

Dramatic increase in paternity leave among S. Korean dads ^[1]

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EXCERPTS

The number of fathers taking paternity leave is increasing rapidly.

According to the Ministry of Employment and Labor on Sunday, in the first half year, of the total 53,494 cases of parental leave in the private sector, 20.7 percent, or 11,080 cases were paternity leave.

The number of men taking paternity leave jumped 30.9 percent from the same period last year. If this trend continues, the number of men on paternity leave will exceed 20,000 this year, the ministry predicted.

The increase is attributed to the spread of the “double-income family” culture as well as “co-parenting” and the increased income replacement rate of childcare leave pay, easing the burden of falling income.

In fact, the ministry raised the first three months of parental leave payment to 60 percent from 40 percent of ordinary wages in 2017, and raised the payment after the first three months to 50 percent from 40 percent of ordinary wages from this year.

The “Daddy’s Child Care Leave Bonus System,” introduced in 2014, also contributed to promoting paternity leave.

The system offers a second parental leave payment at 100 percent of normal wages if both parents use their leave for their child.

In the first half of this year, the number of people using a bonus system for paternity leave jumped 56.2 percent from the same period last year.

This is due to the fact that the monthly ceiling of the father’s maternity leave bonus system, which used to be 2 million won (US\$1,688), has been raised to 2.5 million won starting this year.

Of the male paternity leave in the first half of this year, 6,285 people belonged to workplaces with more than 300 employees, accounting for 56.7 percent of the total.

In other words, male paternity leave is still being used mainly in large companies.

However, the number of workers taking paternity leave rose slightly from 40.8 percent in the same period last year in workplaces with fewer than 300 employees.

The ministry also expects a gradual boost of male paternity leave at small and medium-sized companies.

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