

JAPAN-OECD INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP ON SPECIAL EDUCATION

From 2 to 4 March 2005, OECD International Workshop was held jointly by Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, Japan (MEXT), OECD/CERI and The National Institute of Special Education (NISE). The workshop theme was “The JAPAN-OECD International Workshop on the Education of Students with Disabilities, Learning Difficulties and Disadvantages in OECD Countries”. The workshop was participated by 17 people from 11 OECD countries namely U.S.A., Canada, U.K., Italy, France, Finland, Norway, Luxembourg, Sweden, Australia and Republic of Korea. The workshop was also participated by MEXT and NISE researchers and staff members. Overview report on Special Support Education in Japan, presentations on current situation of education for Children with disabilities by participants from each country and discussions were made at Yokohama Symposia as the main site. The participants also visited a special school and an ordinary school in Yokohama during the period.

In this workshop, NISE made a presentation on current status of education for students with profound and multiple disabilities in Japan. The presentation’s title was “Overview of present situation of Education for Students with Profound and Multiple Disabilities in Japan –Toward a Cohesive Society –“. The contents of the presentation is outlined below. Please note that the original of the summary have been sent to OECD Secretariat as a report from Japan.

Present State of Education for Children with Profound and Multiple Disabilities in Japan - Toward a Cohesive Society

Ken Sasamoto

Kouki Chida

Kengo Nishimaki

Shinichi Takisaka

Yutaka Tokunaga

Chikako Arai

Masahiro Watanabe

(NISE Workshop Executive Group)

1. Summary of educational measures for children with disabilities in Japan from a macro viewpoint

There are two major background factors for the reform of the educational systems for children with disabilities that Japan is now carrying out as a nation as a whole.

①One is increasing implementation of measures for person with disabilities in Japan. This might be a trend peculiar to Japan, though it is related with global trends and activities

carried out by the UN and others in relation to the issue of the disabled. ②The other is reform of the educational system as a whole now being promoted in Japan which includes education for children with disabilities. This is a part of a national-level reform covering a wide range of areas designed to reexamine and improve the nation as a whole in the 21st century.

1 – 1 History of the measures for children with disabilities in Japan

As for the measures for the disabled (“①” above), in 1982, the Japanese government formulated a long-term plan concerning measures for the disabled which was its first long-term plan concerning such measures. This was a domestic action plan formulated in conjunction with the "UN Decade of Disabled Persons 1983-1992". In 1992, the government followed up by formulating a new long-term plan concerning measures for the disabled. This plan came to be treated as "Basic Program for Persons with Disabilities" (Cabinet Office, December 2002) based on the Basic Law for Persons with Disabilities (Law No. 84 of May 21, 1970) last amended in 2004.

The “UN Decade of Disabled Persons” thus ended in 1992. In its place, the UN started “Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons 1993-2002”, in order to further promote its “World Programme of Action Concerning

Disabled Persons" (adopted by the UN General Assembly 3 December 1982) in the Asia-Pacific region. In addition, the "UN Decade of Disabled Persons" was extended for another decade based on proposal by the Japanese government in the ESCAP (United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific) meeting held in May 2002. In October the same year, the ESCAP High-level Intergovernmental Meeting to Conclude the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons (1993-2002) adopted the "Biwako Millennium Framework (BMF)" ("Biwako Millennium Framework for Action Towards an Inclusive, Barrier-Free and Rights-Based Society for Persons with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific", Otsu City, Shiga, Japan). Thus, it can be seen that the measures for Persons with Disabilities implemented in Japan are closely related with UN activities.

The measures for the disabled in Japan are

Table 1. Measures for Persons with Disabilities in Japan and UN Activities

	UN activities	Japanese measures
1981	International Year of Disabled Persons	
1983-1992	Decade of Disabled Persons	“Long-term plan concerning measures for the disabled”
1993-2002	Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons	“New long-term plan concerning measures for the disabled”
1996-2002		“Plan for the disabled – 7-year normalization strategy”
2002	Biwako Millennium Framework (Otsu City, Shiga, Japan), extension of “Asian and Pacific Decade”	
2003-2012	Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons (extended)	Basic Program for Persons with Disabilities (Cabinet Office)

based on the following four basic ideas.

