

Annual Report on the Declining Birthrate 2020 (Summary)

July 2020
Cabinet Office

This document is based on the provisions of Article 9 of the Basic Act for Measures to Cope with Society with Declining Birthrate (Act No. 133 of 2003), and it is intended to make a report on the general situation of the declining birthrate and an overview of the measures taken to address the declining birthrate.

This report is submitted to the Diet each year in line with the Basic Act for Measures to Cope with Society with Declining Birthrate. This is the 17th edition.

The Basic Act for Measures to Cope with Society with Declining Birthrate (Act No. 133 of 2003)

Article 9 The government must submit to the Diet each year a report concerning the state of the declining birthrate and an outline of measures it has taken to deal with the declining birthrate.

Part 1 Current Status of Countermeasures against the Declining Birthrate

Chapter 1 Current Status of the Declining Birthrate

1. Trends and projections of Japan's total population and demographic structure
2. Trends in the number of live births and birthrate
3. Trends in marriage and childbirth
4. Attitudes towards marriage
5. Attitudes towards childbirth and childrearing
6. Encouragement of participation by men in housework and childcare (**Special Topic**)
7. Prefectural comparison

Chapter 2 Efforts to Deal with the Declining Birthrate

Section 1 Past efforts

Section 2 Formulation of a new Outline of Measures for a Society with a Declining Birthrate – Declining birthrate measures appropriate to the Reiwa era (**Special Topic**)

Part 2 Implementation Status of Countermeasures against the Declining Birthrate

Chapter 1 Key Challenges

Section 1 Further enhancement of child care support measures.

Section 2 Development of an environment in which hopes for marriage and childbirth can be realized

Section 3 Creating an environment in which it is easier to have three children

Section 4 Promotion of work style reform for men and women

Section 5 Strengthening of initiatives tailored to actual regional circumstances

Chapter 2 Promotion of Precise Measures against the Declining Birthrate

Section 1 Support for each different stage of marriage, pregnancy, childbirth and childrearing

Section 2 Promotion of measures against the declining birthrate through actions by society as a whole

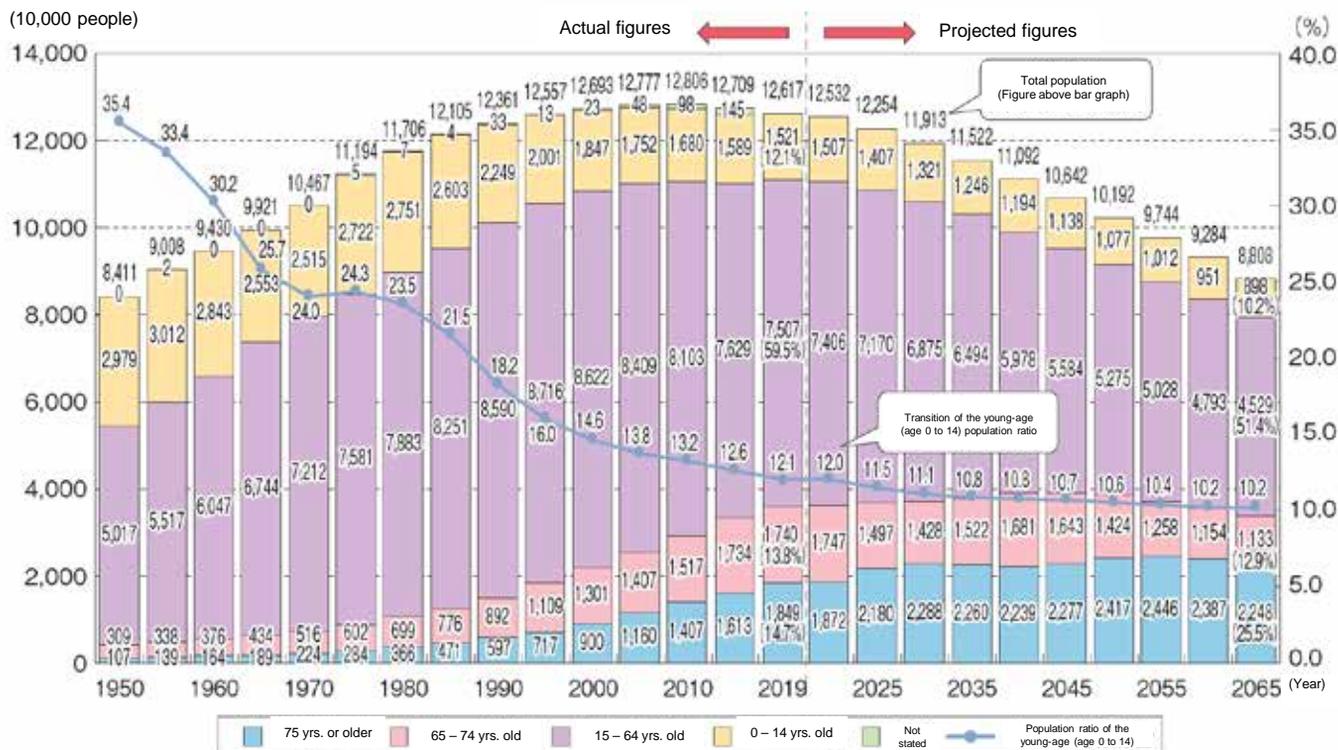
Topics

- Countermeasures against the declining birthrate in France
- Support programs for the daily life of newly-weds
- Useful baby-tech for childrearing
- Countermeasures against the declining birthrate through the “regional approach” and the “regional evaluation tools for countermeasures against the declining birthrate”
- Family Day Forum
- Utilization of the older generations: Diversification of childrearing providers

