

NISE Newsletter

for Special needs Education in Asia-Pacific

No.28
December, 2008

1. Foreword – National Center for Special Needs Education Activities for the Current Fiscal Year

It has been about one and a half years since special needs education commenced full scale in the last fiscal year. We are pleased to inform you of the main activities of our Institute for fiscal 2008.

Providing educational support to children with developmental disorders such as learning disabilities and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder is an urgent matter. The Law on Supporting the Independence of Persons with Developmental Disabilities was enacted, which promotes early-stage support and the encouragement of their social independence and participation in society, thus paving the way for supporting the welfare of persons with developmental disabilities.

In light of these social conditions, the Information Center of Education for the Persons with Developmental Disabilities was established within our Institute in April 2008. In order to provide better support to teachers, parents and others involved with developmental disabilities and to inform a wider range of people, the Center launched a website in August where it posts various information related to

developmental disabilities.

A basic research plan for strategic studies has been decided on, taking future development into account. The plan covers major research themes to be addressed in the medium and long term, and those to be implemented or commenced within the short term of five years. To promote a smooth implementation of the research plan, the Institute's research and operation systems were organized.

Regarding our training projects, our previous program has been fully reviewed to raise the skills of current teaching staff who are in a leadership position in the prefectures and to expand our support for elementary and lower secondary schools. Meanwhile, to step up our activities in this field of education, the new program includes enriching the training content and holding study meetings for leaders in education for children with developmental disabilities, namely, teachers at kindergartens, elementary schools, lower and upper secondary schools.

As the National Center for Special Needs Education, we are determined to do our best to improve research activities and training projects to

deal with the government's policy and needs arising in the educational interface, thus helping to strengthen and develop special needs education.

ODA Yutaka, President
National Institute of Special Needs Education

2. The Information Center of Education for Persons with Developmental Disabilities

At this stage, as we move from special education to special needs education, our response to children with developmental disabilities such as learning disabilities and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder is in greater demand than ever, as well as those involved in conventional education for children with disabilities.

The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology is therefore working to provide support for infants, children and pupils with developmental disabilities. Examples of such work include a model project for early-stage comprehensive support of developmental disabilities and a model project for the support of students with developmental disabilities at lower secondary schools.

At our Institute, the Information Center of Education for Persons with Developmental Disabilities was established past April to assist teachers, parents and others concerned with developmental disabilities and to obtain wider public understanding of developmental disabilities.

The Center is already working on the following projects:

- (1) The provision of information on developmental disabilities through its website;
- (2) The video delivery of lectures given in training courses for teachers;
- (3) The investigation, research and provision of information on the use of machines and equipment to aid people with developmental disabilities;
- (4) A comprehensive survey concerning developmental disabilities;
- (5) Counseling support for persons with disabilities and for supporters by means of the website;

(6) The provision of support to persons involved in Japanese schools abroad; and

(7) The promotion of understanding and awareness of developmental disabilities.

To facilitate these projects, the Information Center of Education for the Persons with Developmental Disabilities website was launched on August 27, 2008, to provide information on various matters concerning the education of children with developmental disabilities. To celebrate this, an opening ceremony was held and a commemorative lecture was given on the same day.

Guests invited to the ceremony expressed their expectations for future development. Mr. ICHIKAWA Hironobu, the Director of Tokyo Metropolitan Umegaoka Hospital, delivered a lecture entitled: "Expectations for the Information Center of Education for the Persons with Developmental Disabilities."



The launching of the website marks the start of the Center. We will enrich the contents to reflect users' voices. We invite you to express your opinions and reactions.

The Developmental Disabilities Educational Information Center website (<http://icedd.nise.go.jp>) is accessible via NISE website (<http://www.nise.go.jp>). We look forward to your visit.

3. Research Activities and Themes for Research Scheduled for Fiscal 2008

Research System

Up to FY2007, the institute engaged in research activities in six classifications, including project studies and theme-based studies. Project studies dealt with cross-sectional themes, utilized a larger number of researchers and a larger budget, and possessed greater political importance. Theme-based studies were chiefly conducted on types of disabilities.

However, in order to respond to the demands of the times, the institute must select and give preference to the promotion of studies based on their importance and urgency and engage not only in studies on types of disabilities but also in studies that keep pace with scientific developments and social changes.

Against this background, the institute decided in FY2008 to reorganize its research system by introducing a “research team system” in which teams serve as the agents of planning and implementation of studies. To clarify research characteristics and focus on selected studies, the institute reorganized studies into the following nine groups in five categories.