- ① Aim for a cohesive (or "inclusive") society through rehabilitation and the idea of normalization.
- ② Promotion of social participation by the disabled, by valuing human rights and voluntary selection and decision-making.
- ③ Improvement of the environment through barrier-freeing, etc., and improvement and development of the related systems and institutions.
- ④ Provision of support by valuing the supportees' interests.

It has been based on the above ideas that the measures for the disabled have been implemented in Japan.

1-2 Trends for reform on a national level (educational reform)

As for the second major background factor namely reform of the educational system, today's Japan faces major socioeconomic changes which include rapid aging and dwindling birthrates and progress of IT-orientation. Given such a situation, Japan has been promoting activities for fundamental structural reforms in diverse areas especially national economy and finances, society, administrative agencies and systems and educational systems. This is to make the 21st century society into a vigorous one which is safe and secure and in which each person can lead a meaningful life.

The educational reform is hoped to contribute toward such social reform. On this basis, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) formulated an educational reform program in 1998. This program's basic goals are as follows.

- ① Enrichment of mental education (fostering of rich humanity)
- ② Achievement of a schooling system that emphasizes individual needs for wider schooling selection
- ③ Promotion of school-building by valuing initiatives by teachers, etc. who actually provide education
- ④ Promotion of college reform and researches

Based on such goals, today's Japan is implementing educational measures for the realization of a cohesive society (through normalization) also in the field of education for children with disabilities. This is based on the nationwide efforts and trends for reform and in conjunction with the international measures, programs, etc. for the disabled.

Figure 1 schematizes such measures, efforts, etc.

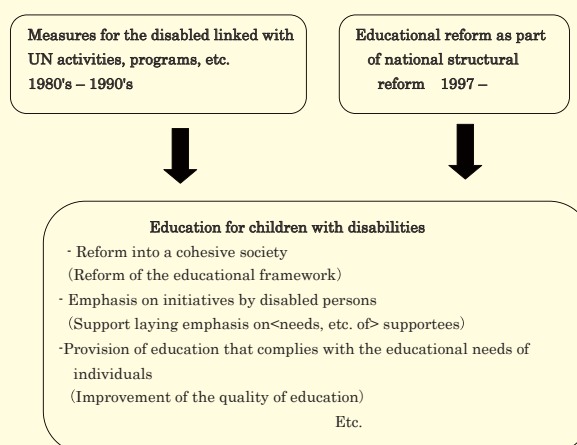


Figure 1. Measures for the Disabled and the Goals of Education for the Disabled

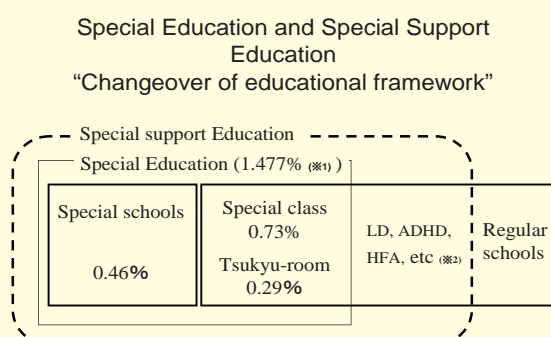
1-2-1 “Special support education”

Based on such trends and efforts, from around 2000, Japan has been trying to change its conception of and approach to education from “special education” to “special support

education”, by taking the entire educational system into view.

The former concept of “special education” meant laying of stress on provision of individualized education according to the kind and degree of disability and by setting up special occasions. In contrast, the concept and approach of “special support education” is designed to support the voluntary efforts by the disabled for independence and social participation, and to provide appropriate education and support by understanding the educational needs of individual disabled persons from this viewpoint.

