OECD/NEA CRPPH

The 7th Asian Regional Conference on the Evolution of the System of Radiological Protection

Session 2: Life in Existing Exposure Situation
Topic 1: Remediation and Reconstruction

“To Support Children”
~From Fukushima, elementary school sites affected by the Nuclear Accident~

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Ⅰ Introduction

Ⅱ Involvement & Correspondence
   from the view of mental care

Ⅲ Towards the future

Ⅳ Conclusion
My Role

A teacher of special support education. (I have a qualification of psychologist.)

(1) I teach children with developmental disabilities.

(2) I work as a special support education coordinator in a school.

(3) I am in charge of the mental care of children and their parents as an expert in psychology.
As the impacts of the nuclear power station accident were different depending on the location, each school wondered what kind of support children needed. After the disasters, we teachers struggled with the troubles of schools and children.
Anxieties of Parents and Children After the Nuclear Power Station Accident

The Features of the Disasters which occurred in Fukushima:

- Simultaneous
- Duration
- Lack of experience
- Conjunction with earthquakes, explosion of the nuclear plant, and the Tsunami.

Anxiety of safety, due to the inability to verify the extent of damage.

Shared anxiety of parents and children.

Children and parents confronted with danger.

Wide spread panic.

Lack of commodities (Water, food, gasoline, etc.)

Property damage

Aftershock

Miscommunication

Televised images of the damage
Increased Anxieties

Anxieties:

- what was going to happen to us
- whether we could survive or not
- experiencing anxieties in waves

Anxieties against experts:

- scientific experts took no steps to ensure our safety
- lack of information and conflicting information
- unstable criteria concerning safety
- people in various fields were unsure about their responsibilities

What happens to our hometown?
When can the nature recover?
Is this food safe?

Children were involved in adult’s anxieties
Children’s Lives after the Fukushima earthquake (6 months or 1 year)

- They happen to watch or hear the reports of the nuclear and the radiation.
- They couldn’t have graduation ceremonies held.
- They weren’t allowed to open the windows.
- They had their houses destroyed by the earthquakes.
- They could only watch TV programs reporting the disaster.
- Some of their friends moved to other places.
- They moved unexpectedly to other place, Living in unfamiliar place (provisional house, hotel)
- Family were forced to live separately.
- They had to go to school apart from their hometown.
- They couldn’t play outside, do exercise outside, touch the sand and the ground, play in the nature, get in the school pool.
- They couldn’t visit their friends freely.
- They felt aftershock.
- They had their houses destroyed by the earthquakes.

Crisis
Ⅱ Involvement & Correspondence
from the view point of mental care

* against the earthquake and the nuclear accident
1. The basic policy

1) Supporting not only children but parents

2) Common understanding among teachers
   ① “mental care”
   ② “celerity” and “timely”
   ③ “for each child”
      — having a sharp eyes for detail and being together —

3) Cooperating with parents striving for “safer”
For cooperation among teachers

1) Mental attitude toward children
2) Children needing special care
3) How to pay attentions to children
4) Continual care
   (making the school system and schedule)
5) Supporting parents
6) Adaption of exchange students from the Souso area

【First Priority】
I gave priority to the current need, of learning from the past experiences of the big earthquakes that occurred in Japan. Also, considering the situation of damage and the relation to schools.

“Maintaining a positive and constructive attitude.”
1) Preparation for teachers
   Deep breathe, Relax, Be Steady
2) Approach toward transfer students
   With warm atmosphere, “You can come to us anytime.”
3) The manner of speaking to and listening to.
   Slowly, carefully
   Tell students, “Thank you for coming.”
   Caring to their health.
   Giving hope for the new school term
4) How to prepare for the annual ceremonies
   In the same as always

Teachers: “Being together”, “Getting close to” children
Children: “Feeling safe and relaxed”
2. Understanding children and Supporting them

1) Observing children (in playing, painting, and so on)

2) Observing carefully children’s health

3) Exchanging information (in the meeting and the conference)

4) The questionnaire “For Your Mind and Body” (April 19th)

5) Educational Counseling

6) Care for the children who evacuated from the Souso area
   • Assessment of their situation • Educational counseling
Educational Counseling for the transfer students from the Souso area

June 2\textsuperscript{nd} ~ June 7\textsuperscript{th}

1) For Care: Being close to them and giving them opportunities to talk

2) To soothe their feeling: Letting them express themselves by their words and receiving it

3) For Clues: Continuous Care for such students continuously
3. Educational Practice

- for children's smile

1) Giving priority to their “daily lives"
2) Enriching their studying
3) For students' growing
   ① Teachers devised education contents
      (harvesting in schoolyard, utilizing the gym and the vacant rooms)
   ② Students supported each other by interchanging each other
   ③ Teachers tried to enrich the children’s exercise and their play
4) Giving “joyful” time
   ① The Orienteering in school
   ② The Pool indoors
   ③ The support from Rock artist
   ④ The excursions by bus
4. Supporting Parents

1) Giving Handouts of “mental care”
   “For Children’s Mental Care” (Apr 8th)
   “For Children’s Mental Care 1 year after the disaster” (in the end of next February)

2) Holding Lectures on “Mental Care” for parents
   “For Children’s Mental Care” (Apr 27th)
   “The Earthquake and the Nuclear Accident & Children’s Mental Care” (Jan 22nd)

3) Holding Educational Counseling
   On demand

4) Giving Handouts informing the children’s school lives
People have been distressed

They couldn’t cry for the long period.