Part 1 Current Status of Countermeasures against the Declining Birthrate

Chapter 1 Current Status of the Declining Birthrate

- Japan's total population was 126.17 mil. as of 2019.
- The young-age (age 0 to 14), working-age (age 15 to 64), and those aged 65 or older populations are 15.21 mil., 75.07 mil. and 35.89 mil., respectively, being equivalent to 12.1%, 59.5%, and 28.4% of the total population.



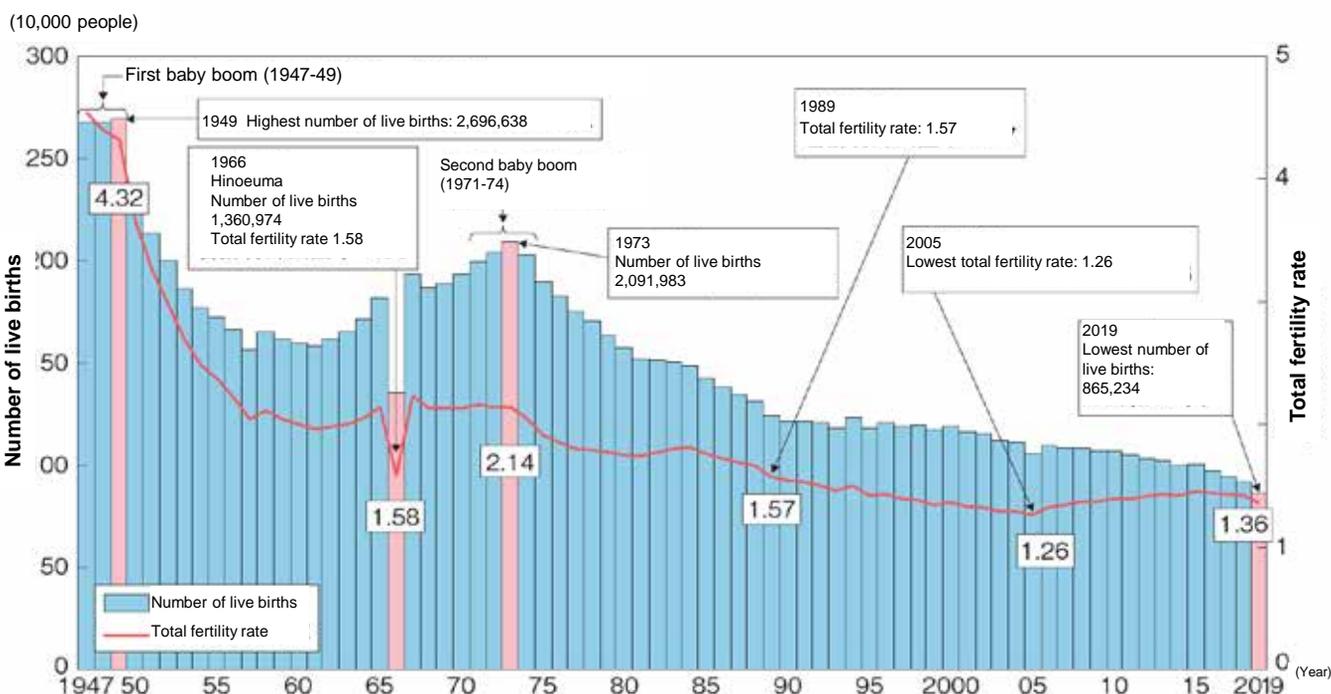
Source: The results are based on MIC's Population Census up to 2015; as for 2019, MIC's "Population Estimates" (Final estimates as of October 1, 2019); and as for 2020 onward, National Institute of Population and Social Security Research, "Population Projections for Japan (the 2017 estimate) for the medium-fertility and medium-mortality projections.

Note: Percentages are rounded to the nearest second decimal place and shown to the first decimal place. As a result the totals of breakdowns may not add up to exactly 100% in some cases.

- The number of live births in 2019, which was 865,234, was the lowest on record (the "860,000 shock").

Note: This figure lies within the range of the future medium-fertility projection (904,342 people) and low-fertility projection (821,121 people) for the total population estimate.

- The total fertility rate in 2019 was 1.36, which was down by 0.06 percentage points compared to the previous year.