Research Teams

Research teams designed to promote studies from a mid-to long-term perspective serve as the agents of various studies.

The institute has 13 research teams in five research fields which have been arranged in consideration of cross-sectional themes and specialties. In addition, joint research systems and set-term (approximately five years) research (survey) teams are set up as appropriate with the participation of the relevant teams to deal with specific themes, cross-sectional interdisciplinary themes, and common themes.

2008 The Composition of Research Units

(1) Special Needs Education Group

Perspective Unit

Promoting Unit
Transition Support Unit
Information Resources and Assistive Technology Devices Unit

(2) Multiple Disabilities Group

Multiple Disabilities Unit

(3) Sensory Disabilities·Speech and Language Group

Visual Impairments Unit

Deaf and Hard of Hearing Unit

Speech and Language Disorders Unit

(4) Motor Difficulties·Health Impairments Group

Physical/Motor Disabilities Unit

Health Impairments Unit

(5) Intellectual disabilities·Developmental Disabilities Group

Intellectual Disabilities Unit

Autism Unit

Developmental Disabilities and Emotional Disorders Unit

Research Groups and Research Categories

(1) Core Research

Key Research: Specialized studies which were selected from the viewpoint of their importance and urgency and which should be promoted intensively.

Specialized Research A: Studies which are not based on types of disabilities and include cross-sectional studies designed to promote special needs education and studies on themes common to different types of disabilities. These studies are conducted primarily by the special needs education research team and the multiple disabilities research team.

Specialized Research B: Specialized studies by type of disabilities, conducted primarily by the multiple disabilities research team, sensory disabilities and speech/language disabilities research team, motor difficulties and health impairments research team, and intellectual and development disabilities research team.

Specialized Research C: Studies which are needed for educational duties and require institute-wide efforts. These studies are conducted primarily by personnel from concerned departments in cooperation with personnel of other departments.

Specialized Research D: Leading-edge, experimental, and embryonic studies not included in the above.

(2) Externally Funded Research

Grand-in-Aid for Scientific Researches: Studies funded by external funds such as grant-in-aid scientific research

(3) Entrusted Research

Entrusted Research: Studies entrusted by an external organization

(4) Collaborative Research

Collaborative Research: Research untied NISE's practical, general research and University or other medical or welfare institutes' basic and academic research

(5) Survey and Investigation Projects

Survey and Investigation Projects: Department of Policy and Planning, Educational Support, Teacher Training and Information, Counseling and Consultation for Persons with Special Needs and Information Center of Education for the Persons with Developmental Disabilities conduct various surveys and studies needed to perform duties in addition to the special studies mentioned above.

2008 Research Titles

Specialized Research A

- (1) Fundamental study of educational systems for children with disabilities by international comparison-Based on the present circumstances in Japan and course of action to be taken in the future-
- (2) Practical study on the use of ICF-CY in special needs education
- (3) Study on brain science applicable to education for children with disabilities
- (4) Follow-up study on the "Plan for Special Needs Resource Room"
- (5) Study on curricula in schools for special needs

education -Teaching children with multiple disabilities and an integrated course of study covering primary through upper secondary departments-

- (6) Study on an integrated support system for children with disabilities -Highlighting support for developmental disabilities in the latter part of secondary education-
- (7) Basic study on effective school evaluation based on specific characteristics of schools for special needs education
- (8) Study on improvement of career education and vocational Education
- (9) Research on development of teacher's video guide for promoting of using assistive information technology devices for children with disabilities
- (10) Research on assessment of children with multiple disabilities -Improvement of assessment tools for initial developmental stage in communication and understanding environment through-

Specialized Research B

- (1) Research for on the development of teacher's expertise in deaf blind Education
- (2) Study on qualitative improvement of course instruction for children with visual impairments enrolled in special needs schools and regular schools and provision of teaching materials based on individual special needs
- (3) Study and evaluation of teaching in schools for the deaf -Aiming at improvement of teaching methods including the use of sign language and upgrading of language skills and literary ability-
- (4) Study on the content, method and evaluation of instruction in education for children with speech and language Disabilities -Aiming at developing a practical guidebook for education for children with speech and language disabilities-
- (5) Study on improving teacher's expertise in education for children with physical/motor disabilities -Propose a model for upgrading schools for special needs education (physical disabilities) expertise-
- (6) Study on special needs education for long-time

absentees due to illness who are enrolled in primary and junior high schools

- (7) Study on career education in education for children with intellectual disabilities-Aiming to build a practical model based on a “table of Stage and Contents of Career Development(draft)”
- (8) Practical study on the content of instruction and teaching methods for autistic children -Focusing on classes for special needs education in primary and junior high schools-
- (9) Study on curricular education and other support for children with developmental disabilities in primary and high schools

