



政府統計

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Seventeenth Japanese National Fertility Survey: Summary of Results

The National Institute of Population and Social Security Research has compiled the results of the Seventeenth Japanese National Fertility Survey (JNFS) conducted in June 2025 (based on data collected as of June 30, 2025). The JNFS is conducted periodically to examine marriage and childbearing patterns in Japan to understand population trends and provide basic data for developing policies. It consists of a survey of unmarried men and women and a survey of married women.

Survey Subjects

The survey was conducted in June 2025 (based on data collected as of June 30, 2025). Survey subjects were unmarried individuals age 18-54 and married couples with wives (who served as respondents) younger than 55. All subjects resided in 1,000 survey districts randomly selected nationwide from those surveyed in the 2025 Comprehensive Survey of Living Conditions, conducted by the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare.

Sample Size

Unmarried individuals:

- 15,811 surveys distributed
- 6,756 total valid responses (42.7% valid response rate)

Married couples:

- 10,489 surveys distributed
- 5,024 total valid responses (47.9% valid response rate)

Valid Responses by Survey Method

Unmarried individuals:

- 6,756 total valid responses (100%)
- 1,206 paper surveys collected in-person (17.9%)
- 1,726 paper surveys collected by mail (25.5%)
- 1,475 online surveys (via computer) collected (21.8%)
- 2,349 online surveys (via smartphone) collected (34.8%)

Married couples:

- 5,024 valid responses (100%)
- 544 paper surveys collected in-person (10.8%)
- 1,195 paper surveys collected by mail (23.8%)
- 1,148 online surveys (via computer) collected (22.9%)
- 2,137 online surveys (via smartphone) collected (42.5%)

Description of Survey Subjects

Unmarried individuals include never-married men and women age 18-34, and never-married, divorced, or widowed men and women age 35-49. Married couple surveys sampled wives, or both members of couples, in first-marriage unions with wives younger than 50. Data on behavioral history, including duration of marriage, covers first-marriage unions for both spouses where wives married before age 50 and were younger than 55 at the time of the survey. It also covers couples where either spouse remarried, and wives were younger than 50.

Key Findings

● Survey of Unmarried Individuals: Attitudes Toward Marriage and Childbearing

- For the first time, the proportion of unmarried individuals age 18-34 who “intend to eventually marry” fell below 80% (men: 75.1% vs. 81.4% previously; women: 77.8% vs. 84.3% previously). The percentage of respondents stating they “do not intend to ever marry” exceeded 20% for the first time, reaching 24.0% for men (17.3% previously) and 21.5% for women (previously 14.6%). See Figure 1-1, p. 25.
- The proportion of respondents who view marriage as advantageous declined from the 60% to 50% range for men, and from the 70% to 60% range for women. While perceived benefits such as “having children and a family,” “emotional peace of mind,” and “financial stability” decreased, those agreeing with the benefit of “living with someone I love” increased. See Figures 1-5 and 1-6, pp. 29 and 30.
- Among the reasons for remaining single despite an intention to marry, there was a slight increase for “wanting to enjoy hobbies and leisure activities” among those age 24 and under. Among those age 25 and older, “not finding a suitable partner” was the most common reason given, though it declined from the previous survey. However, the number of people who do not intend to ever marry increased during this period. See Figures 1-10 and 1-9, pp. 34 and 33.
- Among unmarried individuals who “do not intend to ever marry,” 40% of men and just under 50% of women indicated there was a possibility, or a potential possibility, that their stance might change to “intend to eventually marry” in the future. Reasons cited include meeting a desirable partner or experiencing an increase in income or savings. See Figures 1-11 and 1-12 pp. 35 and 36.
- The percentage of respondents with a romantic partner decreased slightly for men (19.6%) and remained flat for women (27.8%). There was a significant increase in respondents who met partners online, including through dating apps (men: 19.8% vs. 11.9% previously; women: 23.0% vs. 17.9% previously). One in

three unmarried individuals do not want to be in a relationship. See Figures 2-1, 2-4, and 2-2, pp. 37, 40, and 38.

