

Information Booklet



To ensure that every child grows up in a smiling and happy environment.
To ensure that every family can raise children with peace of mind while feeling joy in child-rearing.
We will start the “Comprehensive Support System for Children and Child-rearing.”



A law entitled the “Act on Child and Childcare Support” was enacted in August 2012 to resolve various issues concerning children and childcare in Japan.

Based on this law and other related laws, the “Comprehensive Support System for Children and Child-rearing” will start from April 2015. The new system will promote the quantitative expansion and the qualitative improvement of early childhood school education, childcare, and child-rearing support services in local communities.

In order to implement the new system, it has been decided that approximately 700 billion yen will be appropriated every year for this purpose out of an increased portion of revenue after raising consumption tax to 10%.

We will utilize the precious funding effectively to support children and child-rearing in this country.

We will promote the following measures!



1 Make “Centers for Early Childhood Education and Care” that combine the advantages of both kindergartens and nursery centers more widely available.



2 Realize a society where people find it easy to raise children and to work at the same time by establishing more childcare facilities and reducing the number of wait-listed children.



3 Promote the quantitative expansion and the qualitative improvement of early childhood school education, childcare, and various child-rearing support services in local communities.



4 Support childcare not only in urban areas, but also in the areas where the number of children is declining.

● About the logo (on the cover page): The logo depicts children, who are at the center of the new system, playing musical instruments while showing their energy and personality. The logo was created in the hope that all children will grow up healthily in a nurturing environment.

| | | |
|-----------------|---|--|
| Contents | The New System Will Provide More Educational and Childcare Facilities 05 | To Obtain Certification 13 |
| | Expand Child-rearing Support Services in Local Communities 07 | Examples of User Charges 15 |
| | Steps to Use the New System 11 | Q&A 17 |



More effective support for “quality” and “quantity.” The Comprehensive Support support child-rearing by the portion of the consumption

Expand the **Quantity** of Support!

We will aim to provide support that can cover all households in need for the support.

- Prepare various types of support facilities and services based on the age of the child, the employment status of the parents / guardians, etc.
Increase options for education, childcare, and child-rearing support (the options will differ depending on local circumstances).
- Expand educational and childcare services to ensure that people can raise not only their first child, but also their second and third children with peace of mind.
(Newly secure childcare services for approximately 400,000 children by FY 2017 to resolve the issue of wait-listed children.)

Main support options available

There are many days I cannot look after my children because of work, looking after elderly members of the family and so on.

0 to 2 years old



- Nursery centers
- Centers for early childhood education and care
- Small-scale childcare services
- Family-style day-care services and so on



3 to 5 years old

- Nursery centers
- Centers for early childhood education and care and so on

I am normally at home and spend most days with my child

0 to 2 years old



- Temporary custody*
- Community childcare support centers* and so on

*3 years old and older children can also use this service.



3 to 5 years old

- Kindergartens
- Centers for early childhood education and care and so on

- We will also increase the number of “after-school children’s clubs,” which children whose parents / guardians are not at home during the day can attend, and the number of “childcare for children with disease,” where parents / guardians can leave their children when they are sick.

children and child-rearing both in terms of

System for Children and Child-rearing will entire society while utilizing an increased tax revenue.

Improve **Quality** of Support!

We aim to provide support that enables children to grow up in a more enriched environment.

<Main improvement examples>

Improve staffing at kindergartens, nursery centers, centers for early childhood education and care etc.

- Improve children to staff ratios so that the children can get better attention from the staff.

(For example, we will change the children to staff ratio for 3 year-old children from 20 to 1 to 15 to 1.)

Improve working conditions of staff members at kindergartens, nursery centers, centers for early childhood education and care etc.

- Improve working conditions of staff members to improve the staff retention rate and secure highly capable personnel.

Extend the services of after-school children's clubs

- By providing financial support required to keep the children's clubs open after 18:30, we will aim to remove the so-called "elementary school 1st grade barrier," which often makes it difficult for parents / guardians to handle both work and childcare when their child starts elementary school.



*Consumption tax revenue will be also spent to improve facilities, such as children's foster homes, where children who need social care live, for example.

The New System Will Provide More Educational and Childcare Facilities



In addition to kindergartens “centers for early childhood education and care” will increase the number of children 3 years old for whom the

Up until now, two types of facilities, namely, kindergartens and nursery centers, the new system which combine the advantages of the kindergartens and nursery centers. Further, by newly establishing services to foster a small number of children are on a waiting list and in local areas where the

Kindergartens

3 to 5 years old



Schools that provide early childhood education to establish a foundation for education provided at elementary school and higher education

Opening hours

Educational lessons are provided until just after lunch-time, and depending on the facilities, educational activities (day care services), etc. are conducted before and after the educational lessons and out of opening days.

Eligible parents / guardians

No restrictions

Centers for early childhood education and care

0 to 5 years old



Facilities that provide integrated services of education and childcare

- These facilities have the functions and characteristics of both kindergartens and nursery centers and also provide child-rearing support services for local communities (introduced in 2006).
- Under the new system, the centers for early childhood education and care will be further promoted by making it easier to establish new facilities or to change existing kindergartens or nursery centers into the facilities through simplifying the certification procedure, for example.

Three points

1

Regardless of the employment status of the parents / guardians, any children from 3 to 5 years old will receive both education and childcare.

2

Even when the employment status of the parents / guardians changes, such as, when parents / guardians stop working, their children can continue to use the same center they are used to.

3

As child-rearing support services are available, even families whose children don't attend the centers can use child-rearing consultation services and join parents and children interaction gatherings, etc.

*If a child aged from 0 to 2 years old is to attend the center, it is necessary to obtain a childcare certification (refer to pages 11 to 14).

and nursery centers, we will make the education and care” more widely available. <municipal-level childcare services>, we childcare services for children under 3 waiting list is longest.

nursery centers are mainly used as facilities for pre-school children. system will make the “centers for early childhood education and care” more widely available, centers, while taking into account local circumstances. of children, we will secure locally childcare services to users both in urban areas where many number of children is declining.