From the viewpoint of the educational system as a whole, this change can be schematized as follows. It can also be said to be one for reform of the educational framework as a whole.



※1 Figures : “Future Directions for Special Support Education (Final Report)” (2003)

※2 One Research by MEXT showed 6.3% of students in regular class have extreme difficulty in learning or in behavior.

Figure 2. Change of Framework from “Special Education” to “Special Support Education”

Notes:

1. “Resource rooms” (“*tsukyu*”): Children with mild disabilities attending ordinary classes of elementary and lower secondary schools are taught according to their disabilities in special classrooms (“resource rooms”) while participating in most of the ordinary classes.
2. The figures are from Final Report “Guideline

of the Future Special Support Education”, MEXT, 2003.

In reality, such a reform of the educational framework necessitates teachers, etc. on the actual site of education to deal with the following changes and issues for instance.

① Unlike “special education”, the concept of “special support education” covers children with LD, ADHD, etc. that were not covered before. ② The need to improve the system to support children with disabilities who attend ordinary classes. These children were not covered by “special education”. ③ The need for teachers, etc. who actually provide education to more closely cooperate and collaborate with medical and welfare institutions and the local community. ④ The need to prepare “educational support plans” for all children, with disabilities no matter what type of school they are enrolled in.

Such changes will require schools and teachers that actually provide education to make diverse sorts of innovations and efforts in the future.

2. Education for children with profound and multiple disabilities in Japan

This section discusses issues pertaining to education for children with profound and multiple disabilities. These issues can also be understood as something related with the national efforts for educational and structural reforms.

2-1 Definition of “children with profound (or “severe”) and multiple disabilities”

In holding this workshop, Mr. Peter Evans raised the question why pick up the issue of education for children with

profound and multiple disabilities.

The main reason that we decided to pick up the issue of education for children with profound and multiple disabilities in this workshop was that we thought that the basic ideas about the education for disabled children provided in Japan are symbolically represented in the education for children with profound and multiple disabilities.

We thought that presenting and describing the situation of the education and educational practices for children with profound and multiple disabilities in Japan might let the participants in this workshop from the OECD countries better or more accurately understand the Japanese ideas about “better education for all children” and “every child should receive proper and appropriate education”, as well as the issues arising thereof.

The systemic and institutional definition of “children with profound and multiple disabilities” in the field of education in Japan can be found in “School Education for Children with Profound and Multiple Disabilities” which is a report prepared by a study group of the then Ministry of Education (today’s MEXT) in 1975.

According to that definition, “children with profound and multiple disabilities” refers to children with two or more disabilities with examples being blindness, deafness, intellectual disabilities, physical/motor disabilities and health impairments. It also includes children with severe developmental and/or behavioral disorders.

Thus, the concept of “profound and multiple disabilities” treated in this workshop complies with such a concept generally understood and used on the actual sites of education in Japan.

Below are specific examples of “children with profound and multiple disabilities”.

- Children suffering from two or more of the following severe disabilities: visual impairments, hearing impairments, physical/motor disabilities, intellectual disabilities
- Children who have difficulty walking or keep seated
- The ability to communicate is "incipient", "infantile" or nonlinguistic.
- Children who have problems breathing and eating or suffer from epileptic seizures, requiring (constant) medical care or attention.

2-2 Children with profound and multiple disabilities and school education

One of the epochal things about school education for children with profound and multiple disabilities in Japan was the system to oblige parents, etc. to send children with disabilities to "special schools" enforced in 1979. This reform in effect achieved the goal of "education for all".

Until 1979, children with profound and multiple disabilities were excluded from the coverage of (compulsory) school education. They were "deferred" or "exempted" from schooling. The 1979 reform gave educational opportunities to even children with profound and multiple disabilities.

This reform, and the ideas about school education for children with profound and multiple disabilities, were preceded by the mentioned 1975 Ministry of Education (today's MEXT) study group report "School Education for Children with Profound and Multiple Disabilities".