Many students had evacuated just after the earthquake.

Teachers had no choice but relied on the new school.

Students staying in their hometown were also confused the situation.

Many students complained about mental or physical problems, which were due to the refuge lives only during weekends or holidays.

It was hard to say for teachers what was important and priority.

Many students couldn’t play in the school yard because of the radiation affect.

Parents had to make a final decision of allowing their children to play outside or not.

Many students couldn’t enjoy their nature and even walk in the nature.

They’d lost the place to grow themselves.

There are many other people who has lost more.
Ideas of supporting children under the influence of the Nuclear Accident

Adults rose up to protect Children again and again

Children must live their lives under the long-term influence of the Nuclear Accident.
Adults must consider the fact there are possibilities for them to have the secondary disaster.

Supporting not only children but parents (Supporting both)
Connect and Cooperate in a local community
From “We can’t・・・” to “We can・・・”
Adults must try our best for getting “better”

“Create” — making something new, recognizing we are with children
We never forget their smile in playing in the school yard after decontamination 6 months after the Nuclear Accident.
Many people have come to Fukushima and supported us to share our pain.

We appreciate many people who have been trying to understand our situation and cheer on us.

The children who have come back to us from the refuge place. Some of them grew up strong and spiritually rich. We appreciate all the people who had cared for them.

Gratitude to the people who have been facing to this serious situation and trying to settle the problems.
Ⅲ Towards the future

Sharing the pain
Learning from the experience
Current Situation

Regional difference and Individual difference

The people who have evacuated
The people who have settled down in a new place
The people who have made up mind to come home.
The people who have come back to their hometown.
The people who can live their lives almost in the same way.

Each person Each thought

Children are living now.
Never Ending

We must consider the affect of regional difference and individual difference.

Children's problem depends upon what they did in those days
- basic motility
- sporting ability
- developmental balance
- parent-child relationship
They have less experience because of the accident;
We must consider the developmental possibilities that children can achieve through experience.

Adults must not leave behind their responsibilities, and they have to find a way to solve these problems.
The education that a teacher aims at

- To develop a zest for life
- To make children independent
- To make them think for themselves in class and in daily life
- To face up to difficulties for themselves
- To cooperate with other people
- To let them express what they feel by their words

Teachers can’t expect too much.
Children need to live their own lives even if they have difficulties.
To improve educational activities

Carefully, Creatively
To improve their total ability
“Studying” as an individual Knowledge and Activism

Subject Instruction
Moral Education
Safety Education
History Education
Career Education
Radiation Education
Health Education
Disaster-prevention Education
Human-rights Education
Support from a “Long-term” viewpoint

The Support System

Teachers must try to understand students’ problems and their feeling and stand by them.

Students have taken numerous courses.

Students need to be watched out for safety.

Teachers should support parents in raising their children.

Teachers should care for students’ mental health to widen their possibilities.
IV Conclusion
“Trust”

To build a relationship of trust
To get a feeling of trust
•••with time, consistency, continuity
•••it becomes possible by working together

Adults can teach children various things by an action.
Cooperation : Wisdom and Courage

1 Cooperation with the people in the community
   ~Searching for and creating resources~
   Work together with more peers
   Make the most of young people

2 Cherishing children ~Childcare and Education~

3 Make something “better”, working toward “best”. Start small around us.

4 Focus on the “language”
   Imagination, Creation, New Value
- To observe what we can see now and in the future

- There’s no right answer. ~ Exploring is important. The answers can be good only on the surface. They can be worse than we expect. We have to be patient to build up each step and to make an answer.

- Not to put things back the way they were but to create better ones.
Working Together For The Children
Responsibility of Each field

To support children is to support school. We have to consider how we can achieve this.

Ensuring a place where they feel most at home

School
Family
Community
Society

The experience of working together with other people. The experience faced with people and life events.

The courage to work together and co-operate.

Considering the communities’ present situation and the families’.

Each support makes a great one.
Imagination and Responsibility

- **Imagination**: If we put ourselves in their shoes.
  - The Fukushima Disaster has something to do in all areas of the world.

- **External assistance**
  - Continuous following
  - Two-way exchange
  - From a fresh perspective

- Continuing to share “the facts”
I expect to share knowledge and feeling and seek out new value together —“Create”—

For the children, For the future