Early Childhood Education and Care in Japan
## ECEC Facilities in Japan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kindergarten</th>
<th>Day Care</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Target</strong></td>
<td>From age 0 to 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* Children with needs for care (Eligibility determined by municipal governments)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Childcare Time</strong></td>
<td>8 hours a day, in principle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4 hours a day, as educational standard</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Legal Foundation</strong></td>
<td>School Education Law</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Child Welfare Law</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Governing Body</strong></td>
<td>Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT)</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (MHLW)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Standards</strong></td>
<td>National Curriculum Standards for Kindergartens</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Guidelines for Nursery at Day Cares</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number of Children</strong></td>
<td>1,705,000 (2007)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Public 338,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Private 1,368,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2,015,000 (2007)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Public 945,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Private 1,071,000</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Number of Facilities</strong></td>
<td>14,000 (2007)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Public 5,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Private 8,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>23,000 (2007)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Public 12,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Private 11,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2 types of facilities are provided to the children of the same age 3-6.
Number of Pre-school Children in Japan

MEXT (2006fy)

- **Age 5 Class (5-6):**
  - Kindergarten: 57.3%
  - Day Nursery: 39.4%
  - Others: 3.2%
  - Total: 1,175,500

- **Age 4 Class (4-5):**
  - Kindergarten: 54.3%
  - Day Nursery: 40.1%
  - Others: 5.6%
  - Total: 1,160,000

- **Age 3 Class (3-4):**
  - Kindergarten: 37.4%
  - Day Nursery: 38.0%
  - Others: 24.6%
  - Total: 1,136,000

- **Age 2 Class (2-3):**
  - Kindergarten: 31.6%
  - Day Nursery: 68.4%
  - Total: 1,106,500

- **Age 1 Class (1-2):**
  - Kindergarten: 23.9%
  - Day Nursery: 76.1%
  - Total: 1,074,000

- **Age 0 Class (0-1):**
  - Kindergarten: 14.1%
  - Day Nursery: 85.9%
  - Total: 1,069,000

- **Total:**
  - Kindergarten: 25.7%
  - Day Nursery: 31.5%
  - Others: 42.8%
  - Total: 6,721,000

**Number of Pre-school Children in Japan:**
- 1,175,500
- 1,160,000
- 1,136,000
- 1,106,500
- 1,074,000
- 1,069,000
- 6,721,000
Administrative System of ECEC

(Government) Minister of MEXT

(Prefecture) Prefectural Board of Education

(Prefecture) Prefectural Governor

(Municipality) Municipal Board of Education

(Municipality) Mayor

(Establisher) Municipal Kindergarten

(Establisher) Private Kindergarten

(Establisher) Municipal Day Care

(Establisher) Private Day Care

(Facilities) ・Establishment ・Management

(Facilities) ・Establishment ・Management

(Facilities) ・Establishment ・Management

(Facilities) ・Establishment ・Management

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(Facilities) ・Establishment ・Management

(Facilities) ・Establishment ・Management

(Facilities) ・Establishment ・Management
Funding System of Private ECEC Facilities

(Government)
- Promotional grants for Kindergarten enrollment

(Prefecture)
- Subsidies for Private School ordinary expenses

(Municipality)
- Subsidies for Private School ordinary expenses

* Public ECEC facilities are mainly funded by municipalities.

* Payment of budget (1/2 of cost by government)
* Payment of budget (1/4 of cost by prefecture)
* Payment of budget (1/4 of cost by municipality)
Recent Topics on ECE Policy in Japan

    - Stipulated for the importance of ECE and supporting parents.  

- Amendment of the *School Education Law* (2007)  
  - Put schools under an obligation to make self-assessment.  

- Establishment of the *Law for the Centre for Early Childhood Education and Care* (2006)  
  - established a authorization system of Centre for ECEC.  

- Revision of Curriculum Standards (2008)  
  - *National Curriculum Standards for Kindergartens* (published by the Minister of MEXT)  
  - *Guidelines for Nursery Care at Day Cares* (published by the Minister of MHLW)  

- Publication of the *School Evaluation Guideline* for ECE (2008)  

- Drawing up *Basic Promotion Plan for Education* (2008)  
  - Reduction of household expenditure, etc.
Seven aims

- Enhancement of further cooperation between Kindergartens and Day Cares, Promotion of the Centres for ECEC
- Strengthening and expanding educational functions in every facilities for children ages 3-5
- Emphasizing smooth transition from ECEC to elementary school (compulsory education)
- Improvement of the quality of ECE teachers
- ECE to support parents and families raising children in local communities
- Revitalizing and improving families’ and local community’s capability to educate children in the context of lifelong education.
- Construction of effective local administration system for supporting ECE.
(b-1) School Evaluation System in Japan

**Self Evaluation**

Evaluator: Staff of the school include teachers

Schools settle the concrete aims and examine, and then, evaluate themselves.