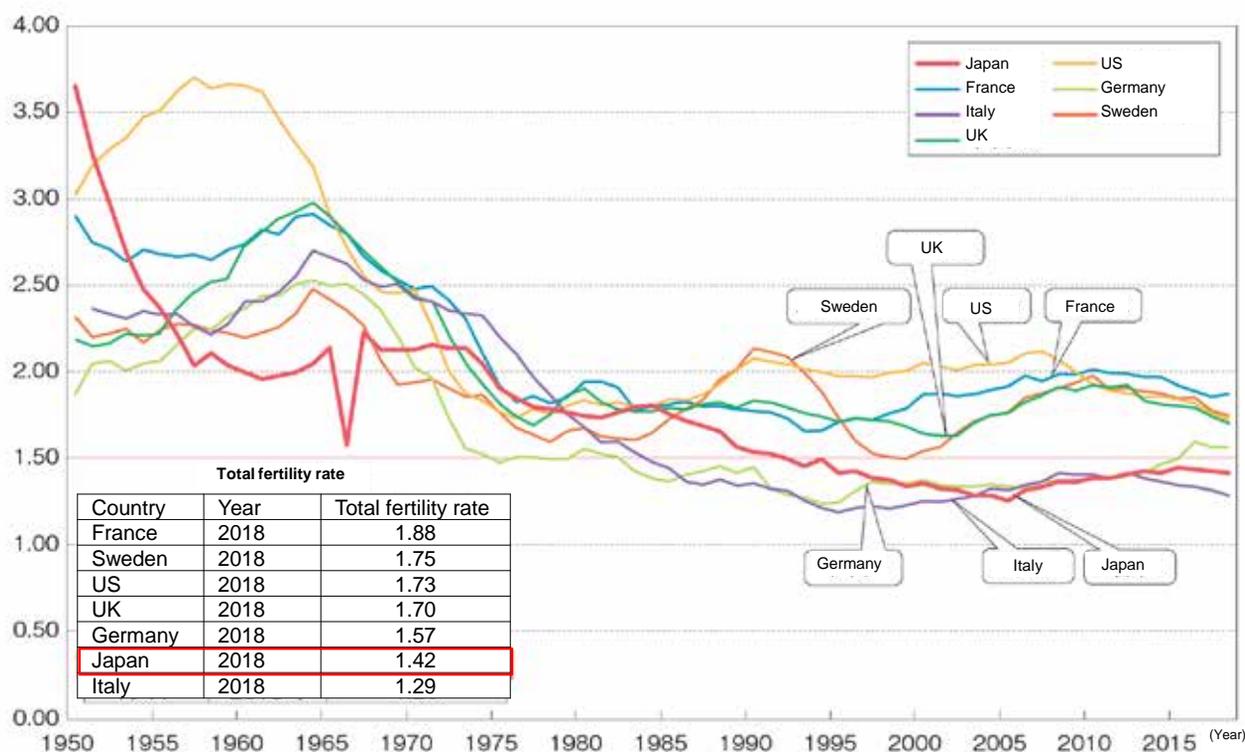


Source: "Vital Statistics," by the MHLW

Part 1 Current Status of Countermeasures against the Declining Birthrate

Chapter 1 Current Status of the Declining Birthrate

- The total fertility rate in some countries (France, Sweden, the US, the UK, Germany and Italy) declined from 1970 to around 1980 as a whole. In some countries, however, the rate recovered since around 1990. However, in those countries too, the fertility rate started to decline once more from around 2010.

