

International Network on Leave Policy and Research 9<sup>th</sup>  
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## Introduction to Leave Policies in Japan: Legislation, take-up, and their connection with fertility trends

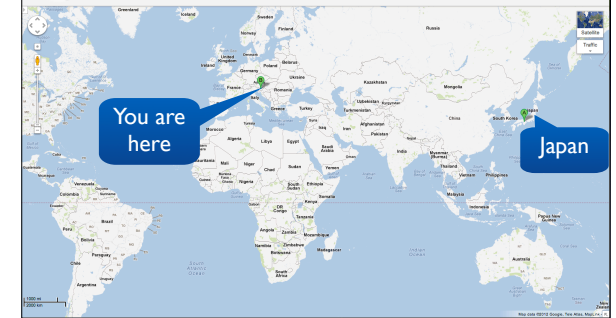
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## Japan Basics

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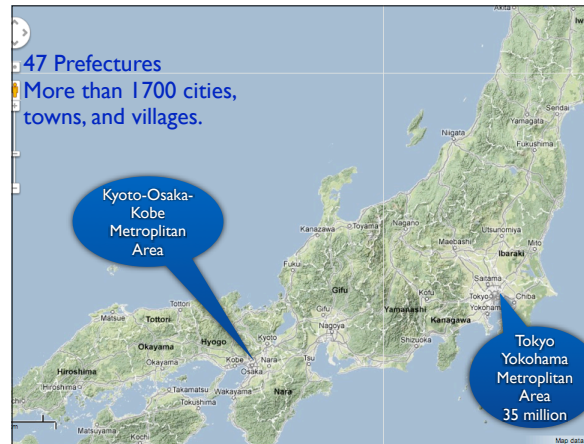
## Location



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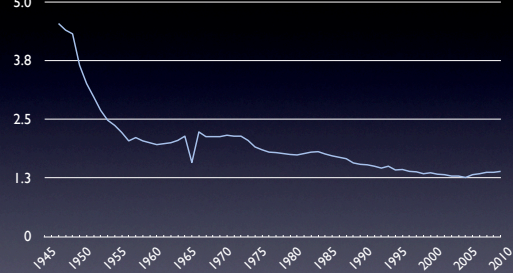


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## Fertility Trends in Japan

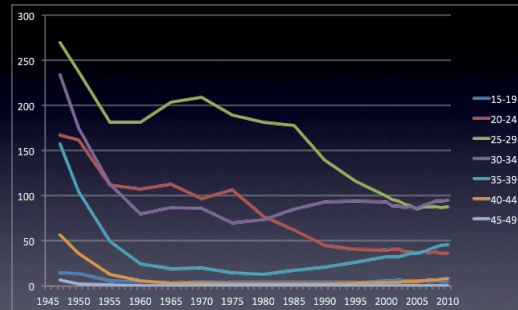
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# Total Fertility Rates



Decrease until 2005 (1.26)  
Recovery afterward (1.39 in 2011)

# Trends of Age Specific Fertility Rate



Increase for 30-34 resumed around 2005  
Decline for 25-29 stopped around 2005

# What happened around 2005?

Implementation and amendments of Parental Leave scheme and related policy change

## Background public concerns

- gender inequality
- declining fertility
- (mental) health problem (from long working hours etc.)

1992 (a grace period until 1995 for companies with 30 or less regular employees)

## Statutory parental leave

- Length of the leave was 1 year
- No leave benefit

# 1995

## Leave benefits

25% of the wage of a worker before he/she starts the leave

# 2001

Benefit rate raised from 25% to 40%

Still declining fertility

## 2003

### Act on Advancement of Measures to Support Raising Next-Generation Children

Private companies as well as national and local governments are obliged to establish action plans. (2005-2009 and 2010-2014) .

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### Recommended topics for the action plan (1)

Implementation of paternity leave (“leave for childbearing of spouse”)

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### Recommended topics for the action plan (2)

Encouraging fathers to take parental leave

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### Recommended topics for the action plan (3)

Establishing work environment to enable workers to harmonise work and life.

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### Recommended topics for the action plan (4)

Target setting (eg. Leave take-up rates by gender)

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### “Kurumin “ Certification



Certificate that the plan and achievement of a company meets certain conditions.

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### Conditions for “Kurumin “ Certification

- At least one male employee who took parental leave.
- Take-up rate for female employee  $\geq 70\%$

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### Number of certified Companies

920 companies (Jun 2010)  
--> 1121 companies (July 2011)

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### Example of usage of the certification mark

**Acquiring “Kurumin” Certification (Japan)**



In February 2011, Hitachi, Ltd. acquired certification under the Act on Advancement of Measures to Support Raising Next-Generation Children, also known as “Kurumin” certification. This is granted to companies that create action plans for child care support in line with the act and meet the performance requirements.

**TOPICS: Family Day (Japan)**

One workplace-specific event during WLB Month was a family day; it was also held at Hitachi, Ltd. headquarters in December 2010. Employees' families were invited to the headquarters office on a holiday to see the place where their family members work, to learn about Hitachi's history and to eat in the



CSR report on a company website

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Increasing consciousness about work/life issues and support for working parents at workplaces



Workshop at a private company on harmonising work and life

## Other changes in parental leave scheme

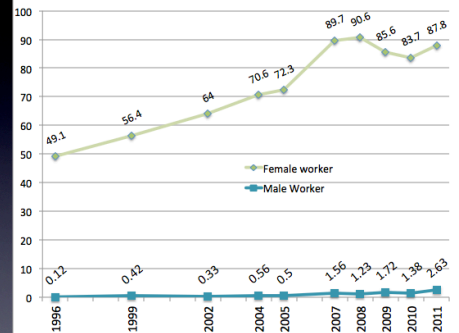
# 2007

Making the leave to be an individual entitlement  
 -> Fathers can take leave and get the benefit even when their partner is on leave or not in labour force.

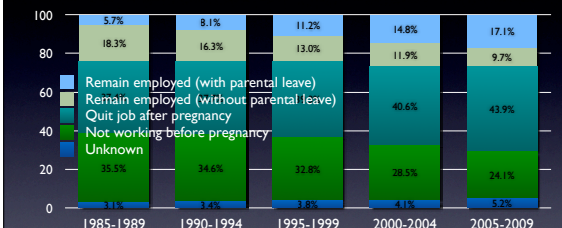
## 2007(cont.)

Leave benefit rates increase  
 -> 50 % of wage before leave  
 All paid during the leave

Change in parental leave take-up rate  
 (Basic Survey of Gender Equality in Employment Management)



Mothers' labour force participation by year of the birth of a first child  
 (The National Fertility Survey)



Still many women quit job when pregnant or after the birth of a child, but we need to note the meaning of steady increase of leave mother remain employed with parental leave.

Female workers who want to continue career can be getting less hesitant to have children.

## Other changes

Increased use of shortened working hours

## Summary

Improved support system including paid parental leave encourages full-time female worker to give birth.

Still large proportion of women who quit job in relation to birth.

For fathers -- still much to improve, but increasing concern about father's involvement in childrearing and slight increase in the leave take-up.

It is important to recognise what we have achieved at this point as well as examining what needs to be done.