

6. Realization of Work-life Balance

On 18 December 2007, Council of Executives of Public and Private Sectors to Promote Work-Life Balance consisting of representatives from related ministries, economic circles, labor circles and local authorities, reached an agreement on the Charter for Work-Life Balance and the Action Policy for Promoting Work-Life Balance

Society in Which Work-life Balance Has Been Achieved

A society in which an individual citizen can work with motivation and a sense of fulfilment and discharge his/her responsibility at work, while at the same time can choose and lead a diversity of living styles in his/her family and community life in accordance with each stage in life, such as raising children and middle- and older- stages of life.

Examples of numerical targets Formulation of Action Guidelines → year 2017

Society where people can provide themselves with jobs for economic independence

Number of casual employees
1,870,000 → 1,447,000 or less
Employment rate of women (25 – 44 years old)
64.9% → 69-72%
Employment rate of the elderly (60 – 64 years old)
52.6% → 60-61%

Society where people have time to lead healthy, affluent lives

Proportion of employees who work 60 or more hours a week
10.8% → reduce by half
Rate of paid annual leave consumption
46.6% → full consumption

Society where people can choose from a variety of working and life styles

Ratio of female workers who take maternity leave
72.3% → 80%
Ratio of male workers who take maternity leave
0.5% → 10%
Hours spent by men with children less than six years old for child-rearing and household chores
60 minutes / day → 2.5 hours / day

All individuals, irrespective of age and gender, will be able to participate in a variety of activities, such as work, child rearing, nursing, self-development and community activities, to the degree of their own choice, which in turn will create a virtuous circle by enriching life at work and life outside work.

Example of National Government Initiatives

- **Project for promotion of work-life balance**

Invite 10 major socially influential companies in Japan to take part in the “project for promotion of the work-life balance” (a model program for the promotion of work-life balance) and widely publish their own initiatives toward realizing work-life balance and the positive outcome thereof, in order to increase social awareness.

- **Establishment of a “website to support the introduction of permanent employment with reduced working hours scheme”**

The permanent employment with reduced working hours scheme is designed to allow those people who were unable to stay at jobs due to various constraints such as child care and family care the flexibility to choose from among various working styles. For companies, it should serve as a personnel system effective in reducing employee turnover and invigorating the organization. It is expected that the scheme will be widely introduced and adopted. A website was set up in December 2008 to provide brief information about the scheme, examples of its application, and procedures for its introduction.

- **Promotion of the accreditation (Kurumin Mark) based on the Act for Measures to Support the Development of the Next Generation**

In accordance with the Act for Measures to Support the Development of the Next Generation, the general business owner action plan is to be drawn up and registered, and those companies that have met certain criteria by achieving objectives of the action plan are to be accredited by the Minister of Health, Labour and Welfare. With the revision of the Act (which is to come into force in April 2011), the scope of the obligation to draw up and submit the general business owner action plan is expanded from companies with 301 and more employees to include companies with 101 and more employees.



- **“New zero wait Listed Children Strategy” (establishment of “Anshin Kodomo Kikin fund”)**

In order to extend, substantiate, and promote child care services and after-school services, in terms of both quantity and quality, the “New zero wait Listed Children Strategy” was drawn up and is being implemented under a three-year intensive implementation period in fiscal 2008. During fiscal 2008, as part of the “New zero wait Listed Children Strategy,” measures were taken to set up more childcare centers in order to respond to new demand for certified childcare facilities and other child care services. Training courses were organized to improve the quality of child care services. The “Anshin Kodomo Kikin fund” was set up in all prefectural and city governments to develop support environments for child rearing.

- **Promotion of the “After-School Plan for Children”**

Empty classrooms in primary schools will be made use of, in order to provide places for children’s after-school/weekend activities, such as playing games, doing experiments and studying and other interactions, thereby promoting sound growth for children.

- **Publication of Daddies’ Experiences of Paternity Leave**

For the purposes of changing perceptions in the workplace and at home, experiences of male workers who have taken paternity leave or are on paternity leave will be collected and compiled as “Daddies’ Experiences of Paternity Leave.” It will be published as practical examples of taking paternity leave and going back to work afterwards.