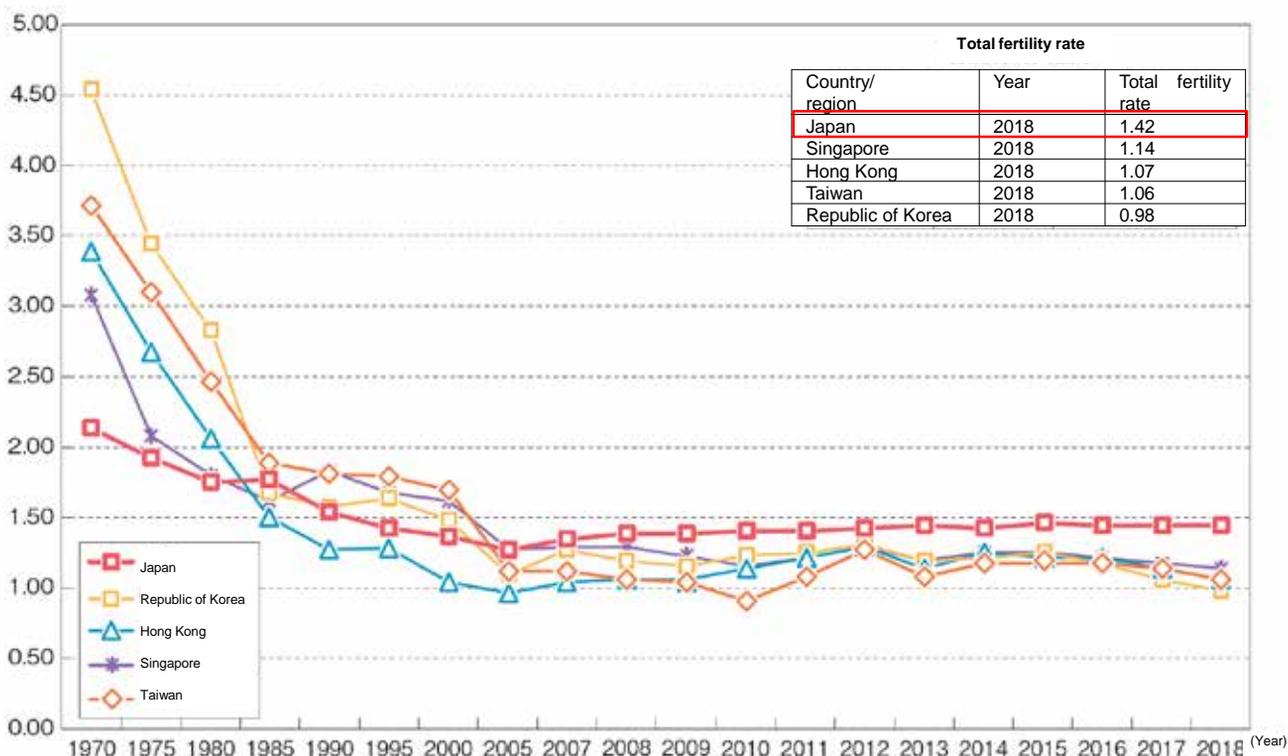


Source: The numbers regarding countries other than Japan were from sources including "Demographic Yearbook" by United Nations for the years up to 1959, OECD Family database for the years between 1960 and 2017, and the statistics in each country for the year 2018. The numbers regarding Japan are based on "Vital Statistics" by the MHLW.

Note: The figures for the rate in France in 2018 are provisional.

Note: In 2019 the rates were: 1.87 in France (provisional), 1.70 in Sweden and 1.71 in the US.

- Looking at the transition of the total fertility rate in Singapore, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Republic of Korea, among the countries and regions in Asia, all maintained a level higher than Japan as of the year 1970. However, they have shown a declining trend, and today the total fertility rate in these countries and regions falls below the replacement-level fertility rate.



Source: The numbers are cited from statistics in each country and city. As for Japan the numbers are based on "Vital Statistics" by the MHLW.

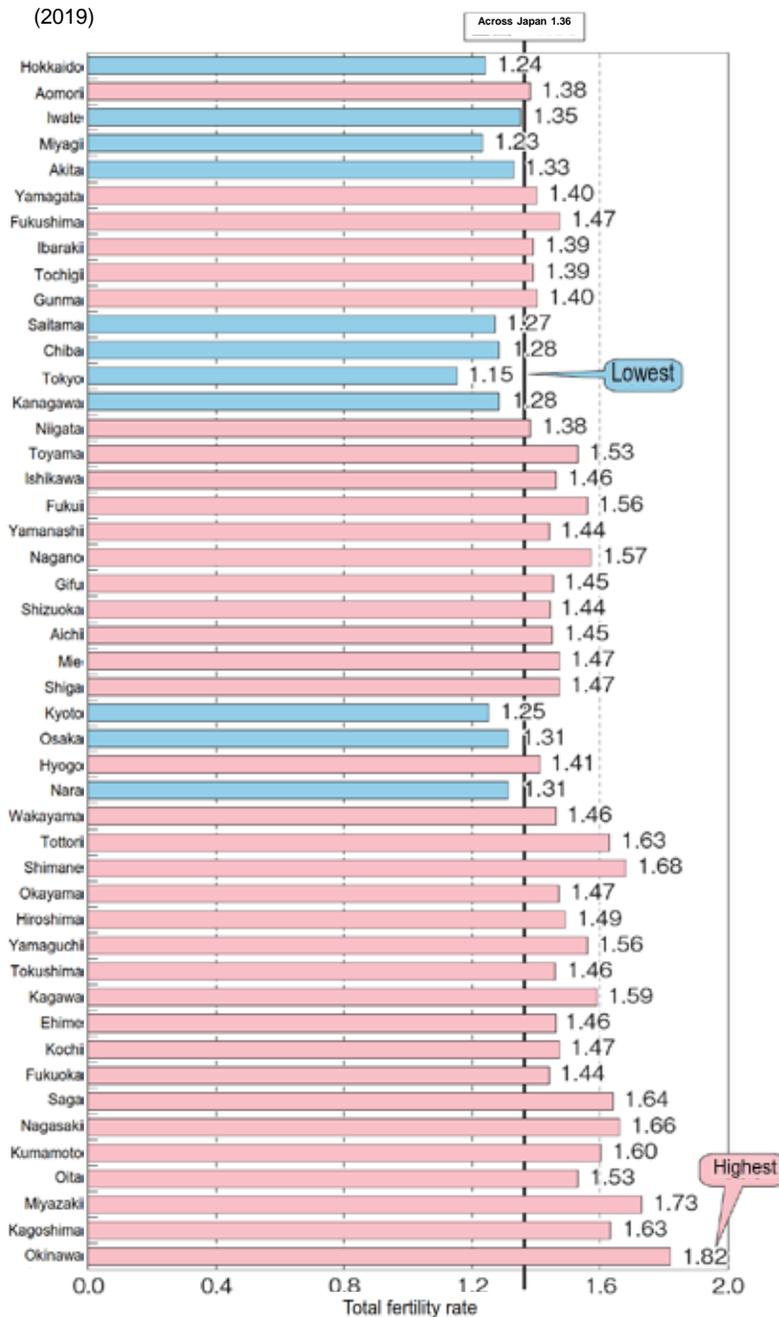
Note: The figures for Taiwan in 1970 are 1971's, for 1975 they are 1976's and for 1980 they are 1981's.