Nursery centers
0 to 5 years old

Facilities that provide day care to children whose parents / guardians cannot look after their children at home because of employment etc.

- Opening hours** Day care is provided until evening, and depending on the facilities, extension childcare services are also provided.
- Eligible parents / guardians** Parents / guardians who cannot look after their child at home, such as households where both parents are working



Municipal-level childcare services
0 to 2 years old

Provide day care to children aged from 0 to 2 years old in a smaller number than nursery centers which accommodate 20 or more children in principle

- Under the new system, those services will be newly established as licensed services at the municipal level, and the number of services for children aged from 0 to 2 years old will be increased to shorten long waiting lists.
- These services will be provided based on various local circumstances, for example, in urban areas where spaces are limited for establishing new nursery centers care facilities or in local areas where the number of children is declining.

Four types

1 Family-style day-care services
Provide closely supervised childcare to a small number of children (5 or less children) in a homelike environment

2 Small-scale childcare services
Provide closely supervised childcare to a small number of children (6 to 19 children) in an environment similar to that of the family-style day-care.

3 Childcare within institution services
Provide childcare both to children of employees and children from local areas at childcare facilities located within business offices, etc.

4 Home-visit childcare services
Provide one-on-one day care at parents' / guardians' home, when individual care is necessary due to disability or illness or when day care services need to be maintained in an area where no nursery centers exist any longer, for example.

*For information regarding what kind of services are actually provided in your area, please contact your local municipal office.



Expand Child-rearing Support Services in Local Communities 1

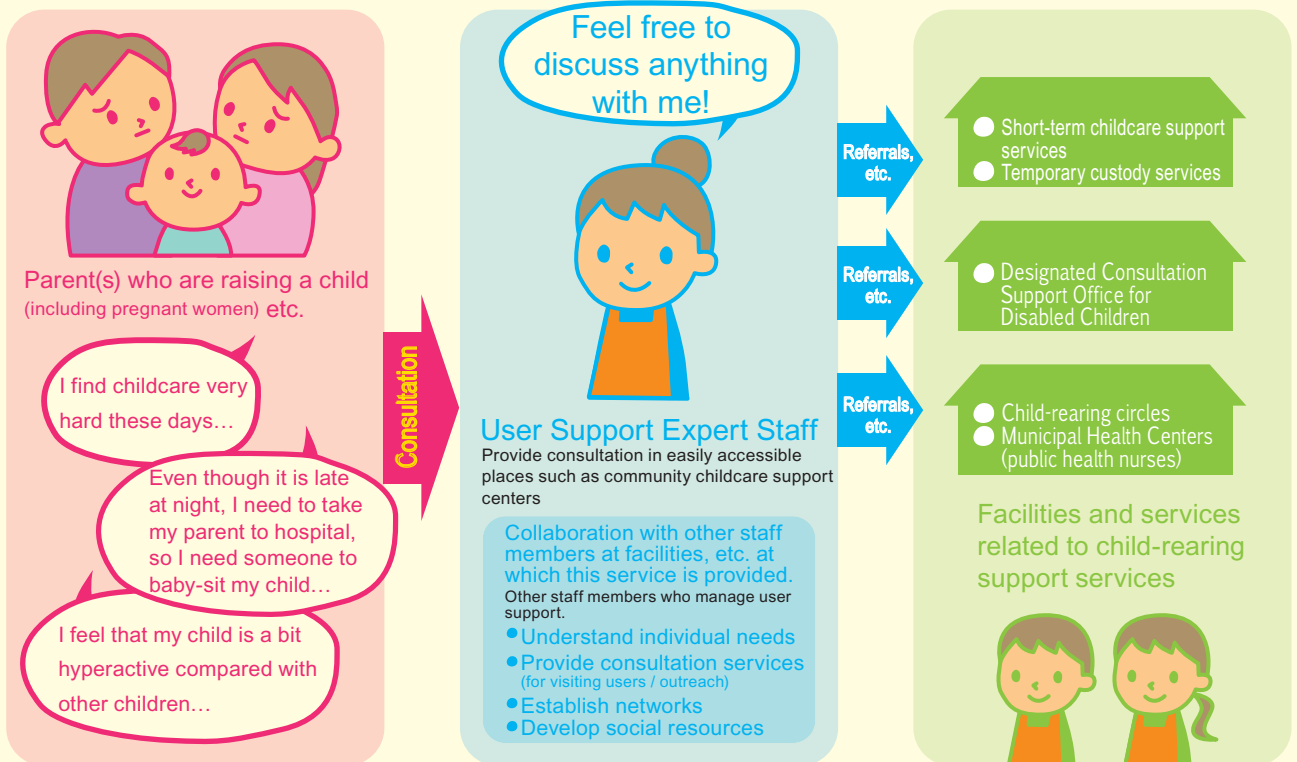
Childcare support services change to become easier children.

The new system will support not only households where both extend various local childcare support services, such as normally look after their children at home, “community childcare and “after-school children’s clubs” which elementary school attend. Further, we will establish user support to enable all

User Support

- To enable users to select and use necessary support services from various options, including facilities such as kindergartens, nursery centers etc. and other local childcare support services, in accordance with their household childcare needs, we will provide the users with relevant information, advice, and help.
- Expert staff will provide consultation services at such places as community childcare support centers and municipal offices.
- Anyone can use these services as a general inquiry service for children and childcare, when they have any questions regarding how to use the services etc.

Anyone can access consultation services about childcare and child-rearing.



To receive support services matching your household needs

Given various facilities and local child-rearing support services, some municipalities provide users with relevant information, advice, and help to enable users to receive support services that meet their childcare needs. Please fully utilize the user support available in your area, when you apply for any services or go through any procedure under the new system.

in local communities will also to use for all households with

parents are working, but all child-rearing households in Japan. We will “temporary custody services” that can be used by parents / guardians who support centers” where people can receive childcare advice close to home, children whose parents / guardians are not at home during the day can households to receive support services suited to their needs.

