

Make It Easier for Men to Actually Help Do Childcare

男性の育児休業取得率が初めて4割を超えました。大きな前進ですが、女性との差はまだ大きく、課題は残っています。背景には法改正や社会の意識の変化がありますが、給付の仕組みが整っても実際には短期間しか取れない人が多いのが現状です。家族や職場のために、育休制度はどうあるべきでしょうか？あなたの意見を講師と話し合ってみましょう。



1. Article

Read the following article aloud.

The Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare's FY2024 Basic Survey on Equal Employment Opportunities shows that the rate of men taking childcare [leave](#) has risen to 40.5%.

The rate has risen sharply in recent years. From just 17.13% in 2022, it jumped to 30.1% in 2023. Finally, in 2024, it exceeded 40% for the first time.

This is certainly a welcome trend. However, there is still a huge gender gap, as 86.6% of women workers take childcare leave. For men, the government has set a 50% target in 2025, and an 85% target for 2030.

It is important to create an environment where both men and women can balance work and childcare. Therefore, we would welcome more Japanese men taking childcare leave.

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Source: Make It Easier for Men to Actually Help Do Childcare
[JAPAN Forward](#)

1. Article

"Single parenting," where the burden of child-rearing falls on women, is a likely contributing factor to maternal isolation and postpartum depression. It has also been identified as hindering women's advancement in society and efforts to grow their family income. One consequence is that fewer women desire to have children.

There is, therefore, great significance in men taking childcare leave.

There are several reasons why more men have been taking parental leave in recent years. First is the amended Act on Childcare Leave and Caregiver Leave. It requires employers to confirm the intention of employees who have applied for leave due to pregnancy or childbirth, whether for themselves or their spouses.

One of the main reasons why men hesitate to take leave is to avoid a decrease in income. However, the government has expanded childcare leave benefits from April 2025. Now, if both spouses take 14 or more days of childcare leave, the benefits will be increased to the same level as their take-home pay prior to the leave, up to a maximum of 28 days. Hopefully, couples will make effective use of this new system.

Nonetheless, it is not right if individuals take childcare leave without doing much actual childcare. Insufficient leave is another problem.

According to a survey conducted by the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare, 70% of men want to take parental leave of "more than one month." But, in FY2023, nearly 60% of men who actually took parental leave took it for less than one month.

Meanwhile, over 90% of women take more than six months of leave. The atmosphere in Japanese workplaces is probably still such that it is harder for men to take childcare leave than women.

There are other issues as well. The rate for men taking parental leave who work at small- and medium-sized businesses is low. By size of the firm, the rate for businesses with more than 500 employees was 53.8%, while it was only 25.1% at companies that had five to 29 employees. Smaller enterprises are likely facing labor shortages and finding it difficult to secure replacement staff.

We urge companies to improve the efficiency of their operations and constantly review how work tasks are allocated. For the sake of crisis management, it is also important to make sure that someone else can fill in for an employee who normally handles a specific task if the need arises.

2. Key phrases and vocabulary

First repeat after your tutor and then read aloud by yourself.

1. **leave** 休暇、休業

Kevin is on leave from work for the next two weeks.

2. **burden** (精神的・肉体的な) 負担

Kara and James take turns sharing the burden of the housework.

3. **child rearing** 子育て、育児

Child rearing takes a great deal of time, energy, thought, and money.

4. **postpartum depression** 産後うつ

Denise suffered from postpartum depression right after she had her first child.

5. **hesitate** ためらう、躊躇する

Please do not hesitate to call me if you need help.

3. Questions

Read the questions aloud and answer them.

1. What is the difference in the number of women and men taking childcare leave?
2. How have childcare leave benefits for men improved recently?
3. What reasons does the writer give for the low number of men taking childcare leave?
4. Currently, men can receive a maximum of one month paid leave if both spouses take time off. Do you think this is enough?
5. What can companies do to make sure they have enough labor if men need to take time off for childcare leave?

4. 男性育休4割超え 機運をもっと醸成したい

男性の育児休業取得率が40.5%となり、初めて4割を超えた。厚生労働省の令和6年度雇用均等基本調査で分かった。

4年度は17.13%、5年度は30.1%と、ここ数年で取得率は急上昇している。

望ましいことだが、女性の取得率は86.6%で、男女で開きがある。政府は男性の取得率を7年に50%、12年に85%にする目標を掲げる。男性の取得をもっと進めたい。男女ともに仕事と育児が両立できる環境を整えることは重要だ。

子育ての負担が女性に集中する「ワンオペ育児」は、母親の孤立や産後うつを招く要因とされる。女性の社会進出と収入増を妨げ、出産意欲を低下させるとの指摘もある。男性が育休を取得する意義は大きい。

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男性の取得率が伸びている要因には、育児・介護休業法の改正で、本人や配偶者の妊娠・出産を申し出た従業員に対し取得の意向を確認することを、事業主に義務付けたことなどが挙げられる。

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出典：男性育休4割超え 機運をもっと醸成したい
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4. 男性育休4割超え 機運をもっと醸成したい

政府は今年4月から、育児休業中の給付を拡充した。夫婦ともに育休を14日以上取得した場合、28日間を上限に、育休前の手取り収入と同じ水準にかさ上げされる。男性が取得をためらう大きな理由の一つに収入減がある。こうした制度を有効に活用したい。

もっとも育休を取ってもほとんど育児をしない「取るだけ育休」はだめだ。取得期間があまりにも短いのも問題である。

厚労省の意識調査では、男性の7割が「1カ月以上」の育休取得を希望しているが、5年度の実績では実際に育休を取った男性の6割近くが「1カ月未満」だった。女性は9割以上が6カ月以上取得している。女性に比べて、男性が育休を取りにくい職場の雰囲気はまだあるのだろう。

課題はほかにもある。中小の事業所では男性の取得率が低いことだ。規模別でみると、500人以上の事業所は53.8%なのに対し、5～29人は25.1%だった。中小は人手不足で、代替要員を確保するのが難しいという事情はあろう。

業務の効率化を進めるとともに、分業の在り方を絶えず見直してほしい。一つの業務を特定の個人ではなく、別の人も対応できるようにしておくことは、危機管理上も重要である。



出典：男性育休4割超え 機運をもっと醸成したい
[JAPAN Forward](#)