Note: The rates for 2019 were 1.14 in Singapore, 1.05 in Hong Kong (provisional) and 0.92 in Republic of Korea (provisional).

Part 1 Current Status of Countermeasures against the Declining Birthrate

Chapter 1 Current Status of the Declining Birthrate

- The total fertility rate of Japan was 1.36 in 2019. Among the 47 prefectures, 36 prefectures exceeded this rate. Okinawa had the highest total fertility rate (1.82), followed by Miyazaki (1.73). The lowest was Tokyo (1.15), followed by Miyagi (1.23).



Prefecture	2019 (Approximately) (a)	2018 (Final)	2005 (Final) (b)	Change (a)-(b)
Hokkaido	1.24	1.27	1.15	0.09
Aomori	1.38	1.43	1.29	0.09
Iwate	1.35	1.41	1.41	▲ 0.06
Miyagi	1.23	1.30	1.24	▲ 0.01
Akita	1.33	1.33	1.34	▲ 0.01
Yamagata	1.40	1.48	1.45	▲ 0.05
Fukushima	1.47	1.53	1.49	▲ 0.02
Ibaraki	1.39	1.44	1.32	0.07
Tochigi	1.39	1.44	1.40	▲ 0.01
Gunma	1.40	1.47	1.39	0.01
Saitama	1.27	1.34	1.22	0.05
Chiba	1.28	1.34	1.22	0.06
Tokyo	1.15	1.20	1.00	0.15
Kanagawa	1.28	1.33	1.19	0.09
Niigata	1.38	1.41	1.34	0.04
Toyama	1.53	1.52	1.37	0.16
Ishikawa	1.46	1.54	1.35	0.11
Fukui	1.56	1.67	1.50	0.06
Yamanashi	1.44	1.53	1.38	0.06
Nagano	1.57	1.57	1.46	0.11
Gifu	1.45	1.52	1.37	0.08
Shizuoka	1.44	1.50	1.39	0.05
Aichi	1.45	1.54	1.34	0.11
Mie	1.47	1.54	1.36	0.11
Shiga	1.47	1.55	1.39	0.08
Kyoto	1.25	1.29	1.18	0.07
Osaka	1.31	1.35	1.21	0.10
Hyogo	1.41	1.44	1.25	0.16
Nara	1.31	1.37	1.19	0.12
Wakayama	1.46	1.48	1.32	0.14
Tottori	1.63	1.61	1.47	0.16
Shimane	1.68	1.74	1.50	0.18
Okayama	1.47	1.53	1.37	0.10
Hiroshima	1.49	1.55	1.34	0.15
Yamaguchi	1.56	1.54	1.38	0.18
Tokushima	1.46	1.52	1.26	0.20
Kagawa	1.59	1.61	1.43	0.16
Ehime	1.46	1.55	1.35	0.11
Kochi	1.47	1.48	1.32	0.15
Fukuoka	1.44	1.49	1.26	0.18
Saga	1.64	1.64	1.48	0.16
Nagasaki	1.66	1.68	1.45	0.21
Kumamoto	1.60	1.69	1.46	0.14
Oita	1.53	1.59	1.40	0.13
Miyazaki	1.73	1.72	1.48	0.25
Kagoshima	1.63	1.70	1.49	0.14
Okinawa	1.82	1.89	1.72	0.10
Across Japan	1.36	1.42	1.26	0.10

Source: "Vital Statistics," by the MHLW

Part 1 Current Status of Countermeasures against the Declining Birthrate

Special Topic: Formulation of a new Outline of Measures for a Society with a Declining Birthrate – Declining birthrate measures appropriate to the Reiwa era

The evermore serious declining birthrate

- The number of live births in Japan in 2019 dipped below the 900,000 mark, resulting in a situation that deserves to be called the “860,000 shock.” The total fertility rate declined by 0.06 compared to the previous year to 1.36. While the critical progression of the declining birthrate becomes starkly apparent, this increasingly serious problem is having a massive impact on the social economy and will continue to be a common problem for the whole of the Japanese public even after the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) is finally overcome. Tackling this difficulty head-on and transforming society into one in which children and families are well-treated is an urgent mission.

Main measures in the new Outline

- In the background to the declining birthrate are the advance of the nuclear family and diversification of the environment surrounding families, and the entanglement of many factors preventing the realization of individuals’ wishes regarding marriage, childbirth and childrearing.
- In order to serve as a basic policy for tackling these sorts of declining birthrate problems, the Cabinet decided the new Outline of Measures for a Society with a Declining Birthrate on May 29, 2020. The new Outline cites a basic target of achieving “a desired birthrate of 1.8.” As specific directions it cites marriage support, support for pregnancy and childbirth, the preparation of an environment in which both men and women can balance work and childrearing, childrearing support through local communities and society, financial support including assistance for households with many children, and seeks to boldly address comprehensive measures against the declining birthrate corresponding to different life stages. The following are the specific measures incorporated in the Outline.
 - Marriage support**
...Support for further initiatives in the comprehensive support of marriage conducted by local authorities
 - Support for pregnancy and childbirth**
...Subsidies for infertility treatment costs will be implemented, an examination will be made of providing wide insurance coverage for medical treatment that is clearly effective in treating the complaints in question, and support enriched.
 - Preparation of an environment in which both men and women can balance work and childrearing**
... Having taken measures to encourage men to take childcare leave, a comprehensive examination will be conducted regarding childcare leave benefits, including their improvement and the ideal manner of effective childcare leave systems.
 - Childrearing support through local communities and society**
... The preparation of an environment which, regardless of whether parents are working or not, responds to diverse needs, in which all childrearing families have access to the requisite support, and childrearing can be pursued with safety and peace of mind.
 - Financial support including assistance for households with many children**
... With regard to child allowance, in tandem with specific ways to secure fiscal resources, an examination will be made of how to make effective payments corresponding to number of children and income level.
- Furthermore, COVID-19 has once more laid bare the importance of environmental improvements so that children can be born and raised with peace of mind, and initiatives will be pursued while bearing in mind responses during times of emergency, and anticipating the changes expected in the social economy and the public’s lifestyles after COVID-19 has receded
- Initiatives will be pursued to rapidly make a reality of the measures in line with the new Outline, and forcefully unblock the bottleneck obstructing the realization of the wishes for marriage, childbirth and childrearing of individuals.

