



## Devising Specific Measures to Deal with Elementary and Junior High School Students Who Refuse to Attend School: Suggestions for Further Efforts Based on Recent Data

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### Introduction

There are numerous social issues that need to be quickly addressed in Japan [1-5]. Some of these issues concern children [6-8], and one such issue is refusal to attend school. Over the years from 1995-2006 the proportion of Japanese children who refused to attend school increased until 2001, but that proportion plateaued from 2002-2006 [9]. Recent trends in refusal to attend school need to be studied in detail, and specific measures to deal with refusal to attend school need to be devised.

### Materials and Methods

The current study examined “the number of children refusing to attend school” and “the number of children who have refused to attend school starting the previous year” out of Japanese “second graders to sixth graders in elementary school” and “seventh graders to ninth graders in junior high school” from 2013 to 2015 according to a report by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology [10]. This study used the 2 numbers of children to calculate the percentage of “children who have refused to attend school starting the previous year/children refusing to attend school”. Based on those findings, future measures that are needed to deal with refusal to attend school are discussed.

### Results and Discussion

Over the 3 years studied, “the number of children refusing to attend school” was tallied. These children consisted of 5,952 second graders, 9,097 third graders, 13,498 fourth graders, 19,753 fifth graders, 25,615

sixth graders, 71,125 seventh graders, 105,397 eighth graders, and 114,361 ninth graders. During the same period, “the number of children who have refused to attend school starting the previous year” was tallied. These children consisted of 1,871 second graders, 3,234 third graders, 5,154 fourth graders, 8,071 fifth graders, 11,781 sixth graders, 20,492 seventh graders, 54,620 eighth graders, and 75,178 ninth graders. The percentage of “children who have refused to attend school starting the previous year/children refusing to attend school” was calculated for the same period. The percentage was 31.4% for second graders, 35.6% for third graders, 38.2% for fourth graders, 40.9% for fifth graders, 46.0% for sixth graders, and 40.7% for second graders to sixth graders as a whole. Similarly, the percentage was 28.8% for seventh graders, 51.8% for eighth graders, 65.7% for ninth graders, and 51.7% for seventh graders to ninth graders as a whole. The current results revealed that “of the children refusing to attend school, about 2 in 5 of those in elementary school and about half of those in junior high school have refused to attend school starting the previous year”. The percentage of “children who have refused to attend school starting the previous year/children refusing to attend school” “has increased among both elementary and junior high school students”. In other words, measures to deal with refusal to attend school cannot be adequately devised based on data from a single year alone. Analyzing continuous data from multiple years and statistics on children who refuse to attend school for a prolonged period in detail and summarizing the results of those analyses will lead to insight into measures to deal with refusal to attend school. Such a perspective has yielded several approaches that have effectively addressed social issues in Japan, such as traffic accidents and suicide [11-13]. Moreover, “the medical establishment”, “administrative bodies”, “relevant organizations and groups”, and “the public” should consider and work together to implement measures to deal with refusal to attend school. “The medical establishment”, “administrative bodies”, and “relevant organizations and groups” should also conduct education campaigns regarding refusal to attend school.

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