

**Convention on the Rights of Persons
with Disabilities
(CPRD)**

**Replies to the list of issues
in relation to its initial report**

The Government of Japan

Annex 5

COVID-19 Response: Main measures concerning persons with disabilities (as of April 2021)

(1) Welfare for persons with disabilities

The various services provided by social welfare facilities, including welfare service offices for persons with disabilities, are indispensable for the continuation of the lives of service users and their families, and it is important that the necessary services are continuously provided to users on the premise of adequate infection prevention measures.

Therefore, the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (MHLW) requested local public entities to take measures to prevent COVID-19 from spreading at social welfare facilities. These measures include: considerations in the event a person is infected; appropriate management of hygiene products; and flexible arrangements for welfare services for persons with disabilities in terms of payment, personnel, proper facilities and equipment, and operational standards. MHLW also shared information with local public entities on responses after the declaration of a state of emergency.

As support for welfare service providers for persons with disabilities, MHLW provided various allowances to establishments where infected persons were identified, subsidies for additional costs such as disinfection costs and the costs of securing personnel, and benefits for staff who come into contact with service users. In addition, in order to raise the level of response to infectious diseases in the field of welfare services for persons with disabilities, MHLW formulated and disseminated a manual on infection control and business continuity guidelines.

(2) Labor

Considering the negative impacts associated with lower economic activities due to the COVID-19 pandemic on the employment of persons with disabilities, initiatives were put in place to provide necessary assistance for the stable employment of persons with disabilities. These included specialized assistance for relocation of persons with disabilities at Local Vocational Centers for Persons with Disabilities, and the provision of team support by public employment security offices to help persons with disabilities forced to leave employment to obtain a job.

In order to support employers' efforts to ensure persons with disabilities can continue in employment, special measures have been taken to ease the requirements for granting employment adjustment subsidies and to expand the content of the subsidies, Special measures have also been taken for trial employment subsidies ("trial employment" for persons with disabilities and "short trial employment" for persons with disabilities).

In order to prevent the spread of COVID-19 infections, public employment security offices publicized the fact that applications for seeking a job and to fill a job vacancy can, as far as possible, be made without coming to the office, and that occupational counselling is available by such telephone, by post, and via online tools. In addition, in order to offer continuous support, Local Vocational Rehabilitation Centers for Persons with Disabilities and Work/Life Support Centers for Persons with Disabilities have, to the greatest extent possible, been promoting measures such as providing support that does not require coming to the Centers' offices.

Regarding employment settlement support for persons with disabilities (subsidies for assistance to persons with disabilities and subsidies for workplace adaptation aides), while such subsidies previously only applied to in-person support, they have been made to also apply to online support using ICT.

In addition, the GOJ has requested trade associations to give special consideration for stabilizing employment for persons with disabilities.

(3) Education

With regard to the response to COVID-19 at each educational institution, the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture (MEXT) has been disseminating information on measures against COVID-19 to students and parents from the initial stage when infected persons began to be confirmed in Japan. Various measures were taken, such as requesting the boards of education to pay close attention to the issue of ensuring safety.

A. Primary and secondary education

On February 27, 2020, the Prime Minister announced a policy of requesting simultaneous temporary closures of elementary, junior high, and high schools, as well as special needs education schools, from the perspective of prioritizing the health and safety of children and preparing for the risk of COVID-19 caused by the daily gathering of many students and teachers for a long period of time. In response to this, on February 28, MEXT requested the school administrators to implement temporary closures until the start of the spring vacation, and many schools closed temporarily.

Since some children with disabilities attending special needs education schools among other institutions could not stay alone when parents could not take leave during this temporary closing period, the GOJ has worked to secure places for these children to stay.

In addition, in order to ensure the learning of children who are unable to attend school due to the temporary closure, the basic concept of home learning to be imposed by schools was set forth in the "Notice on the

Educational Guidance for Children who are Unable to Attend School due to the Temporary Closure for Countermeasures against the Novel Coronavirus Infections” on April 10, 2020. Furthermore, on May 7 of the same year, MEXT issued a notice entitled “Notice on the Support for Home Learning of Students with Disabilities During the Temporary Closure for Countermeasures against the Novel Coronavirus Infections,” in which it set out points to be noted regarding home learning according to disability type in order to support home learning of students with disabilities. In addition, it requested each school to actively provide support for home learning.

Although the state of emergency declaration was lifted in stages, on June 19, 2020, MEXT summarized and disseminated its basic concept for pupils/students with disabilities, which had been presented in guidelines and other documents, under the title. “Concepts and Approaches for Measures against Novel Coronavirus Infection in Special-Needs Schools.”

B. Higher education

At the higher education level, in order to both prevent the spread of COVID-19 and secure learning opportunities for students, the “Guidelines for Responding to the New Coronavirus Infections at Universities” was compiled on June 5, 2020 and disseminated to universities and other institutions concerned. In addition, in order to continue learning amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, support was provided for the development of an environment for distance education at universities and other institutions, and consideration was given to students with disabilities in the “Q&A on the Coordination of Academic Schedules and the Use of Distance Learning,” which was shared on May 22, 2020.

C. Social education

MEXT has been urging social education facilities such as community centers and libraries to be accessible to all people, regardless of disabilities. In response to the spread of COVID-19, local GOJs are urged to take thorough infection prevention measures by disseminating the infection control guidelines formulated by nationwide organizations such as community centers and libraries in May 2020, and to ensure that local residents, including those with disabilities, have opportunities to learn even when faced with the spread of COVID-19.

(4) Sports, culture and arts

A. Sports

In addition to the postponement of the 2020 Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games due to the spread of COVID-19, the 7th Special Olympics Japan Winter National Games in Hokkaido and the 54th National Athletic Meet for the Deaf in 2020 were cancelled, and the National Sports Festival for People with Disabilities has been postponed to 2023.

In light of this situation, the Japanese Para-Sports Association has formulated the “Guidelines for Preventing the Spread of COVID-19 for the Resumption of Sports Events,” which outlines the criteria for resuming various sports events and points to keep in mind to prevent the spread of the virus during the resumed events.

B. Culture and arts

In light of the COVID-19 outbreak, many cultural and artistic events, including those related to the arts for persons with disabilities, were cancelled or changed. This had a significant impact on cultural and artistic activities.

For this reason, in addition to the efforts to maintain employment by the GOJ as a whole, it has also been trying to continue cultural projects and maintain employment by all means possible. These include subsidies for sustaining businesses, subsidies for employment adjustment, special tax exemptions for donations of ticket prices for cancelled cultural and artistic events, and deferment of taxes and social insurance premiums.

In addition, the Agency for Cultural Affairs, utilized the first, second and third supplementary budgets for FY 2020, to work for the resumption, continuation and development of cultural and artistic activities through measures against COVID-19 in cultural facilities, efforts to continue the activities of cultural and artistic organizations and to strengthen their profitability, and proactive support for performances with sufficient measures against COVID-19 in place.