Points of the Outline of Measures for a Society with Declining Birthrate

- The new Outline of Measures for a Society with Declining Birthrate were decided by the Cabinet on May 29, 2020.
- The Outline cites the basic target of achieving “a desired birthrate of 1.8,” and aims to show specific directions to reach this target.

Background

- The round number of births in Japan in 2019 was 865,234, the lowest on record (the “860,000 shock”).
- The progression of the declining birthrate, which causes population decline and the further aging of society, has massive impact on the social economy and is a common problem for the whole of the Japanese public.
- There is a need for initiatives that forcefully unblock the bottleneck obstructing the realization of the wishes for marriage, childbirth and child-rearing of individuals, which lie in the background to the declining birthrate.

Main measures

- Bold pursuit of comprehensive measures against the declining birthrate that respond to each life stage to achieve “a desired birthrate of 1.8.”**

<p>Reasons for not marrying The most commonly cited reasons for not marrying are “There’s no one I want to marry” and “I’m not ready to get married.”</p>	<p>Reasons for not having the desired number of children (total: one child) 34.0% responded “I want children but can’t have them,” and 81.2% that “I don’t want to give birth because I’m too old.”</p>	<p>Preparation of birth of second or further child according to time spent on housework or child-rearing When the total on average time on housework or childcare is 10.0%, when the total on average is 15 minutes or less 12.1%</p>	<p>Reasons for not having the desired number of children (at least three children) “Because child-rearing and education will cost too much” was cited by 59.0% of respondents</p>	
<p>Marriage support</p> <p>Support for further initiatives in the comprehensive support of marriage conducted by local authorities.</p> <p>Reduction of the financial burdens of starting up new lifestyles upon marriage.</p>	<p>Support for pregnancy and childbirth</p> <p><Infertility treatment> Subsidies for infertility treatment costs will be implemented, an examination will be made of providing wide insurance coverage for medical treatment that is clearly effective in treating the complaints in question, and support enriched.</p> <p><Seamless support> Improvement etc. of post-natal care programs</p>	<p>Work and child-rearing balance</p> <p><Encouragement of participation by men in housework and child-rearing> Promotion of comprehensive initiatives towards a target of use of childcare leave by 30% of men.</p> <p><Childcare leave benefits> Based on the state of progress of the above and from a mid-to-long-term perspective, a comprehensive examination of the ideal manner of effective systems, including their improvement.</p> <p><Reducing the number of children on waiting lists> Securing places for child day care.</p>	<p>Child-rearing support through local communities and society</p> <p>The preparation of an environment which, regardless of whether parents are working or not, responds to diverse needs, in which all child-rearing families have access to the requisite support, and child-rearing can be pursued with safety and peace of mind.</p>	<p>Financial support</p> <p><Child allowance> The examination of how to make effective payments corresponding to number of children and income level, in tandem with specific measures to secure fiscal resources.</p> <p><Support for the completion of higher education> The examination of improving systems with greater consideration paid to households with large numbers of children.</p> <p><Provision of free preschool education and child day care> Steady implementation of making these service free of charge since October last year.</p>

- With regard to the securing of the stable fiscal resources essential in order to push ahead with even firmer declining childbirth countermeasures, wide examinations will be made that encompass the manner of bearing costs throughout society as a whole, while simultaneously earning the understanding of all strata of the Japanese public.

Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)

- The COVID-19 pandemic has once more laid bare the importance of environmental improvements so that children can be born and raised with peace of mind.
- While bearing in mind responses during times of emergency, and anticipating the changes expected in the social economy and the public’s lifestyles after COVID-19 has receded, comprehensive countermeasures to the declining birthrate will be pursued.