● After-School Children’s Clubs

- These are activities that enable children (i.e. elementary school children) whose parents / guardians are not at home during the day to spend after-school hours at places such as spare classrooms in elementary schools or child centers.
- In accordance with local needs, we will increase the number of after-school children’s clubs and will also improve their quality by establishing new standards for staffing, facilities, and equipment under the new system.
In addition, this service will be available to elementary school children up to sixth grade.

The new standards requires....

● Staffing

Allocate two or more after-school children support staff members per support unit (apart from one of the staff members, it is possible to substitute them with assistant staff members)

● Facilities and equipment

Establish a dedicated area (a room or a space that functions as a place for playing, living, and resting) etc. and secure an area larger than approximately 1.65 m² per child

● Opening days and hours

- Required to be open for 250 or more days per year in principle
- Required to be open for 8 or more hours per day on Saturdays, Sundays, long holidays, etc. (when elementary schools are on holiday)
- Required to be open for 3 or more hours per day on weekdays (when elementary schools are not on holiday)

Future plans...

In order to break the so-called “elementary school 1st grade barrier,” which often makes it difficult for the parents / guardians to handle both work and childcare when their child starts elementary school, we are planning to utilize spare school etc. as much as possible to organize after-school children’s clubs and after-school classes for children. Doing so, we aim to provide an environment where all children can enjoy various experiences and activities while leading their daily lives safely and with peace of mind to develop human resources who can lead the next generation.

● Increase the number of after-school children’s clubs



Newly establish after-school children’s clubs for approximately 300,000 additional children by FY 2019

● Expand after-school classes for children*

*Learning support and other various programs targeting all children

● Promote the integration* of after-school children’s clubs and after-school classes for children



Implement the projects in an integrated or collaborative manner in all elementary school zones in Japan (approximately 20,000 zones) and adopt the integrated-type facilities in 10,000 or more zones.

*Both these projects will be implemented in the same elementary school premises etc. to enable all children, including children attending the after-school children’s clubs, to participate in activity programs provided by the after-school classes for children.

Community Childcare Support Centers

- We will increase the number of easily accessible local facilities where parents and children can freely interact and parents can receive childcare consultation services.
- Municipal governments or incorporated NPOs will play a role of service providers at various places such as public facilities and nursery centers.

Temporary Custody

- We will make temporary custody more accessible to users to accommodate various household childcare needs, such as childcare required by an unexpected business or a short-term part-time employment.

For example, you can use the services in the following ways:

- Temporary custody at nursery centers or community childcare support centers
- Temporary custody mainly for enrolled children at kindergartens or centers for early childhood education and care (day care services)
- Temporary custody utilizing unfilled capacity at nursery centers, centers for early childhood education and care, small-scale childcare services, etc.
- Home-visit temporary custody

Childcare for Children with Disease

- Provide childcare services using spaces attached to hospitals or nursery centers when a child is sick or still recovering from sickness and his/her parents / guardians cannot look after the child at home.
- When a child starts feeling unwell at a some facility such as nursery centers, the facility may keep the child at rest until his/her parents / guardians come to pick up the child.



Family Support Centers

- Accepting parents / guardians who are raising infants, toddlers, elementary school children, etc. as members, provide communication and coordination services for activities that enable people who want to receive childcare services and people who are willing to provide such childcare services to mutually help each other.



Home-visiting Childcare Support

- To ensure appropriate childcare is provided for all households, visit those households that particularly need childcare support and provide such households with guidance, advice etc.



Visit to All Families with a Baby

- Visit all households with infants up to 4 months old to provide them with information regarding child-rearing support services and to understand their childcare environment etc.



Health Checkups for Pregnant Women

- To maintain and enhance the health of pregnant women, provide health checkups to (1) understand their health conditions, (2) conduct examination and measuring, and (3) provide health guidance, and as necessary, conduct medical tests at appropriate timings during the pregnancy period.

Municipal governments that are most accessible for residents will play a central role in promoting activities under the new system.

- Municipal governments will try to fully understand household childcare situations and childcare needs in respective municipalities and will systemically prepare and implement support facilities and services suited for the identified needs while selecting them from various support facility and services options.
- In order to systemically promote those activities, each municipal government will develop a “Municipal Plan for Children and Child-rearing Support Services” based on a 5-year project period starting from April 2015 when the new system will be introduced.
- Prefectural and central governments will support those activities at the municipal level in institutional and financial areas.

*For information regarding what kind of support services are actually provided in your area, please contact your local municipal office.



Steps to Use the New System

Parents / guardians who facilities, etc. are required certification for using the

Under the new system, facilities, etc. (kindergartens, nursery education and care, municipal-level childcare services) for according to **three types of certifications** granted by the Although procedures under the new system are not significantly system in term of application timings and processes, please provided by the municipal government and relevant facilities in



*When you wish to obtain Type 1 Certification and use a center for early wish to obtain Type 2 or Type 3 Certification and use a center for early

Childcare fees charged under the new system will be basically determined according to incomes of parents / guardians.

Childcare fees for various support services under the new system will be determined by municipal governments in accordance with current burden levels and parents' / guardians' incomes while also reflecting local circumstances. The upper limits of the fees will be set by the central government. (refer to page 15)

*Steps required for using a kindergarten which does not join the new system will not change.

wish to use to obtain a service.

centers, centers for early childhood
respective applicants will be decided
municipal government in your area.
different from those under the current
carefully read through information
your area.

Three Types of Certifications

Type 1 Certification Standard Time Education Certification

When a child is **3 years old or older** and parents / guardians wish to provide the child with education at a kindergarten etc.

Service options Kindergarten and center for early childhood education and care

Type 2 Certification 3 years old or older / Childcare Certification

When a child is **3 years old or older** and one of the “reasons for need of childcare” (refer to page 13) applies, and parents / guardians wish to receive childcare for their child at a nursery center, etc.

Service options Nursery center and center for early childhood education and care

Type 3 Certification Under 3 years old / Childcare Certification

When a child is **under 3 years old** and one of the “reasons for need of childcare” (refer to page 13) applies, and parents / guardians wish to receive childcare for their child at a nursery center etc.

Service options Nursery center, center for early childhood education and care, municipal-level childcare service

3

Make an application for certification to use the facility through the kindergarten etc.