Collaborative Research

- (1) Study on development of non-invasive imaging techniques of the brain function for children with disabilities (2007-2009)

Collaborative Research Institute: Notional Hospital Organization Kurihama Alcoholism Center

- (2) Empirical study on establishing an archive of teaching-learning systems utilizing ICT devices for children with health impairments (2007-2008)

Collaborative Research Institute: WESTFIELD Co., Ltd.

- (3) Development of animation teaching material

and internet technology which children with articulation disabilities are able to learn by themselves (2007-2008)

Collaborative Research Institute: Riken

- (4) Research on the support of students with developmental disabilities in higher education -Development of an evaluation method and enlightenment of faculty and staff- (2007-2008)

Collaborative Research Institute: Japan Student Service Organization (JASSO)

- (5) Improvement of explanatory expression of kana and alphabetical letter for students with visual impairments (2007-2008)

Collaborative Research Institute: NEC

- (7) Development of assistive technology device using electro-steganography technology for enhancing compensation of audio information –Aiming to achieve practical usefulness of “personal acoustic caption decoder” (2007-2008)

Collaborative Research Institute: Research Institute of Electrical Communication, Tohoku University

- (8) A practical study on building social support system for children with disabilities and its evaluation (2008-2009)

Collaborative Research Institute: Yokosuka City, Kanagawa University of Human Services

4. Report on the 8th KISE and NISE Seminar on Special Education (NISE and KISE Seminar on Special Needs Education)

The 8th KISE and NISE Seminar on Special Education was held at Korea Institute for Special Education on February 25, 2008. From our Institute, Mr. ODA Yutaka, President, Mr. TAKIGAWA Kuniyoshi, Chief Researcher, and Mr. HARADA Kimihito, Chief Researcher, participated.

This seminar is an annual event that started in 2001 when our Institute (NISE) and Korea Institute for Special Education (KISE) signed a research



partnership agreement in November 1995. The two institutes alternate biannually in holding a seminar in their respective countries, Korea or Japan.

The main theme for this year's seminar was "Suitable Support Systems for Life Cycles - Early Childhood; Elementary, Junior High and Senior High Schools and Adulthood." Under this theme, Japanese and Korean representatives gave presentations on three sub-themes: "Education for Children with Health Impairments," "Early Childhood Education" and "Support for Students with Developmental Disabilities," each of which was followed by a discussion. Besides KISE staff members, there were about 60 participants including teachers at special schools in the greater Seoul area.

The seminar opened with a heartwarming welcome address delivered by Ms. LEE Hyou-Ja, the Director General of KISE. The first presentation was "Present Conditions and Problems in Education for Children with Health Impairments" and the presenters were Mr. TAKIGAWA, Chief Researcher of NISE; and Ms. KIM Eun-Joo, Educational Researcher, Special Education Policy Section, Ministry of Education & Human Resource Development. This was followed by "Early Childhood Education in Special Needs Education" presented by Mr. ODA, President of NISE; and Prof. LEE Byoung-In, Department of Special Education, Dankook University. In the last session, Mr. Harada, Chief Researcher, NISE; and Prof. PARK Heechan, Department of Special Education, The Catholic University of Korea, reported the results of their

research on support for students with developmental disabilities.

Korea enacted the Special Education Law for the Disabled and Others in 2007, marking a major step forward in the legal preparations for special needs education. The law stipulates free education for infants under three years of age with disabilities, the right to receive compulsory education for the young from 3 to 17 years of age eligible for special education, the establishment of a special education support center, integrated educational support, the development of IEP, a review of requirements for establishing special classes and so forth. According to the Korean representatives, because the legal requirements have only recently been improved, insufficient penetration thereof into the educational interface remains a problem, and the actual conditions for prompt materialization will be investigated.

In discussions following the respective presentations, in addition to an exchange of basic information, for example, on how inclusion was dealt with, participants were able to obtain in-depth knowledge of support to be rendered for different types of disabilities and stages of development. The seminar confirmed that the two countries have a common awareness of problems such as the need to develop special needs education by responding to individual requirements and the importance of teaching expertise and lifelong learning. It is anticipated that NISE and KISE, as the respective national centers, will strengthen systematic cooperation by, for instance, establishing a joint research program.

