

# Govt hopes 13% of men will take child care leave <sup>[1]</sup>

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**Source:** The Japan News

**Format:** Article

**Publication Date:** 21 Mar 2015

## AVAILABILITY

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## EXCERPTS

The government has compiled a new outline of five-year policy guidelines to address the nation's chronically low birthrate, a move aimed at encouraging men's participation in child-rearing.

The new outline, which was approved during a Cabinet meeting Friday, calls for raising the rate of men taking child care leave to 13 percent in fiscal 2020. The figure posted in fiscal 2013 was 2 percent.

Businesses will be urged to establish internal systems for granting childcare leave. If a firm fails to allow workers to take such leave, guidance will be issued through the local offices of the Health, Labor and Welfare Ministry.

The outline sets a target of having 80 percent of men take childcare leave sometime after their spouses give birth. It also calls for raising the rate of women who work before and after delivering their first child to 55 percent, up from 38 percent in 2010.

Statistics show that Japanese men spend one hour and seven minutes a day on child-rearing and household chores, less than half of the three hours of German men or the two hours and 58 minutes spent by their U.S. counterparts. The outline calls for increasing Japan's figure to the same level as that of France, which recorded two hours and 30 minutes.

To improve the environment for child-rearing, the guidelines aim to boost the overall number of infants receiving temporary care at such facilities as day care centers to 11.34 million in 2020 compared with 4.06 million recorded in fiscal 2013.

To assist two working parents families with children of primary school age, the outline sets forth a policy of having 300,000 more such students join extracurricular clubs, enabling anyone who wishes to participate to do so.

To achieve these targets, the outline has defined the next five years as a period for intensive efforts. This is the second time that the outline has been revised since it was mapped out in 2004.

**Region:** Asia <sup>[3]</sup>

**Tags:** paternal leave <sup>[4]</sup>

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