4

Certification is issued by the municipal government through the kindergarten etc.
(Type 1 Certification)

5

Exchange a contract with the kindergarten etc.

3

Make an application to use a nursery center etc.
(specify the name of the facility you wish to use.)

4

The municipal government selects who are available for the service based on requests from the applicant, situations of nursery centers, etc.

* If the child needs day care (Type 2 or Type 3 Certification), the municipal government finds and recommends available nursery centers, etc. for the applicant if necessary.

5

After the facility is decided, a contract is exchanged.

childhood education and care, please follow the blue steps, and if you
childhood education and care, please follow the red steps.

Depending on the facility, the user exchanges the contract with and makes payment to a different party.

When you use a **center for early childhood education and care**, a **kindergarten**, a **public nursery center**, a **municipal-level childcare service**

The user exchanges the contract with a **facility / service provider** and pays childcare fees to the **facility / service provider** (the municipal government in case of the public nursery center).

When you use a **private nursery center**

The user exchanges the contract with the **municipal government** and pays childcare fees to the **municipal government**.



To Obtain Certification

When you wish to use etc., one of the reasons for

When you wish to use childcare services at a nursery center, etc., the following three points will be considered before the Childcare Certification (Type 2 or Type 3 Certification) is granted.

1 Reasons for Need of Childcare One of the following reasons should apply

- Employment (all types of employment including full-time, part-time, and night-time employment, working at home, etc. in principle)
- Pregnancy and childbirth
- Sickness and disability of parents / guardians
- Nursing or caring of a relative who lives in the same household or who has been hospitalized for a long time
- Restoration after a disaster
- Job-seeking activities (including preparations for starting up a business)
- Schooling (including vocational training at a vocational training school etc.)
- Risk of abuse or domestic violence
- When there is a need for continuous use of childcare, as a parent / guardian who is taking childcare leave already has a child using the childcare service.
- When the municipal government acknowledges that there exists a similar situation to one of the above-described circumstances.

*When a relative who lives in the same household can look after the child concerned, a priority for using childcare services may be adjusted accordingly.

2 Amount of Childcare Required When the childcare service is used because of employment, one of the following categories will be applied.

- a "Standard Time Childcare" Service ▶ Time calculated assuming that the user has full-time employment (up to 11 hours per day)
- b "Short Time Childcare" Service ▶ Time calculated assuming that the user has part-time employment (up to 8 hours per day)

*The lower limit of employment hours of parents / guardians, who are eligible to use the "Short Time Childcare" service, will be specified by the municipal government within a range of 48 to 64 hours per month.

3 Application of "Priority Use"

Priority use of childcare services may be considered necessary for some children, when the child is from a single-parent household, a households receiving public assistance, or the main income earner of the household is laid off, or the child has a disability, for example.

Specific implementation measures will be gradually considered and determined by the municipal government. Please contact your local municipal office for details.



childcare services at a nursery center, need of childcare should apply.

The following support services are available, for example, depending on your working style and childcare situation.

Please refer to the following information when you choose support services suitable for you under the new system.

Note that, in order to make these support services easily accessible to you, we will take measures to arrange dedicated staff members at places close to you.

After childcare leave has ended, I want to work hard as well as look after my child!

In the case of a household where either parents work on a full-time basis (or a single-parent household where the parent works on a full-time basis)

- Center for early childhood education and care
- Nursery center
- Kindergarten + Temporary custody
*When the child is 3 years old or older
- Small-scale childcare, etc.
*When the child is under 3 years old
- After-school children's club
*When the child is an elementary school student.

The childcare service provided will be the "Standard Time Childcare" service in principle.

Three days a week when I have a part-time job, I also want to use the day care service.

In the case of a household where either of the parents works on a part-time basis (or a single-parent household where the parent works on a part-time basis)

- Center for early childhood education and care
- Nursery center
- Kindergarten + Temporary custody
*When the child is 3 years old or older
- Small-scale childcare, etc.
*When the child is under 3 years old
- After-school children's club
*When the child is an elementary school student.

The childcare service provided will be the "Short Time Childcare" service in principle.

I want to enjoy spending time with my child as the child is still small.

In the case of a household where one of the parents is a housewife or a househusband

- | | | | | |
|--------------------|---|---|-----------------------|---|
| [Use facilities] | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Center for early childhood education and care ● Kindergarten | *When the child is 3 years old or older | [Childcare at home] | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Local childcare support service <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support services available at community childcare support centers, centers for early childhood education and care etc. • Temporary custody services |
|--------------------|---|---|-----------------------|---|

Valid period of childcare certification

The valid period depends on the reason for the need of childcare, but in principle, the valid period of the Type 2 Certification is up to entry into elementary school, and the valid period of the Type 3 Certification is up to the 3rd birthday of the child (refer to Q&A section on page 20 for details).

For information regarding what kind of support services are actually provided in your area, please contact your local municipal office.





Examples of User Charges

Childcare fees under the new governments within a range government.

Upper limits of the childcare fees are set at similar levels to the actual user fees currently charged at private kindergartens and nursery centers.

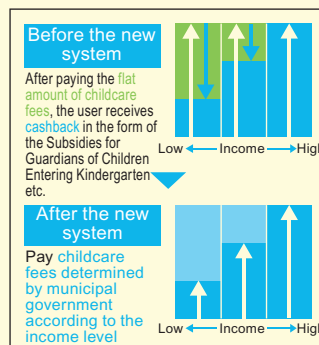
- When the **Standard Time Education Certification** (Type 1 Benefits) is issued to the child, the user fees are set by deducting the amount of the Subsidies for Guardians of Children Entering Kindergarten (which is determined depending on the parents' income) from the national average of the current childcare fees at private kindergartens.