Special Topic: Encouragement of participation by men in housework and childcare

1. Current situation regarding men taking leave from work for childcare

(1) Childcare leave (from the results of the 2018 Basic Survey of Gender Equality in Employment Management by the MHLW)

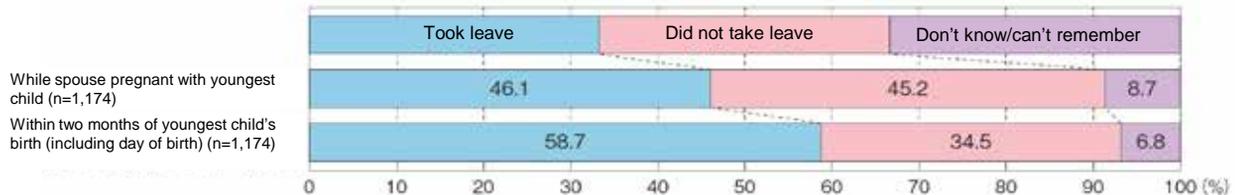
The rate of men taking childcare leave was 6.16% (2018; rate of women was 82.2%).

The most commonly cited duration of days taken off was “less than five days” (36.3%) and those taking less than two weeks off accounted for over 70%.

(2) Men taking childcare leave immediately after spouse has given birth (from the results of the Survey of Men Taking Leave for Childcare (Cabinet Office, 2019).

1) State of taking leave between spouse’s pregnancy and within two months of childbirth

The percentage of men taking leave (annual paid holiday, special leave related to spouse’s childbirth etc., or childcare leave) of half a day or one day or more within two months after their spouse’s childbirth was 58.7%.



2) Characteristics of the workplaces of fathers taking leave

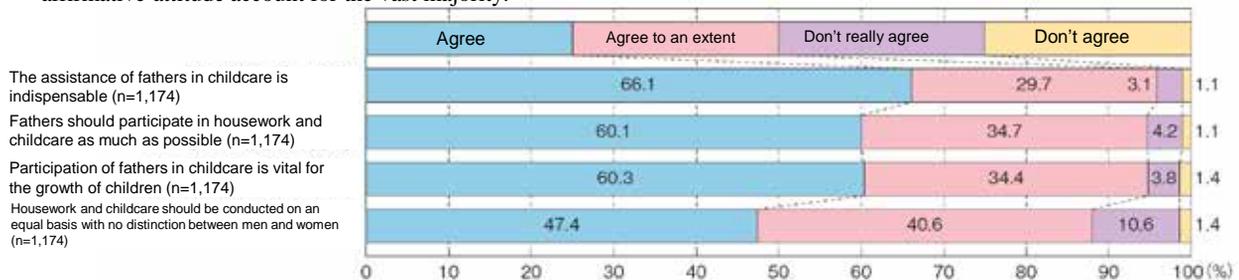
The percentage of those taking leave within two month of the birth of their youngest child is high, 66.4% among those working at large companies with a personnel of “300 or more people,” and 66.5% at “governmental offices etc.,” but low (42.0%) at small companies with a personnel of “less than 30 people,” showing that there is a large disparity according to the number of employees where people work. In addition, “place of work where it is easy to take leave” was the most cited matter in order to encourage the taking of leave, suggesting the importance of workplace environment preparations.

3) Characteristics of families in which the father takes leave

Communication between spouses is an important factor, with 43.5% of fathers responding that the catalyst for taking leave was “everyday conversation with spouse,” and 32.8% responding “request from spouse.”

4) Fathers’ awareness of participation in housework and childcare

With regard to the awareness of men regarding participation in housework and childcare prior to birth, the number of those with an affirmative attitude account for the vast majority.



2. Recent activities of the government

(1) Encouragement of participation in childcare by men

The government is pursuing examinations regarding measures to attain a target in which 30% of males take childcare leave.

From a perspective of gaining the joint participation of men and women in childcare the Outline of Measures for a Society with a Declining Birthrate points out a direction for the comprehensive promotion of the taking leave for childcare and participation in childcare. Specifically, the government will make widely-known and publicize childcare leave systems that take the opportunity of the procedures from pregnancy to birth, prepare an environment in which it is easy to take time off for childcare, the consideration of a framework encouraging men to take leave during the period immediately after their spouse gives birth, and through the collection and horizontal development of positive case studies encourage the hosting of childbirth classes for parents.

Furthermore, with regard to national public service employees, from the perspective of properly securing time for male employees to participate in childcare and linking this is with nationwide efforts to raise the rate of taking childcare leave in the private sector as well, the government is aiming to enable all male employees to whom children are born to take leave from work due to childcare lasting a period of approximately one month or more in total, and enthusiastically pursue initiatives to reform attitudes throughout the workplace, encourage the taking of leave, and ensure the operation of business during taking leave.

(2) Engendering social opportunities that favorable to childrearing

1) Initiatives of the Childrearing Support Consortium

With the participation of KEIDANREN (Japan Business Federation), The Japan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (JCCI) and KEIZAI DOYUKAI (Japan Association of Corporate Executives), progressive corporate examples regarding childcare leave for men etc. will be introduced.

2) Wide-scale promotion of the Sankyu Papa Project

A major promotion campaign of the project is underway, with the creation of the “Really? Sankyu Papa” video, and the ceremony to appoint as the PR “ambassador” Yoshihisa Kobayashi, formerly host of a popular NHK children’s program.



From the video “Really? Sankyu Papa.”

Detailing in main the measures taken in FY2019 regarding the specific state of implementation of measures relating to the declining birthrate in line with the framework of the Outline of Measures for a Society with Declining Birthrate (decided by the Cabinet on March 20, 2015).

