

The Support Office for Children in the Aftermath of the 2011 Japan Earthquake

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1 . What is foster care?

Foster care provides a nurturing family environment of affection and understanding for children who are difficult or cannot be raised in their own homes for whatever reason.

It is a significant system in which children are raised in a caring and loving relationship with certain adults through family life, which is very important to the sound growth of children. (Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, 2011)

1 . What is foster care?

Four types of foster parents:

- (1) nurturing foster parents
- (2) specialized foster parents
- (3) adoptive parents
- (4) kindred foster parents.

Since the Great East Japan Earthquake, many families and relatives have become kindred foster parents and nurturing foster parents. Kindred foster parents are provided with living expenses from public funds for social nursing care, and in principle their medical expenses are free of charge.

2. Children who lost one or both of their parents by the 3/11 disaster.

Table 1 Numbers of posthumous children and orphans from the earthquake disaster

| | Earthquake disaster orphans | Earthquake disaster posthumous children |
|-----------|-----------------------------|---|
| Iwate | 94 | 489 |
| Miyagi | 135 | 923 |
| Fukushima | 24 | 162 |
| Total | 253 | 1574 |

(By the hearing survey from the municipalities, September 2014)

Table 2 Who is taking care of the orphans who lost both parents?

Table2 Numbers of earthquake disaster orphans in foster care

| Caregivers | Preschool children | Elementary school children | Junior high school students | High school students and older | Total |
|--------------|--------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|-------|
| Kindred | 9 | 53 | 29 | 43 | 134 |
| Nursing home | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Total | 9 | 53 | 30 | 43 | 135 |

(Miyagi Prefecture, January 2013)

3. The support we provide

- Counseling for children on:
school, career, family, friend, etc.
- Counseling for parents on:
child development, child rearing, their
own individual concerns, etc
- Operation of parenting salon where parents gather
and talk
- Education for people who have dealings with
children
- Provision of information
- Counsellor can make a visit, if requested
- Counselling and telephone calls are free of charge