The 1975 report says as follows (summarized): The education for children with disabilities should be provided in order to achieve the goals prescribed by the Fundamental Law of Education, irrespective of the severity or multiplicity of such disabilities. Such education

should take account of and start from the actual physical and mental states of the individual children with disabilities, and provide education that complies with such states.

Thus, this report in effect emphasized the following. In the education for children with profound and multiple disabilities, the educational activities should not start from or based on the contents of the established school subjects, etc. Instead, they should start from or take into account the state of the disabilities or the developmental stage of each child with disabilities. On this basis, the education for such children should cover such issues and areas as maintenance of vital activities and health, sensory and motor functions, communication abilities, and formation of the bases of daily life and activities.

With the enforcement of the system to oblige children with disabilities to attend (special) schools, for those children who have severely disabilities and could not come to schools, efforts were initiated for homebound education. Under this system, teachers visit homes and medical institutions to provide education to children who cannot come to special schools, etc.

Such human and material enrichment of the educational environment of children with profound and multiple disabilities was backgrounded by Japan's educational policy of having all children receive compulsory education (or the policy to ensure opportunities for compulsory education even for children with disabilities as their right), regardless of the type and severity of their disability.

In conjunction with this policy, Japan has ensured systemic and institutional flexibility to ensure that children with disabilities can as much as possible stay in their own community and be with other children of the same school

age. Examples include:

- ① Setting up of "special classes" in regular elementary and lower secondary schools.
- ② Implementation of educational exchange programs between children of schools for the blind, deaf and other disabled children and those of regular elementary and lower secondary schools.
- ③ Implementation of educational exchange programs between children of schools for the blind, deaf and other disabled children and those of nearby regular elementary and lower secondary schools or such schools in the disabled children's home community.
- ④ Provision of education by setting up "resource rooms" (since 1993; see section 1-2-1 for what these are).

3. Summary, and future issues

The system to oblige parents to send children with disabilities to special schools enforced in 1979 was an epochal event. Thereafter, the educational systems in Japan for children with disabilities have provided education to such children, no matter how severe their disabilities may be, depending on the type and severity of disability and by providing special educational opportunities. Then, major efforts were started from the latter 1990's to drastically reform the educational systems towards achievement of a cohesive society. Through such efforts, Japan has been promoting the reform of its educational systems into ones that take into account the educational needs of individual children. It must be noted however that this "reform" is not designed to reject the former systems and ideas for the education of disabled children. Instead, it is designed to reform the educational framework as a whole, inclusive of the former systems, etc.

The major issue that concerns the site

of education in such a period of reform is to ensure efficient cooperation, coordination and collaboration between ① regular education and special (support) education, ② diverse educational opportunities by type of disability and ③ schools for the blind, deaf and other disabled children and such children's local/home

community.

In ensuring such collaboration, etc., the key point will be how to reduce or eliminate the physical and psychological distances that may exist between educators on the respective sites of education.

Support for Persons with Developmental Disabilities in Japan

Yutaka Tokunaga
Chief Researcher, Department for Policy and Planning, National Institute of Special Education
(NISE), Japan

1. Enforcement of “Law to Support Persons with Developmental Disabilities” (April 1, 2005)

The “Law to Support Persons with Developmental Disabilities” (Law number 167 of 2004) was promulgated on December 10, 2004. Based on this Law, “Enforcement Ordinance Relative to the Law to Support Persons with Developmental Disabilities” was promulgated on April 1, 2005. Based on this Ordinance, “Regulations Relative to the Enforcement of the Law to Support Persons with Developmental Disabilities” was promulgated. The Law and the Regulations took effect on April 1, 2005.

Accordingly, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) and the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (MHLW) have notified prefectural governors, heads of cabinet-order designated cities (12 major cities), presidents of national, public and private universities etc. about the contents of these laws and regulations, to ensure appropriate application of the Law by providing the necessary guidance, advice and support.

This notification specifies the Law's outline and purposes. The outline covers 18 topics, which include “Definitions”, “Obligations of the National and Local Governments” and “Collaboration by Related Agencies”.