Chapter 1 Key Challenges

Section 1 Further enhancement of child care support measures

1. Smooth implementation of the children and childrearing system
2. Reducing the number of children on waiting lists
3. Breaking “the barrier of elementary-school first-grade children”

Section 2 Development of environment in which hope for marriage and childbirth can be realized

1. Stable economic basis
(Stable employment of young people) (Promotion of economic support for the young generation by the older generation) (Mitigation of financial burdens of young and low-income people)
2. Support for marriage
(Governmental support for local governments and the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, which provides marriage support)

Section 3 Creating an environment in which it is easier to have three children

1. Mitigating burdens in various aspects of households with many children

Section 4 Promotion of work style reform for men and women

1. Reforming men’s attitudes and behavior
(Correction of long working hours) (Review personnel evaluation systems etc., and reform the attitudes of business directors and managerial staff) (Promotion of men taking childcare leave immediately after their spouse giving birth)
2. Work-life balance and women’s advancement in the workplace
(Improving the environment toward work-life balance) (Promotion of female participation and advancement)

Section 5 Strengthening of initiatives tailored to actual regional circumstances

1. Support for regional measures by taking advantage of their strengths
2. Promotion of initiatives in tandem with regional revitalization

Chapter 2 Promotion of Precise Measures against the Declining Birthrate

Section 1 Support for each different stage of marriage, pregnancy, childbirth and childrearing

1. Marriage
2. Pregnancy and childbirth
(Construction of seamless support systems from pregnancy to childrearing) (Prevention of harassment over pregnancy and childbirth etc.) (Mitigation of the financial burden of pregnancy and childbirth, improvement of consultation support) (Securing and improving medical care in perinatal period etc.) (Support for infertility treatment etc.) (Measures to promote healthy bodies and prevent the infection of mothers)
3. Childrearing
(Mitigation of the financial burden of childrearing and reduction of the financial burden of education) (Support for various people who help raise children and grandchildren) (Improvement of a house where children grow healthily and safely) (Enhancement of the healthcare system for children) (Children’s sound growth) (Popularization and encouragement of food education, and promotion of various experience activities) (Improvement of communities’ safety) (Support for single parent families) (Prevention of child abuse and enhancement of social care) (Efforts to support children with disabilities) (Support for children and young people including those not in education, employment or training, or suffering from social withdrawal (“hikikomori”))
4. Child poverty
5. Education

Section 2 Promotion of measures against the declining birthrate through actions by society as a whole

1. Creation of a society friendly to marriage, pregnancy, children and childrearing
(Popularization and diffusion of maternity badges and baby buggy signs) (Awarding exemplary cases and providing information) (Improvement of facilities and environment to make it easier for pregnant women, mothers and children to go outdoors) (Preferential services for persons with children)
2. Corporate initiatives
(Improving the visibility of corporate countermeasures against the low birthrate society and support for balance) (Providing to incentives regarding corporate initiatives to counter the declining birthrate)

Countermeasures against the declining birthrate in France

An introduction is provided to the outlines of the exchanges of opinion and nursery school visit made by Seiichi Eto, Minister of State for Measures for Declining Birthrate, when he visited France in order to research child and childrearing support measures leading to the maintenance of birth rates

Talks with Christelle Dubos, Secretary of State for the Minister of Solidarity and Health



Factor analyses on declining birthrates conducted by local governments, their use of results

An introduction is provided to case studies regarding the utilization in declining birthrate countermeasures by prefectures and municipalities of the results of factor analyses that have focused on differences in total fertility rates among various municipalities in certain prefectures, namely Shizuoka, Okayama, Nagasaki and Hiroshima.

Support programs for the daily life of newly-weds

With regard to programs to assist the daily life of newly-weds in which partial funding is provided to support local governments offering financial assistance for the “start-up” living costs incurred by newly-wed households, an introduction is provided to the PR initiatives taken by the city of Kobe, Nyuzen Town in Toyama Prefecture, and Yubari City in Hokkaido.

Useful baby-tech for childrearing

An introduction is provided to the presentations given by the Childrearing Support Consortium about baby-tech, which has started to become popular in Japan too over recent years, and some products that will lead to effort-saving during childrearing.

A few of the baby-tech products introduced



Countermeasures against the declining birthrate through the “regional approach” and the “regional evaluation tools for countermeasures against the declining birthrate”

An introduction is provided to the use of “regional evaluation tools for countermeasures against the declining birthrate” for examining these countermeasures in a cross-cutting manner through the visualization of regional characteristics according to factors such as childrearing support systems and male/female working patterns. These efforts are one of the declining birthrate countermeasures through the “regional approach” conducted by the Cabinet Secretariat’s Headquarters for Overcoming Population Decline and Vitalizing Local Economy in Japan.

Family Day Forum

An introduction is provided to the Family Day Forum jointly held with Akita Prefecture in November 2019, and the scenes at the award ceremony for a competition held about the importance of families and communities.

During the Family Day Forum



Utilization of the older generations: diversification of childrearing providers

An introduction is provided to the initiatives to make it easier to participate in local childcare support, looking towards the diversification of childrearing providers, housework and childcare provided at home by older generations.

- (1) Contributions to community-building centering on childcare support that makes the most of experience gained when working
- (2) Initiatives to improve the capabilities of men after retirement