- **“Change! JPN” Campaign**

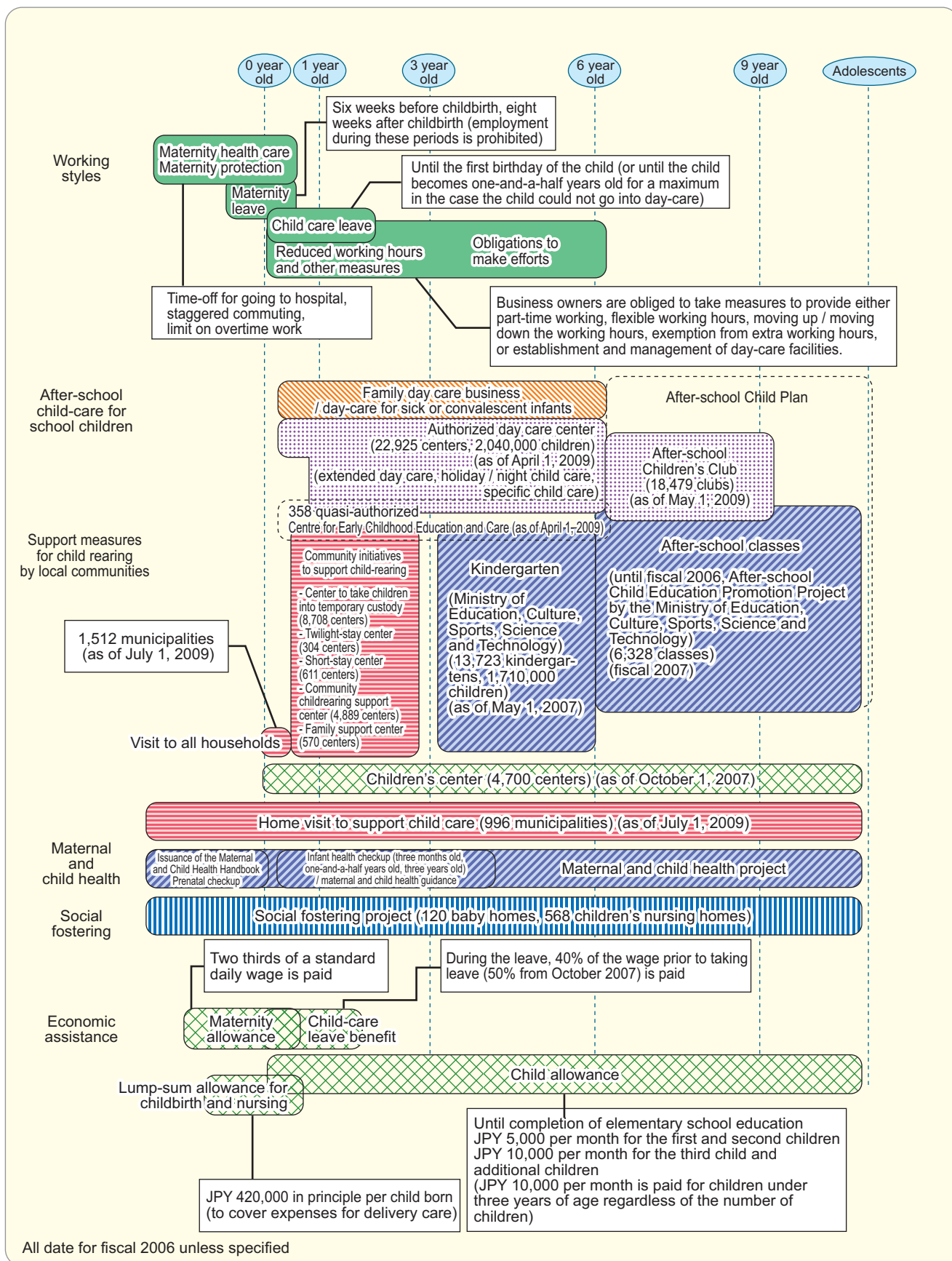
In December 2007, following an agreement between representatives of business, labor, and government, the “Charter for Work-Life Balance” and the “Action Policy for Promoting Work-Life Balance” were formulated, based on which a public-participation-type campaign under the slogan “Change! JPN” is being promoted.



- **Review of the situation of father’s participation in child rearing and of the working style during the child rearing period**

The Act on the Welfare of Workers Who Take Care of Children or Other Family Members Including Child Care and Family Care Leave was revised. Specifically, with a view to realizing a working style that allows fathers to participate in child rearing, the “Papa & Mama Child Care Leave Plus” (a period of leave will be extended when both mother and father take child care leave) was introduced. Also, application of “child-rearing (short-time) work” as well as exemption from overtime work during the child rearing period was made obligatory.

Current Structure for Next Generation Nurturing Support Measures in Japan



Source: "Annual Report on Health and Welfare (2008)"