What all these means is that the Japanese Government has initiated the creation of a system to support persons with developmental disabilities, in addition to the existing systems

to support persons with physical (including motor) and Intellectual disabilities.

1) Definition of “developmental disability”

Section 1 of Article 2 of the Law defines “developmental disability” as follows: “the following disabilities prescribed by the government ordinance and whose symptoms appear in childhood: autism, Asperger's syndromes and other pervasive developmental disorders (PDD), learning disabilities/disorders (LD) and attention-deficit hyperactivity disorders (ADHD) and other similar cerebral dysfunctions”.

2) Education

Concerning education, the Law prescribes as follows. “The national, prefectural and municipal governments shall take the necessary measures for the provision of appropriate educational support including development of the support systems to ensure that persons with developmental disabilities (inclusive of those 18 years of age and older who attend lower and upper secondary schools and schools for the blind, deaf and children with other disabilities) can receive sufficient education in accordance with the state of their disabilities.” It also prescribes for universities and technical colleges to give proper educational consideration in accordance with the state of disabilities.

2. FY 2005 budgets relating to developmental disabilities

Based on the purport of the Law, measures are being expected to be taken to establish commissions to examine developmental disabilities in prefectures and designated cities to provide consistent support in meeting with the life stages of people with developmental disabilities from infancy to adulthood thereby develop the systems for support which include preparation of individual support programs in the regions.

Specifically, the related government agencies are making the following efforts.

1) Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT)

“Projects to Promote Special Support Education”

FY 2005 budget: 202.76 million yen

Since fiscal 2003, the MEXT has been implementing measures such as the following to develop comprehensive systems for educational support for children with LD, ADHD, high-functioning autism (HFA) etc. who attend regular elementary and lower secondary schools: establishment of school committees and teams of specialists, training of “special support education coordinators” and peripatetic (visiting) guidance.

Since 2004, the MEXT has added the following projects to further develop the comprehensive systems to support children with disabilities including LD, ADHD and HFA who attend regular elementary and lower secondary schools: establishment of “special support education liaison councils” as cross-administrative agency organizations in prefectures and areas, preparation of individual educational support programs and implementation of researches on the possibility of having special schools serve center functions.

In fiscal 2005, by strengthening the collaboration with the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, the MEXT has expanded the coverage of these projects and programs to kindergartens and upper secondary schools in order to develop a consistent system of support from infancy to employment.

2) Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (MHLW)

Initiation of projects to develop systems to support people with developmental disabilities
FY 2005 budget (new): 250 million yen

a. Development of prefectural systems of support

The MHLW will establish a “commission for the examination for the development of systems to support people with developmental disabilities” for examination by the related concerns for the development of a consistent system to support people with developmental disabilities from infancy to adulthood.

b. Development of regional support systems

In designated regions, formation of support networks in such areas as healthcare, medical and welfare services, education and employment, as well as teams to support people with developmental disabilities, to prepare individual support programs for such persons for consistent support from infancy to adulthood.

c. Implementation of model projects for developmental and consultative support

Implementation of model projects such as expert developmental support at facilities for children with disabilities and day service centers for children and consultative support for families, and extension of the outcomes of such

projects to the parties concerned.

- Increase of centers to provide support relating to autism and developmental disabilities (from 20 centers in 2004 to 36 centers in 2005).
- Expenses (new) for extension and information relating to developmental disabilities: extension and education relating to developmental disabilities, preparation and distribution of posters and leaflets for correct understanding.
- Holding of workshops for manpower related with developmental disabilities (National Chichibu-gakuen Institute)

By covering administrators, public health nurses (PHNs), children's nurses etc. to become leaders in the field of developmental disabilities in prefectural governments and designated cities, provision of training on developmental disabilities such as LD and ADHD for the improvement of their knowledge and skills.

