

## Section 2. Promotion of Measures for Community-Based Childrearing Support

As community functions are being lost due to the progress of birth rate decline, such as the orientation toward nuclear families, and changing local communities, the burden of childrearing is increasing with a feeling of being isolated with no advisers in local communities present. Especially among females with children aged 3 or younger, 80% of such children are being cared for at home, resulting in many having feelings of being isolated and alienated.

In consideration of this, establishment of community-based childrearing support centers is being promoted in FY 2007 by having childrearing support bases in communities, Get Together Square programs and community-based childrearing support centers, reorganized with utilization of children's halls to be the forerunner for their expansion to 6,000 locations.

Aside from quantitative improvements, expanding grassroots childrearing support activities is also important to develop mutual support and learn childrearing at childrearing support bases in such communities. Based on such an understanding, the “National Federation of Get Together Squares” was established in April 2004 (NPO “National Federation of Childrearing Squares” from April 2007) as a nationwide organization involving people working for Get Together Squares. The federation has also been conducting various seminars and training.

Community-based childrearing support functions are being improved through such service programs as family support centers (community-based membership organizations comprising people who are eager to provide support and those who are eager to receive support) engaged in mutual assistance activities to meet irregular and varied day care needs due to unexpected overtime work or other reasons, short-term childrearing support services to look after children in such cases as overtime work, business trips, or sickness of their parents, and a home visitation program to support childcare by visiting families who are having difficulties with raising children shortly after childbirth or due to various reasons to provide assistance on childrearing and housework and other specific technical support.

In addition, acceptance of operating entities and placement of staff has become more flexible at temporary/emergency day care services to eliminate the psychological distress of guardians due to sickness/injuries or the burden of childrearing since FY 2007, and a pilot program of temporary day care services implemented to provide highly accessible easy to use services.

Furthermore, home visit services for infants 4 months after childbirth (Hello Babies Services) that ties families with infants and local communities together have been implemented in visiting all families with infants 4 months after childbirth to provide advice on their anxieties or worries and provide information on childrearing.