Kindergarten, center for early childhood education and care

Examples of user charges when the Standard Time Education Certification is granted to the child (monthly fees)

*Amounts shown on the right are upper limits set by the central government (Note that actual cost used for the service will be the amount limit if the cost is equal to or less than the upper limits.) *1

- Childcare fees are set for each income bracket. (Income bracket criteria etc. are different depending on municipalities.)
- In some cases, the user may have to cover actual expenses or pay additional service fees.



| Income bracket | Childcare fee upper limit |
|---|---------------------------|
| (1) Households receiving public assistance | 0 yen |
| (2) Households exempted from tax amount of per income levy | 3,000 yen |
| (3) Households with tax amount of per income levy equal to or under 77,100 yen | 16,100 yen |
| (4) Households with tax amount of per income levy equal to or under 211,200 yen | 20,500 yen |
| (5) Households with tax amount of per income levy equal to or more than 211,201 yen | 25,700 yen |

Nursery centers, centers for early childhood education and care, and small-scale childcare services (only for children under 3 years old)

Examples of user charges when Childcare Certification is granted to the child (monthly fees)

*Amounts shown on the right are upper limits set by the central government (Note that actual cost used for the service will be the amount limit if the cost is equal to or less than the upper limits.) *1

- Childcare fees are set for each income bracket. (Income bracket criteria etc. are different depending on municipalities.)
- Depending on the amount of time needed for childcare, the user charges are set for two categories, namely, the standard time childcare (11 hours) and the short time childcare (8 hours).

| Income bracket | Childcare fee upper limit | | | |
|---|---------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|----------------------|
| | 3 years old and older | | Under 3 years old | |
| | Standard Time Childcare | Short Time Childcare | Standard Time Childcare | Short Time Childcare |
| (1) Households receiving public assistance | 0 yen | 0 yen | 0 yen | 0 yen |
| (2) Households exempted from tax amount of per income levy | 6,000 yen | 6,000 yen | 9,000 yen | 9,000 yen |
| (3) Households with tax amount of per income levy under 48,600 yen | 16,500 yen | 16,300 yen | 19,500 yen | 19,300 yen |
| (4) Households with tax amount of per income levy under 97,000 yen | 27,000 yen | 26,600 yen | 30,000 yen | 29,600 yen |
| (5) Households with tax amount of per income levy under 169,000 yen | 41,500 yen | 40,900 yen | 44,500 yen | 43,900 yen |
| (6) Households with tax amount of per income levy under 301,000 yen | 58,000 yen | 57,100 yen | 61,000 yen | 60,100 yen |
| (7) Households with tax amount of per income levy under 397,000 yen | 77,000 yen | 75,800 yen | 80,000 yen | 78,800 yen |
| (8) Households with tax amount of per income levy equal to or more than 397,000 yen | 101,000 yen | 99,400 yen | 104,000 yen | 102,400 yen |

*1: As actual cost becomes the upper limit, when the actual cost for your childcare is 50,000 yen, for example, even if you fall under one of the income brackets from (6) to (8), the upper limit for your cost becomes 50,000 yen.

system will be determined by municipal (i.e. upper limits) set by the central

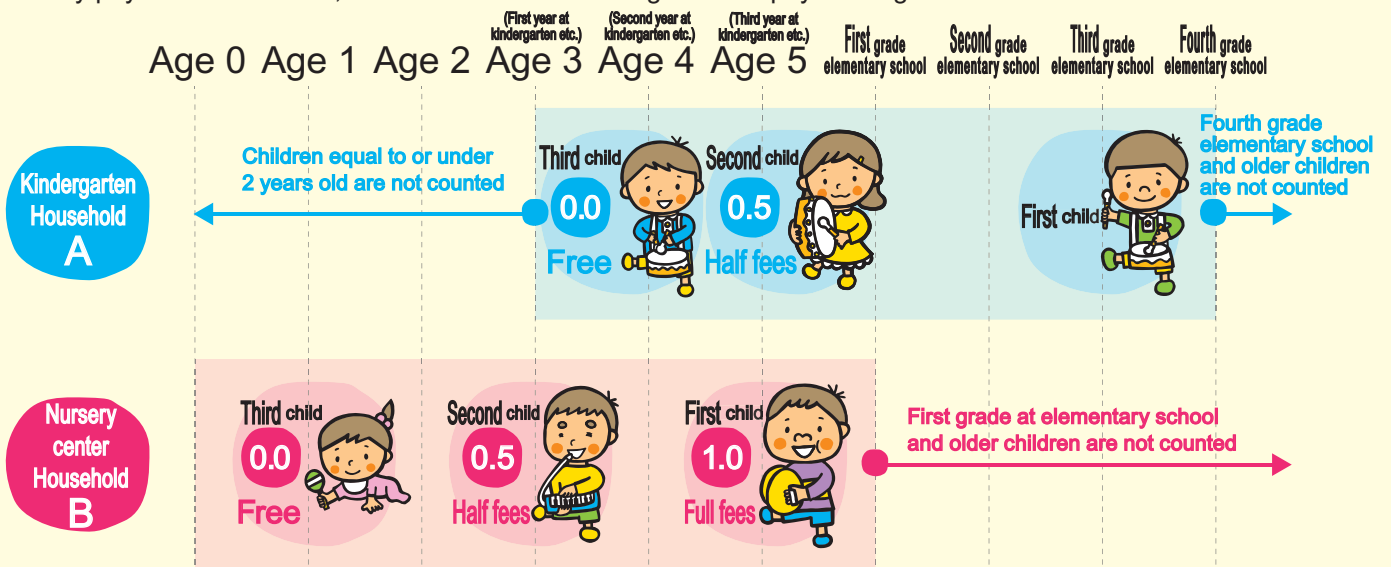
Reduction of childcare fees for households with multiple children

When two or more siblings use the kindergarten, the nursery center, the center for early childhood education and care, etc., childcare fees for the second child are halved, and childcare fees for the third and following children are free.

- In the case of a **kindergarten**, when there are two or more siblings from the first year at kindergarten etc. to the third grade at elementary school, the eldest sibling is counted as the first child and the second eldest sibling is counted as the second child. Although the first child needs to pay childcare fees in full, the second child only pays half of the fees, and the third and following children pay nothing.
- In the case of a **nursery center**, when there are two or more siblings who have not yet entered elementary school, the eldest sibling is counted as the first child and the second eldest sibling is counted as the second child. Although the first child needs to pay childcare fees in full, the second child only pays half of the fees, and the third and following children pay nothing.

