

Distribution of Disaster Prevention Helmets to all 16 Special Needs Schools in Iwate Prefecture: What Can We Do to Protect the Lives of Even More Children?

(January 28, 2013)

The children met us with carefree smiles. While greeting us with “Hello!” in cheerful voices, they helped us with the work of unloading boxes from the truck. “Wow, it’s a helmet!” “Is this how we put it on?” There were also other children who put on the latest folding helmets and posed for pictures.



This took place on Tuesday Nov. 20 in the coastal areas of Iwate Prefecture and was blessed with fine weather. Save the Children visited three special needs schools and distributed disaster prevention helmets. The children met us with smiles and were delighted to receive these new helmets.

Save the Children distributed disaster prevention helmets to all 16 special needs schools in Iwate Prefecture. Since the earthquake, there have been repeated discussions with the principals’ association of special needs schools about what support is necessary to protect children, and the teachers of each school have also participated in and held discussions at disaster prevention training sessions and lectures. As a result, Save the Children heard their requests for support toward providing disaster prevention helmets.

While we conduct our activities we are always looking for ways to provide support to protect the lives of even more children in a wider range of situations. So we were extremely happy and honored to be able to provide support to children at the special needs schools. Below, we will share with you in photographs those we met at Miyako Keifu Special Needs School, Kamaishi Shoun Special Needs School and Kesen Koryo Special Needs School on our Nov. 20. visit.

Miyako Keifu Special Needs School



Seeing the disaster prevention helmets for OK, let's try them on!
the first time.



Taking a snap of everyone skillfully wearing their helmets. The children affix SCJ stickers to their helmets.

Kamaishi Shoun Special Needs School



The folding helmets are a little perplexing. Can the children put the helmets on skillfully?



The children look cool with their helmets on! We received a prepared note as a souvenir.
We were really moved. Thank you!

Kesen Koryo Special Needs School



The arrival of the truck with helmets.



"Hello!"



Right then, let's everyone carry the boxes!



The helmet presentation ceremony.



Working to affix stickers to all the helmets.



Working carefully.



A big smile at being able to do the work skillfully!



And, pose! Everyone looks very cool, don't they?

These three coastal schools were not damaged during the earthquake and so were used as places of shelter for children who attended special needs schools and their families. Many people found shelter there, but the problem was that at that time the special needs schools were not designated as places of shelter. Since the government had not designated them as places of shelter, there were not enough emergency supplies provided to these special needs schools. Despite the fact that these schools were not designed as disaster prevention environments, when disaster actually occurred, it was necessary for them to function as places of shelter. Accordingly, there is a necessity to fully prepare special needs schools with emergency supplies and Save the Children has been supporting these efforts.

By visiting these special needs schools, this day once again reaffirmed the importance of outfitting these locations with disaster prevention equipment. The visit demonstrated the necessity of taking action in order to prepare environments where all children, including those with disabilities, can protect their own lives together with the adults around them.