5. Report on the 2008 Japan-Malaysia Economic Partnership Training

Under the Japan-Malaysia Economic Partnership Agreement concluded in December 2005, our Institute receives trainees from Malaysia, who are in charge of different types of disabilities, in cooperation with the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), as a means

of supporting the establishment of a national institute for special support education in Malaysia.

For fiscal 2008, the second year of the project, nine trainees were accepted for training from Monday, June 23 to Friday, July 18 in five courses: intellectual disabilities, physical/motor disabilities, information/

communication technology, visual impairment and hearing impairment. The trainees eagerly attended lectures on the Japanese system for special needs education and professional skills required in the respective courses, paid visits to special needs schools, special needs classes at elementary schools and nursing care facilities for regular visitors, and engaged in various other activities.



6. Event News

●National Institute for Special Needs Education Seminar I

Date: Wednesday, January 21 and Thursday, January 22, 2009

Place: National Olympics Memorial Youth Center

Theme: Development of Special Needs Education at Primary and Junior High Schools – in Response to the Amendment of the Official Guidelines for Teaching –

Contents:

On January 17, 2008, the Central Council for Education submitted a report entitled “On the Improvement of the National Curriculum Guideline, etc. for Kindergarten, Elementary, Junior High, Senior High and Schools for Special Needs Education.” Based on this, the guidelines for kindergarten teaching, the guidelines for elementary school teaching and the guidelines for junior high school teaching were announced on March 28, 2008. The revised guidelines call for strengthening the contents of teaching to correspond to the conditions of disabilities by using advice and support from Schools for Special Needs Education and developing a teaching plan.

For Seminar I in this fiscal year, we have chosen the abovementioned theme and decided on a keynote address on topics such as the process of deliberation by the Central Council’s Section specializing in special needs education and its Curriculum Section, the parents’ section of the former, and matters stipulated in the said report of the Council and the general provisions of the Guidelines for School-teaching.

A symposium is planned on the three key

concepts of “Individualized Instruction Plan,” “Individualized education support plans” and “self-supporting activities” during which previous cases will be introduced to foster general understanding. Thereafter, views will be exchanged with participants in a subcommittee meeting joined by case presenters.

●National Institute for Special Needs Education Seminar II

Date: Friday, February 13, 2009

Place: National Olympics Memorial Youth Center

Theme: “Support for Children with Developmental Disabilities in the Future”

Contents:

An urgent question is, what type of future support should be provided for children with developmental disabilities under the Law Concerning Support of Persons with Developmental Disabilities in conformity with the concept of special needs education? Our Institute has been conducting research to answer this question. We therefore established the Information Center of Education for the Persons with Developmental Disabilities as a new project in this fiscal year for providing educational information to support children with developmental disabilities.

Accordingly, Seminar II includes a symposium to introduce this project and two subcommittee meetings, focusing on the results of research on a consistent support system for education for children with developmental disabilities and on-going research on an approach from brain science, to follow up on the former aspect.



Editorial postscript

In Japan, the Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology announces the national curriculum guideline as uniform standards for curricula to be drawn up by schools. These guidelines show the standards for drawing up the educational content of kindergartens and elementary, lower secondary, upper secondary and special needs schools, the distribution of learning items to the respective grades, class hours and so forth.

The national curriculum guideline in elementary and lower secondary schools were revised in March 2008. Those for upper secondary schools and special needs schools are scheduled to be revised before the end of this year. Since their previous revision ten years ago, social conditions and circumstances surrounding school education have changed dramatically. From the standpoint of special needs education, a remarkable feature of this year's revision is that promoting special needs education at regular schools including kindergartens and upper secondary schools is cited as a principle.

Individualized instruction plan, individualized education support plan and other know-how accumulated in special needs education are expected to be put to good use as support tools for pupils and students with developmental disabilities who learn in regular classes.

Our newsletters will continue to provide information on special needs education and the research activities and projects of the Institute. We hope that this and future newsletters will have many readers, and we would be delighted to receive your comments and suggestions.

TANAKA Yoshihiro, editor

NISE's English Top Page

http://www.nise.go.jp/en/index_e.html

NISE's International Exchange Page in English

<http://www.nise.go.jp/en/international.html>

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