

# Babies and bosses: Reconciling work and family life (Volume 2): Austria, Ireland and Japan <sup>[1]</sup>

**Author:** OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development)

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## AVAILABILITY

- Press release <sup>[2]</sup>

- Report in pdf (for browsing only) <sup>[3]</sup>

## Excerpts from press release

As in most OECD countries, women in these three countries increasingly want work and careers. Much has been done to help parents, particularly of young children. However, birth rates continue to decline, raising the possibility of future labour shortages. More needs to be done to increase employment while ensuring that children get the care they need.

In Japan, for instance, the study says that a looming labour shortage would never materialize if females joined the labour force in the same numbers as their male counterparts. However, some aspects of government policy and employer practices currently discourage women from working after they have children. Changes are needed in Japan's labour market to provide them with the flexible hours, attractive jobs, decent wages and career prospects needed to entice them back into employment.

Government rules for health insurance and pensions, as well as companies' benefits for spouses, discourage women from earning more than a modest amount. As a result, mothers who return to work often end up in jobs that are below their capabilities.

Austria's commitment to the welfare of children is evident in the country's high level of public spending on family benefits and low incidence of child poverty. Compared to other OECD countries, Austria gives significantly more support to families where one parent is occupied full-time with child rearing. This makes it financially feasible for one parent to choose not to work - even for a period of years. As a result, many mothers are absent from regular work for long periods and find it difficult later to resume their careers. If they decide to return to work when their children are young, a shortage of affordable childcare often forces them into low-paying, part-time jobs with few opportunities for advancement.

Ireland has a similar shortage of affordable childcare. Children of working mothers in Ireland have traditionally been looked after by family or friends. But as increasing numbers of women take jobs, the supply of casual babysitters has declined. In future, working Irish mothers will be far more dependent on formal childcare. To increase work opportunities for mothers, additional public investment in childcare will be needed -- especially for low-income families

## FURTHER READING

Babies and bosses: Reconciling work and family life (Volume 1) <sup>[4]</sup>

**SOURCE** Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

**Region:** Asia <sup>[5]</sup>

Europe <sup>[6]</sup>

**Tags:** poverty <sup>[7]</sup>

affordability <sup>[8]</sup>

funding <sup>[9]</sup>

accessibility <sup>[10]</sup>

international organizations <sup>[11]</sup>

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## Links

[1] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/research-policy-practice/03/11/babies-and-bosses-reconciling-work-and-family-life-volume-2> <sup>[2]</sup>

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<http://www.oecd.org/scripts/publications/bookshop/redirect.asp?pub=812002111P1> <sup>[5]</sup> <https://childcarecanada.org/category/region/asia> <sup>[6]</sup>

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