*However, when the first child grows out of the age band ranging from the first year at kindergarten to the third grade at elementary school (i.e. when the first child enters into the fourth grade at elementary school), the child who used to be the second child is counted as the first child.

*However, when the first child grows out of the age band before elementary school, (i.e. when the first child enters elementary school), the child who used to be the second child is counted as the first child.

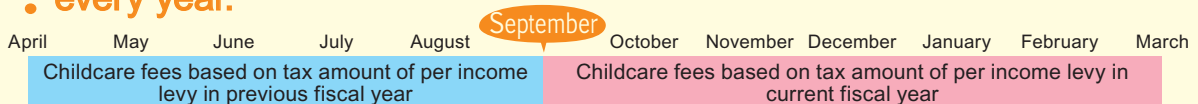


The values within ● indicate the ratio of the user charge to be paid when the user charge of the first child is 1.0.

*In the case of the center for early childhood education and care, when the Standard Time Education Certification is granted to the child, the same rules as the kindergarten will be applied, and when the Childcare Certification is granted to the child, the same rules as the nursery center will be applied.

*When the small-scale childcare is used, the same rules as the nursery center will be applied.

! Under the new system, childcare fees will be switched in September every year.



Q&A regarding facilities such as centers for early childhood education and care

Q What are the advantages of a center for early childhood education and care?

A A center for early childhood education and care is a facility which provides education and childcare in an integrated manner and combines the good aspects of both kindergarten and nursery center. The facility can be used regardless of whether the parents / guardians are working or not. So as a big advantage, even if the employment status of the parents / guardians changes, their child can continue to attend the same facility to which the child is accustomed. Further, the center for early childhood education and care also provides childcare support services, and families whose children don't attend the center also can use those services to consult about child-rearing or parenting or to participate in a parent and child interaction gathering, etc.



▶ Refer to page 5.



Q I am living in an area with no wait-listed children. Is the government going to establish the center for early childhood education and care even in such an area?

A Under the new system, the municipal government will ascertain the needs (demands) for education and childcare in local areas, and will systematically establish (supply) facilities and services to accommodate the identified needs. Then, the municipal government is expected to incorporate into the “Municipal Plan” (refer to page 10) measures for making the center for early childhood education and care more widely available based on local circumstances. Further, under the new system, even in the areas where the supply and the demand are already balanced, when the kindergarten or the nursery center wishes to change its status to become a center for early childhood education and care, the municipal government is expected to approve such a request in a flexible manner.

Q When we move into the new system, are the existing kindergartens and nursery centers going to disappear?

A Existing kindergartens and nursery centers are not necessarily changing into centers for early childhood education and care. Each kindergarten and nursery center will decide how they want to manage their facilities. Please contact your local municipal office for information regarding how each of the kindergartens and the nursery centers in your area is planning to operate under the new system.



Q I am currently using the day care service at a kindergarten. Is this service going to be unavailable under the new system?

A Even under the new system, the day care service can be used as before in the form of the “temporary custody.” However, it should be noted that the service fees may change under the new system. Please contact your kindergarten for details. Under the new system, the temporary custody at the kindergarten, which primarily targets children attending the kindergarten, and the temporary custody services provided by the nursery center and the center for early childhood education and care will be expanded. Further, by newly introducing the home-visit temporary custody, we will make it easier for users to use the services based on their household childcare needs.

▶ Refer to page 9.

Q&A regarding use of childcare services

Q I am living in an urban area where many children are on the waiting list for childcare. Under the new system, am I more likely to be able to use a childcare service for my child?

A In coming years, we are planning to establish more nursery centers and centers for early childhood education and care to meet the childcare needs in each local area. Further, in order to secure sufficient childcare services for children in urban areas, where it is difficult to secure land to build new facilities, we are planning to start providing financial support for such services as “small-scale childcare services” and “family-style day-care services” where children can be looked after in a smaller group.

▶ Refer to page 6.

In terms of establishing and providing such facilities and services, your local municipal office will ascertain the needs for the early childhood education and childcare in your area and will develop and systematically implement the “Municipal Plan.”

▶ Refer to page 10.

Q Is the issue of wait-listed children going to be resolved under the new system?

A In order to resolve the serious situation surrounding wait-listed children, the central government has been already promoting various activities under the “Acceleration Plan for Reducing Wait-listed Children” without waiting for the enforcement of the new system (planned to be enforced from April 2015). More specifically, the government has been promoting activities to improve the working conditions of nursery teachers and to support small-scale day care projects, day care services at kindergartens, and non-certified childcare facilities which are trying to be certified in the near future. Further, by fully introducing the new system and by securing childcare services for approximately 400,000 children under the new system, the government is aiming to completely resolve the issue of children on the waiting list by the end of FY 2017, when day care needs in Japan will reach their peak.

Q There is no vacancy for my child in certified nursery centers in my area, so I am using the childcare service provided by a non-certified nursery center. Under the new system, what is going to happen to such a non-certified childcare facility?

A In order to expand quantity, while maintaining quality, under the “Acceleration Plan for Reducing Wait-listed Children,” the government has already started taking measures to enable non-certified childcare facilities to be smoothly reorganized as certified nursery centers or certified centers for early childhood education and care. Further, under the new system, a system will be introduced in which all facilities which satisfy certain certification criteria will be certified in principle. Through these measures and activities, the number of certified facilities is expected to increase under the new system.

Q I am considering using a small-scale childcare service, but what should I do when my child becomes 3 years old?

A Under the new system, small-scale childcare facilities and family-style day-care services, which provide services for children aged from 0 to 2, will be linked with “partnered facilities (such as centers for early childhood education and care, kindergartens and nursery centers)” to secure facilities for children to be able to attend after leaving the small-scale or family-style childcare facilities. Based on local circumstances, priority placements in the partnered facilities and other measures enable users easily find childcare facilities to which they can continue to send their child even after leaving their previous childcare services, if they wish to do so.

