


Addressing Hikikomori in Adolescence through Early Intervention: example in Japan and in France

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How do Japan and France respond to children and families when a child stops attending school, a situation often associated with adolescent social withdrawal “hikikomori”? Contrasting approaches can be observed.

Implication:

- The key difference between “pull” and “push” systems lies in whether **responsibility** for a child’s development is assumed **by the state** or **left primarily to parents and children themselves**.
- **Underlying values and interpretations** require further discussion.
e.g. interpretations of well-being and self-determination

AI consultation to identify worries 

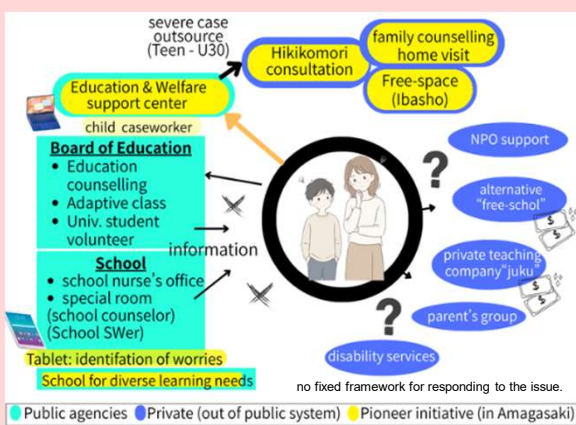


Typically suggested attitude to children at the early stage of school non-attendance



Case of 14-year-old child

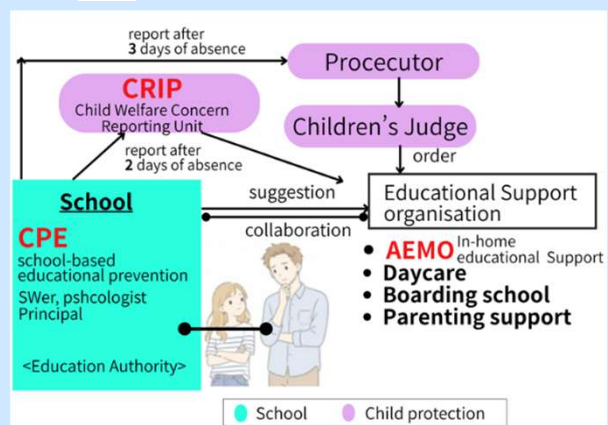
Japan: Pull-type system



Parents need to proactively seek support and submit applications. After consultation with public authorities, information on support options, mainly within the school education system, is provided and the child may be referred to alternative educational settings or support (“pull” model), where the child feels safe and accepted.

- No clear framework has been established for responding to the issue.
- School non-attendance alone does not trigger welfare intervention until additional concerns are identified (e.g., violence, social withdrawal).
- Self-determination is respected, but families are often left isolated.



France: Push-type system



School refusal and social isolation are regarded as situations of concern that may place a child’s development at risk. Schools play a central role in identifying and responding to these situations: they not only identify and address concerns, but also actively provide support to the whole family (“push” model) from an early stage.

- Clear state and public responsibility -education and vocational training
- Guaranteeing children’s rights
- Families are encouraged to access specialized preventive child protection services, which are free of charge, and to receive support for both the child and the family.

Public approach to children not-attending school (facing hikikomori situation)

Statistics and definition	Criteria for intervention	Legislation	Early intervention
 4% (6.8% age 13-15) Absences of more than 30 days : statistically categorized as school non-attendance.	Not clear	Act on Securing Education Opportunities Equivalent to Ordinary Education at the Stage of Compulsory Education (2016)	-Early identification of distress -Flexible school support -Emphasis on allowing the child time to rest and decide
 5% (middle school) Absences for more than 2 days per month without a medical certificate	Professional contact after 2-days absence (assessment, planning & support)	Article 375 of the French Civil Code	-Professional training to recognise signs of distress -Practical support and solutions at daycare centers and in-home services

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