3. Guidebook to support students with developmental disabilities

Developmental disabilities require urgent and appropriate measures at universities and technical colleges. For this reason, the NISE has compiled a “Guidebook to Support Students with Developmental Disabilities” in March 2005.

Developmental disabilities are often not “visible” so that people may not recognize them as disabilities. Therefore, the key issues are how to let people understand about persons having such disabilities and how to support such persons in relation to their educational needs and behavioral difficulties.

A survey conducted by the NISE showed that several times more students having developmental disabilities than those having physical disabilities were attending universities

or colleges. Hence required is development and expansion of the support systems by also covering students with developmental disabilities.

At present, elementary and lower secondary schools are stepping up their efforts to find, understand and support children with developmental disabilities. This year's issue is to expand the coverage of the support systems to kindergartens and upper secondary schools. Such children thus supported will be studying in universities or colleges in a few years, at which time it will be the universities' responsibility to provide such students with appropriate support.

The “Guidebook to Support Students with Developmental Disabilities” is believed a key material for college concerns especially those in charge of student counseling to correctly understand developmental disabilities and provide the necessary support. The NISE has also prepared a pamphlet along with the Guidebook. The related report has been published by “The Earth Kyoikushinsha” publishing company in May 2005 (Japanese only).

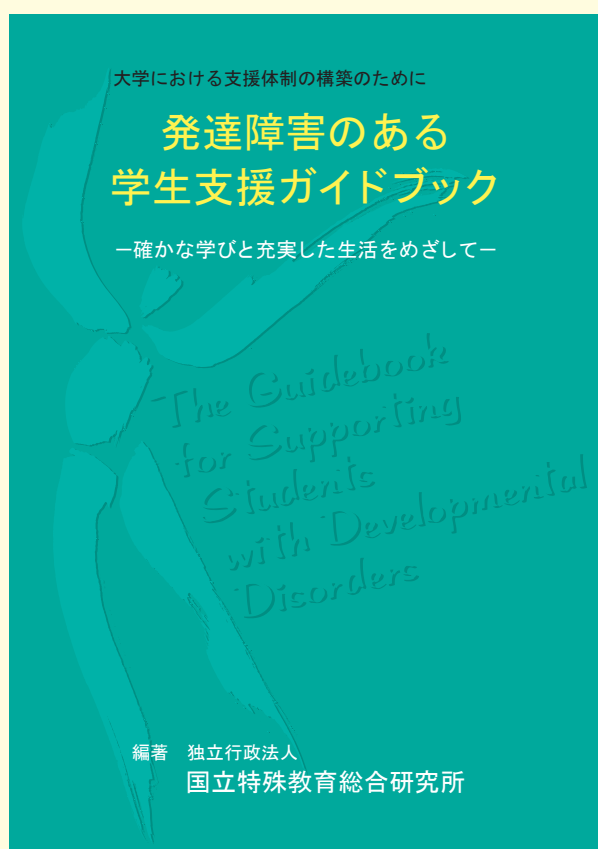
4. Publication of “Guidance Guide”

The NISE has also published a “Guidance Guide” concerning children with LD, ADHD and HFA (which are now included in “developmental disabilities”) in March 2005. It is easy for teachers to use, and covers such topics as the contents and methods of guidance for children with these disorders and matters to note. It consists of the sections “In Providing Guidance”, “Guidance Method and Theory – Specific Examples” and “Introduction to LD, ADHD and HFA”.

As specific examples, it treats problems such as “Have difficulty talking logically”, “Have difficulty understanding sentences related

with math” and “Tend to forget things”. For these items, the Guide provides explanation and solutions from such viewpoints as “Guidance and Care in Classrooms”, “Key Points in Understanding the Situation”, “Possible Causes of Problems”, “Meaning of Guidance” and “Guidance More Suited to Individuals”.

Thus, Japanese concerns are urgently tackling the task of correctly understanding developmental disabilities including LD, ADHD and HFA and of developing the systems to support children and students with such disabilities.



Guidebook to Support Students with Developmental Disabilities



A pamphlet