**School-Concerned Party Evaluation**

Evaluator: Concerned people such as parents and local residents

Based on the self evaluation, the party evaluates the school thorough observation on the school activities and discussion.

The party gets common understandings and co-operates with the teachers to encourage school activities.

**Outsider Party Evaluation**

Evaluator: Outer specialists who don’t have something to do with the school

From the special and objective viewpoints, the party evaluates on whole school activities using the result of self evaluation and school-concerned party evaluation.

The party feedbacks the result of evaluation to the school and its founder to improve their activities.
Self Evaluation --- Each kindergartens set viewpoints and indicators to evaluate depending on their own situations and local situations.

Sample viewpoints to make evaluation indicators:

- **Curriculum and Instruction**
- **Health management**
- **Safety management**
- **Special support education**
- **Organization management**
- **Training (ability improvement)**
- **Educational aim and evaluation**
- **Relationship between parents and local residents**
- **Support for child-rearing practice**
- **Extra curricular hours education**
- **Facility and Equipment**

Sample indicators listed on the next slide.
(b-3) Indicators for evaluation

(sample indicators about curriculum and instruction evaluation)

- Kindergarten management based on the School motto and educational aim
- Setting of the educational aim grounded on their own situation
- Consensus about the curriculum and its execution among the staff
- System of management and execution of school activities
- Standard weeks and hours per day of educational activities
- Annual guidance plan and weekly programs on education
- Programs to ensure smooth transitions to the elementary schools
- Application of playground equipment and instruments
- Cooperative educational activities on, such as team teaching
- Class management such as the feasible environment for the children
- Education adapted for children’s development according to the national curriculum standard
  - Realizing kindergarten education through the environment
  - Relationship of mutual trust with the children
  - Respect toward children’s subjective activities
  - Comprehensive guidance through playing/pleasure
  - Education adapted for each child’s individuality etc.
(c-1) Centre for ECEC

- Law for the Centre for Early Childhood Education and Care was promulgated in June, 2006 and has been enforced since October, 2006. (by MEXT and MHLW)

- It stipulates the establishment of a system through which prefectural governments authorize “comprehensive facilities coherently providing preschool education and childcare services” (Centre for Early Childhood Education and Care)

- Number of Centres:  94 as of April 1, 2007
  229     April 1, 2008
And more about 2,000 applications are expected.

- Government is considering for revamp the institution of the Centre for ECEC to promote them. (The investigation committee intends to make conclusion by end of this fiscal year.)
(c-2) 4 types of Centre for ECEC

- Combined kindergarten and day-care center model
- Kindergarten model
- Day-care center model
- Local discretion model

Centres may choose their types according to needs of the locality.

Supporting function for child care
(d-1) Revision of National Curriculum standard for Kindergartens

• Newly added/enforced items
  – Smooth transition from ECEC to primary school
    • Ex) mutual comprehension between teachers in kindergarten and primary school
  – Update corresponding to the change of children and society.
    • Ex) dietary education (education on healthy eating)
  – Enrichment of kindergarten education taking account of continuousness between kindergarten-life and family-life of children
  – Enrichment of educational activities outside of the curriculum
    • Supporting child-rearing practice
    • Educational activities during extra curricular hours
(e-1) Reduction of household expenditure on ECEC

- The government will comprehensively consider about the problems about resources and institutions needed for free childhood education in the future, simultaneously with tax reform. For the time being, the government expands measures for early childhood education such as reduction of household expenditure on preschool education. (The Basic Promotion Plan for Education, cabinet approval 2008)

- The trial calculation says that it costs about 700-800 billion yen ($7-8 billion) for all 3-5 years old children to take early childhood education for free.

- Discussion about the policy for reduction of the parental expenditure is on-going.
In Japan, about a half of expenditure on pre-primary education is supported by private sector.
Question: What financial measure is preferable to deal with the decline in the number of births?
(This is a question to the women who think financial measure is preferable.)

Mitigation of expenses on kindergarten etc. 67.7%
Exemption of medical expenses 45.8%
More child allowance 44.7%

Source: Cabinet Office, Government of Japan (2004fy)
Ongoing/next tasks

• More smooth transition from ECEC to Elementary School
• Reduction of household expenditure on ECEC
• Promotion of the Centre of ECEC
  – System reform of the Centre for ECEC
• Establishment of evaluation system on ECEC