(Note that it may take a certain period of time for the partnered facilities to be set up depending on local areas.) Further, when the municipal government considers it necessary, children may be able to use the small-scale childcare services etc. even after turning 3 years old.

Q&A regarding in-home and local childcare support

- Q** I look after my child at home.
Can I get any childcare support under the new system, even though my household is not a household with both parents working on a full-time basis?

- A** The new system is designed to support all households with childcare needs. For example, as support for the parent(s) who are looking after their child at home, we will expand temporary custody services, which can be used when childcare is suddenly needed by an unexpected business etc., and will also increase the number of “community childcare support centers” where users can freely discuss childcare or participate in a parent and child interaction gathering, etc.

▶ Refer to page 9.

Further, in order to make it easier for households where the parent / guardian has part-time employment, etc. to receive childcare services at nursery centers, etc., the childcare certification system will be introduced under the new system.

▶ Refer to page 13.



- Q** Do I need to meet any specific requirement, such as obtaining a certification, in order to use the temporary custody?

- A** There is no specific requirement for using the temporary custody. Users can freely use the service based on their various household childcare needs, for example, when parents / guardians need to attend a wedding or a funeral, when they become sick, or when they have unexpected business to attend to, such as going to a hairdresser. For detailed information regarding service fees, opening hours etc., please contact the temporary custody facility you are going to use.

▶ Refer to page 9.

Q&A regarding after-school children's clubs

- Q** I heard that after-school children's clubs will be improved under the new system. What is going to happen?

- A** Under the new system, new standards will be created for after-school children's clubs in terms of qualifications and the number of staff members, facilities and equipment, the size of children's groups, etc. While utilizing the consumption tax revenues to improve the after-school clubs, the new system expands the quantity of and enhances the quality of them covering elementary school children up to sixth grade.

▶ Refer to page 8.



- Q** There are also many wait-listed children for the after-school children's clubs. Will the new system resolve this issue?

- A** It is important to ensure that the children who were using childcare services before entering elementary school can continue to use the after-school children's clubs even after entering elementary school. Under the new system, the municipal government will also strive to improve the situation of after-school children's clubs based on the “Municipal Plan.” It should be noted that, even without waiting for the enforcement of the new system (planned to be enforced in April 2015), since FY 2014, the government has already started taking measures to support the after-school children's clubs that have decided to extend their opening hours.

▶ Refer to page 8.



Q&A regarding need of childcare, etc.

- Q** Do I need to have a childcare certification, even when I wish to use a kindergarten?
- A** Any 3 years old or older children can use a kindergarten. Under the new system, parents / guardians will be required to receive one of three types of certifications, and when you wish to use a kindergarten, you will be expected to acquire the “Standard Time Education Certification” (Type 1 Certification). However, requirements for the certification will remain the same as existing requirements, and basically, you will be able to go through a process to obtain the certification via the kindergarten from which you have received an entry offer.
Please contact your local municipal office for detailed information regarding the certification process etc. [▶ Refer to page 11.](#)
- Q** Our household is a household with both parents working, and we are planning to apply for both kindergarten and nursery center. What kind of certification should we get?
- A** Even when your household is a household with both parents working, if you wish to receive education to your child at a kindergarten, you can apply for and use the kindergarten. In this kind of case, a required procedure becomes different depending on whether you also wish to use services at a nursery center, etc. or not. If you also wish to use the services at a nursery center, etc., you will be expected to obtain the “Childcare Certification for 3 years and older children” (Type 2 Certification). Then, based on how you actually used the services at the kindergarten or the nursery center, the municipal government will decide whether to maintain or change the certification status. Please contact your local municipal office for detailed information regarding the certification process etc.
- Q** How many years does the certification remain valid? When the reason for the certification becomes no longer applicable during the valid period, what is going to happen? Further, do I have to report my household situation etc. to the municipal government every year?
- A** The valid period of the Standard Time Education Certification is basically 3 years (until your child enters elementary school).
The valid period of the Childcare Certification is also 3 years in principle (in case of the Type 2 Certification, until your child enters elementary school and in case of the Type 3 Certification, until your child turns 3 years old). However, if your reason for need of childcare is no longer applicable, the certification becomes invalid as well at that point. Providing that the reason for need of childcare is job-seeking activities, the valid period for the certification is 90 days in principle.
Further, you are required to submit a Current Status Notification to the municipal government once every year in principle so that the municipal government can reassess whether your reason for need of childcare is still applicable and can review the appropriate level of user charges. [▶ Refer to page 14.](#)
- Q** When a child who has the Type 3 Certification turns 3 years old, do I have to go through any procedure? Also, what will happen to the childcare fees?
- A** When the child turns 3 years old, namely, when the Type 3 Certification changes into the Type 2 Certification, the municipal government will change the status of the certification, so parents / guardians do not have to reapply for childcare certification. Further, the childcare fees during the fiscal year when the child turns 3 years old remain the same as those under the Type 3 Certification, and new childcare fees under the Type 2 Certification will be applied from the next fiscal year. Note that, when a child attending a center for early childhood education and care becomes 3 years old, the child becomes eligible to use the temporary custody in combination with the standard time education. In this case, please go through a procedure for changing your certification to the Type 1 Certification. The same thing applies when a child enters a certified center for early childhood education and care (standard time education) or a kindergarten, after leaving a small-scale childcare or a family-style day-care, and uses the temporary custody service. After the certification is changed to the Type 1 Certification, you will be charged for childcare fees under the Type 1 Certification and temporary custody fees.
- Q** Do children having a greater need of childcare have priority in terms of being accepted into nursery centers (centers for early childhood education and care and municipal-level childcare services)?
- A** Although examples of “priority use cases” where childcare services coordination is necessary are proposed by the central government, respective municipal governments will decide the actual method for coordinating the childcare services. When the number of applicants exceeds the number of available placements, the municipal government will coordinate based on priority reasons for need of childcare specified by the municipal government and will decide who will receive which childcare services.
(Please contact your local municipal office for details.) [▶ Refer to page 11.](#)

Q&A regarding procedures, user charges etc.

- Q** Under the new system, how will the entry procedures for kindergartens and nursery centers change?
Are there any changes in the application methods?

