

Improving Support for Child-Rearing

Fukui Prefecture



Background

According to a 2014 Fukui prefectural survey about needs related to marriage and child-rearing, the number of children couples would have if they planned on having children was 2, 1 lower than the number of children they ideally wanted to have if they could. More than 70% of couples planning to have only two children cited high child-rearing costs as the reason.

According to the 2010 national population census, women's employment rate and the double income rate in Fukui Prefecture were the highest of all prefectures in the country, at 50.9% and 56.8%, respectively. The data underscore the need for projects that will support both child-rearing and women's employment.

According to Fukui Prefecture's basic employment survey in 2013, only 1.7% of male employees took child care leave. It is necessary to create an environment in which all family members, including fathers and grandparents can take part in rearing children.

Purpose of Project

To create a prefecture where young men and women can get married, have children, and raise them with peace of mind.

Outline of Project

<Basic Policies>

◆To turn Fukui into a prefecture of "abundant meeting opportunities," including opportunities for unmarried men and women to meet each other, and for parents to have babies.

◆To make Fukui a prefecture with the highest level of happiness in child-rearing in Japan by enabling all family members to take part in the process, and encouraging local businesses, private-sector groups, residents and communities to support them.

Under the above-mentioned basic policies, Fukui Prefecture undertakes measures to address the declining birth-rate and aging population with the four-pillar aim of: improving marriage support, further helping working parents raise children, enhancing regional child care assistance, and improving economic assistance for child-rearing.

Major Projects

◆New Fukui 3-Kid-Family Promotion Project

In order to lessen the financial burden on families raising three or more children, child care fees charged by nursery centres and fees for temporary care and sick child-nursing services have been reduced to zero for households with at least 3 children aged under 18. This benefit continues until the youngest child turns 3 years old (from FY2006).

In fiscal 2015, the scope of the zero-fee programme was expanded to preschool-age children. Specifically, nursing services became free for the third-born and all subsequent children at preschool ages, including kindergarten pupils.

◆Incentives for Companies to Promote Infant Care Leave

If an employee of a company takes child care

leave until the child turns one year old, and there had been no such employee in the past three years, 200,000 yen will be granted to the company.

◆Fukui Childbirth/Child-Rearing Benefit

If an employee gives birth to another child while utilising a shorter work-hour programme and takes child care leave until the baby turns one year old, the employee will receive the difference between child care leave compensation for full-time and shorter-hour workers.

◆Incentives to Promote Childcare Leave by Fathers and Grandparents

If an employee (a father or a grandparent) takes at least 10 days off for child-rearing, 100,000 yen will be given to the company.

Features and Advanced Aspects

The New Fukui 3-Kid-Family Promotion Project, the first of its kind in Japan, started in fiscal 2006 and has been expanded since fiscal 2015 to lead the country's efforts to reverse the declining birth-rate.

Various financial incentives enable comprehensive, fine-tuned support for child-rearing families at different stages in life and working in diversified ways. Individuals can take leave to raise children at home until the children turn 1 year old or work shorter hours to take care of 1 – 2-year-old children.

Effects of Project

- ◆The total fertility rate
1.50 (2005) → 1.60 (2013)
- ◆The birth-rate for the third-born or subsequent children
15.4% (2005) → 18.0 % (2013)
- ◆The proportion of households with three or more children to the total child-rearing households with family heads aged 35-39
23.6 % (2013) → 30% (2019) *target achieved*

- ◆The proportion of men taking child care leave
1.7% (2013) → 5% (2019) *target achieved*

- ◆Men's time spent on child care per day
45 min (2013) → 60 min (2019)
target achieved

- ◆The proportion of those who take child care leave until children turn one year old will rise.

Problems and Responses

◆Before Project Implementation

In the New Fukui 3-Kid-Family Promotion Project, coordination work is necessary to establish collaborative ties between the prefecture and municipalities.

◆After Start of Project

As the projects started in fiscal 2015, it is necessary to implement the projects steadily and assess their progress.

Outlook

Effects of the projects will be studied and publicised to help create an environment in which child-rearing is encouraged.

Reference URL

<http://www.pref.fukui.lg.jp/doc/kodomo/threechildren/sanninko-project.html> *Japanese

<http://www.pref.fukui.lg.jp/kenko/child/cat1303/index.html> *Japanese

<http://angelnet.pref.fukui.lg.jp/> *Japanese

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Measures to Support Child Rearing by Working Parents in Fukui Prefecture

Support for child-rearing at home in consideration of various working styles

- Taking childcare leave until children turn one year old
- Rearing children while working shorter hours under companies' support schemes for rearing children aged one to 2 years old

Birth of the first child
(Maternity leave)

Return to workplace

Birth of the second child
(Maternity leave)

Return to workplace



Until children turn one year old

Leave for rearing the first child



Affectionate child-rearing at home

For companies with up to 100 employees

Incentives for encouraging employees to take infant care leave
(from fiscal 2013)

- * Providing 200,000 yen in incentive to each employee taking child care leave until the child turns 1 year old

For all companies

Incentives to promote child care leave by fathers and grandparents (from fiscal 2015)

- * Payment of 100,000 yen per person to employees taking 10-day leave to rear children as fathers and grandparents



Six months or longer

Shorter work hours for child-rearing

Example: Cutting work hours from 8 to 6

Working vigorously during the daytime



Going to nursery centers to pick up children early in the evening



Until children turn one year old

Affectionate child-rearing at home

Eligible guardians

Fukui Childbirth and Child-Rearing Benefits (from fiscal 2015)

- * Adding up to 300,000 yen to benefits for those who work shorter hours for 6 or more months and take child care leave until their children turn 1 year old

Publicising companies' measures to support employees in rearing children while working

Model companies for child-rearing
(from fiscal 2011)

- * Certifying companies that boast high birth-rates among employees and measures to help employees raise children

Companies encouraging child-rearing by fathers
(from fiscal 2005)

- * Registration of companies making efforts to create a work environment in which fathers are encouraged to participate in child-rearing

Encouraging 3 generations to live together or close-by

Providing housing assistance so that family members up to 3 generations can live together or close-by (from fiscal 2013)

- * Providing financial assistance for housing refurbishment to allow 3 generations to live under one roof or housing acquisition to allow 3 generations to live close-by