counseling are conducted every year from the first grade, and by repeating them for three years, students are guided to make realistic career decisions consistent with their desires.

#### 5-3-3 Career Learning as a Class

Here a class is held on what students learned before and after their tour of workplaces and on-site apprenticeship. Another class is held where students listen to graduates, employers, and supporters of job assistance facilities and learn about things they need to lead a normal social life like using transport facilities and other public facilities. Through these classes, students are supported so that they will be able to think realistically about their career options and life after graduation.

#### 5-3-4 Activities Related to Career Mediation

Here, in cooperation with public employment agencies and municipal welfare offices, support is provided to enable students to prepare documents, procedures and the like they will need for employment and community life.

#### 5-3-5 Activities Related to Support Provided after Graduation

Here Aftercare service is provided to graduates so that they will be able to adapt themselves to life as a gainfully employed worker and a member of their local community. Most schools provide aftercare service to individual students for three years after their graduation. By conducting visitation surveys and mailed delivered surveys, schools identify the actual condition their graduates are in. Schools, in cooperation with the institutions concerned, support graduates experiencing difficulties. Also, there are schools that support, as part of their career guidance, annual class reunion activities and monthly or bimonthly youth classes (activities that help improve the lives of graduates through hobby and culture classes, sports events, short trips, etc.).

### **5-4 Individual Transition Support Plan and Employment Support Network**

The Association of All Japan Special School Principals considers the six-year period from the time one enters an upper secondary department until three years after graduation as a period of transition from school to community. On the basis of this evaluation, the association presents two types of “Individual

Transition Support Plan: Plan 1 and Plan 2. Plan 1 is used while one is in the upper secondary department. Plan 2 is used after graduation.

Plan 1 is a support plan for individual students designed to solve various problems related to career options by foreseeing their life at work and in society after graduation based on the desires expressed by the students and their guardians. Plan 2 is a support plan that projects what would happen three years after graduation and indicates the content and method of support that will be needed in those three years and the division of labor among the supporters. As such, Plan 2 is a tool with which agencies concerned work together to provide the best possible support for the graduates. Since only about 20 percent of the graduates are able to enter the general workforce, a support plan to help graduates enter the work force within three years after their graduation and a support plan to help graduates remain on their jobs beyond one or two years after graduation when not a few of their classmates leave their job. It is hoped that other agencies concerned will inherit Plan 2 and continue implementing it.

To make sure these Individual Transition Support Plans, especially Plan 2, which is used for providing after-graduation support, are implemented effectively, it is essential that the agencies concerned collaborate to establish an employment support network. Below are the most representative support agencies:

(1) Hello Work (public employment agency)

With around 600 offices throughout Japan, Hello Work provides consistent services ranging from registering want ads to providing career counseling and employment referrals. There are employment counselors in charge with counseling persons with intellectual disabilities at most major locations.

(2) Regional Employment Centers for the Disabled

The center, which is operated by the Japan Organization for Employment of the Elderly and Disabled Persons, has offices in 52 locations throughout Japan. In close collaboration with Hello Work and the like, the center provides vocational rehabilitation services including employment evaluation and guidance and job preparation support projects. Also, the center assists projects undertaken by the Japanese version of America's job coaches. There are two categories of job coaches: an assignment coach, like the one just mentioned, and a collaborative coach, like those affiliated with social welfare cooperations.

(3) Support Center for Employment and Well-being of the Disabled

The center is a corporate agency that serves as a base for coordinating efforts with organizations and institutions concerned with issues of, among other

thing, employment, welfare and education in areas familiar to persons with disabilities who have difficulty finding employment or staying employed, The center provides, in a unified manner, support in improving the employment opportunities of persons with disabilities so that their day-to-day life will be enriched, thereby increase their social participation. At present, there are 80 such centers throughout Japan. In the days to come, the center is expected to play a central role in supporting the employment of person with disabilities.

## **6. Educational Problems Surrounding the Provision of Employment Support for Persons with Intellectual Disabilities**

Simply stated, what the trends in the career options chosen by graduates discussed above reveals is that the more graduates of upper secondary departments in schools for intellectual disabilities go on to higher schooling, the fewer find employment each fiscal year, resulting in some 7,00 students being sent into society as users of welfare institutions or as home dwellers. The background against which this trend is occurring includes the tendency of Japanese families to have fewer children, changing social conditions after the bubble economy burst, and other structural changes. There are also other factors that have relevance to how students with intellectual disabilities are being educated. These are listed below.

- The rise in the number of persons with multiple disabilities (the percentage of students in upper secondary departments of schools for intellectual disabilities: 9.0% in 1990 → 16.2% in 2004).
- Structural changes in industry (fewer manufactured-centered → more service-centered)).
- Fewer job types and job duties suitable for persons with intellectual disabilities.
- Vocational education that do not match the types of job and job duties students with intellectual disabilities are assigned in their place of employment.
- Lack of rehabilitation programs for those who leave their job.
- Lack of coordination between the schools that provide career guidance and the organizations and institutions that deal in labor matters.

Against these background factors have emerged matters that must be tackled as an immediate task in improving the education of students with



intellectual disabilities. They are: listed below.

- Enrich vocational education by setting up effective vocational courses.
- Enrich internship programs.
- Expand new types of job and job duties
- Select activities for Work-Centered Learning that match the new job categories. .
- Create an employment support network with institutions that deal in labor matters.
- Work out “Individual Transition Support Plan” and create an evaluation system on the plan