- A** With respect to the procedures under the new system, there will be no significant changes in terms of timings and processes. However, there will be some changes from the current system. For example, all parents / guardians, including those who wish to send their child to a kindergarten, will be required to receive one of the three types of certifications, and when the parents / guardians are certified, a certification will be issued by the municipal government. Further, when parents / guardians wish to send their child to a nursery center, depending on the need of childcare, the municipal government will coordinate and recommend available services to users. Please obtain information which will be published by the municipal government in your area for details, and if you have any enquiries, please feel free to contact your municipal office.



▶ Refer to page 11.



- Q** What is going to happen to childcare fees under the new system?

- A** The childcare fees under the new system will be determined by the municipal government within a range (i.e. upper limits) set by the central government. Note that the upper limits set by the central government are roughly set at the same level as the actual user fees charged at private kindergartens and nursery centers under the current system.

▶ Refer to page 15.

- Q** Under the new system, will the system of childcare fees, etc. for kindergartens change?

- A** The new system will be based on a system where childcare fees paid to kindergartens will be set by the municipal government depending on the income level of parents / guardians. In addition to those fees, actual expenses and additional fees may be charged at some kindergartens. Please contact your local municipal office or a kindergarten of your choice for details.



▶ Refer to page 15.

- Q** I heard that childcare fees will be reduced for the second and third children. What is going to happen to those fees?

- A** When multiple children attend nursery centers, etc. from the same household, even under the current system, reduced childcare fees or exemption have been applied to the second child and the third child. Further, since FY 2014, the same reduced fees and exemption have been also applied to the second child and the third child who attend kindergarten, as long as the second child and the third child attend the facility, when the same household has multiple children who are in the third grade at elementary school or younger. Under the new system, those measures will continue to be implemented to reduce the burden of households with multiple children.

▶ Refer to page 16.



Q Under the new system, will different facilities and service providers charge different childcare fees?

A Childcare fees for each household will be determined by respective municipal governments based on types of certifications and municipal resident tax-based income brackets. Therefore, if the same type of certification and income bracket are applied, parents / guardians will be basically charged with the same amount of childcare fees at any facility or service provider in the area (some municipalities may make a different arrangement).

Further, there are some cases where additional fees are charged that are independently set by the facility or service provider, such as actual expenses for school lunches, school bus services, or additional service fees for improving the quality of education and childcare, so please contact the facility to which you wish to send your child for specific information.

▶ Refer to page 15.

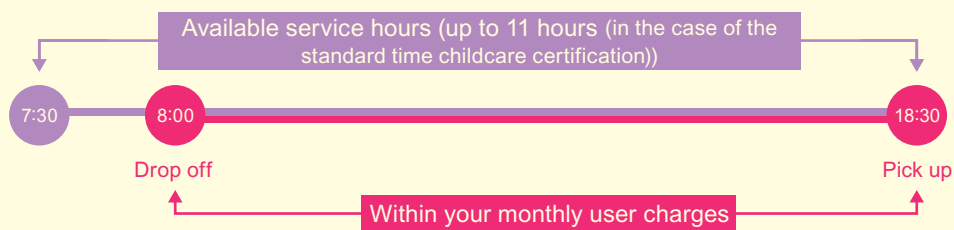
Q Under the new system, will childcare fees remain the same every year?

A Childcare fees will be determined every year based on the tax amount of per income levy, and the childcare fees will be switched in September every year (i.e. childcare fees before August are based on the tax amount of per income levy of the previous fiscal year and childcare fees after September are based on the tax amount of per income levy of the current fiscal year). If the applicable income bracket for the childcare fees changes due to an change in income in the previous fiscal year, new childcare fees are applied from September.

▶ Refer to page 16.

Q Does the standard time childcare certification (up to 11 hours) mean that, when you receive the standard time childcare certification, you can have up to 11 hours of childcare services for your child after you drop off your child at a facility without paying any additional fees?

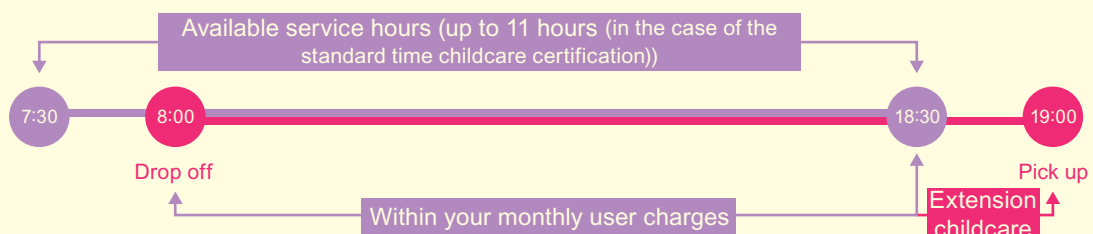
A 11 hours of the standard time childcare certification represent opening hours (available service hours) set by respective facilities and service providers that provide standard childcare services. Therefore, if it is within those opening hours, you can have up to 11 hours of childcare services for your child without paying any additional fees, but it doesn't mean that you can drop off your child at any time during the day and receive up to 11 hours of childcare services without paying any additional fees. (For example, in the case of a facility which sets its 11 hours opening time from 7:30 AM to 6:30 PM, if you drop off your child at the facility at 8:00 AM, you can only take childcare services up to 6:30 PM within your monthly user charges.)



Q Can you leave your child at a childcare facility beyond standard childcare service hours set by the facility?

Also, what is going to happen to childcare fees when I use childcare services outside the set service hours?

A You can use extension childcare services beyond the standard childcare service hours set by the facility (in the case when the facility you are using provides extension childcare services). In this case, you need to pay extension childcare fees. (For example, in the case of a facility which sets its 11 hours opening time from 7:30 AM to 6:30 PM, when you leave your child at the facility from 8:00 AM to 7:00 PM, the childcare services provided from 6:30 PM to 7:00 PM are considered to be extension childcare services.)





“Comprehensive Support System
for Children and Child-rearing”
will start from spring 2015.

Contact Information

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