- The most common response for both men and women regarding the ideal female life course was “a balance of work and child-rearing,” which was chosen by nearly 40% of respondents. See Figure 3-1, pp. 44 and 45.
- More than half of men (55.6%; previously 48.2%) cited the partner’s financial stability when considering marriage partner criteria. See Figure 3-3, p. 47.
- Among unmarried individuals who “intend to eventually marry,” the number of desired children continues to decline (men: 1.64, previously 1.83; women: 1.70, previously 1.79). When including those who “do not intend to ever marry,” the desired number of children for all unmarried individuals was 1.30 for men (previously 1.56) and 1.36 for women (previously 1.56). See Figures 3-4 and 3-6, pp. 48 and 50.
- “Having children makes life enjoyable and is emotionally enriching” was most common reason cited for desiring children, though it declined from the previous survey (men: 41.9%, previously 46.8%; women: 45.1%, previously 50.9%). See Figure 3-7, p. 51.
- Regarding unmarried individual lifestyles, there was an increase in those who feel they “have little money to buy things [they] want” and those who “do not feel lonely living alone.” See Figure 4-1, p. 52.
- Experience interacting with infants and young children is declining. Those with less experience tend to show a lower interest in marriage and desire fewer children. See Figures 11-1, 11-2, and 11-3, pp. 122, 123, and 124.
- Regarding views on marriage and family, support declined for the view that “one should have children after marriage,” while support increased for the view that “sacrifice is natural in marriage.” See Figures 12-1 and 12-2, pp. 127 and 128.

● Survey of Married Couples: Marriage, Childbearing, and Parenting Conditions

- Married couples who met at work or through friends decreased, while couples who met online, including through dating apps, now account for 20% of the total (20.2%; previously 11.0%). See Figure 5-3, p. 59.
- For couples married 15-19 years, the average number of children born was 1.86 (previously 1.90), with approximately 10% having no children at all. One in three couples had fewer children than originally planned at the time of marriage. See Figures 6-1, 6-2, and 7-5, pp. 61, 62, and 82.
- As an indicator of completed fertility, the number of children born to couples with wives age 45-49 remained unchanged from the previous survey at 1.81. See Figures 6-3 and 6-4, pp. 63 and 64.
- Parity progression ratios reveal that the recent decline in the number of children born to married couples is due to a decrease in couples with one child who go on to have a second. See Figure 6-5, p. 65.
- For couples, the ideal number of children was 2.18 (previously 2.25), and the planned number was 1.95 (previously 2.01), marking the first time the latter has fallen below the threshold of two children. See Figures 7-1 and 7-3, pp. 78 and 80.
- Selected by about 70% of respondents, “having children makes life enjoyable and is emotionally enriching” was the most common reason cited for desiring children. The second most common reason, “wanting to have a child with someone I love,” continued to increase from the previous survey. Reasons such as “marriage and raising children are natural” and “children stabilize the marital relationship,” which declined in the previous survey, recovered slightly this time. See Figure 7-6, p. 83.

- There was an increase in respondents citing “the cost of raising children” and “the psychological and physical burden of child-rearing” as reasons for not having the ideal number of children. See Figure 7-7, p. 84.
- The proportion of couples who have undergone infertility testing or treatment remained unchanged at 22.8% (1 in 4.4 couples). Among couples married for less than five years, 6.9% were undergoing infertility testing or treatment at the time of the survey. See Figure 8-6, p. 92.
- The proportion of continued employment around when their first child reached age one rose to 80.5% for wives who gave birth between 2020 and 2024 (up from 69.9% for the 2015-2019 period). Among wives who remained employed, 82.4% utilized the childcare leave system (compared to 79.7% five years prior), with an increase in the percentage of those who used it for first- and second-born children. For children born in 2020 or later, the proportion of husbands involved in daily child-rearing exceeded 50%. See Figures 9-4, 6-14, and 9-9, pp. 96, 74, and 101.

Among unmarried men and women age 18 to 34, the percentage stating they intend to eventually marry fell below 80% for the first time, reflecting a growing trend of viewing marriage as not having advantages. Put differently, the proportion of unmarried individuals who “do not intend to ever marry” has reached 1 in 4 for men, and 1 in 5 for women. However, about 40% of unmarried men and slightly less than half of unmarried women who “do not intend to ever marry” could change to “intend to eventually marry” depending on the likelihood of finding a partner or their own economic circumstances.

The proportion of unmarried men and women who do not wish to have children even if they do marry has climbed to 1 in 6. Consequently, the average number of desired children is declining. While the most common reason cited for wanting children is that “having children makes life enjoyable and is emotionally enriching,” the selection rate for this reason dropped, as did the view that “one should have children after marriage.”

An increasing number of unmarried men and women feel they would not be lonely living alone, and more people lack experiences interacting with infants

or young children. As the number of children in families and local communities declines, opportunities to interact with infants and young children appear to be decreasing.

Rates of dating experience remain low, with over 1 in 3 men and women stating they do not wish to date the opposite sex. Meanwhile, dating trends are shifting, as meeting a partner via apps or other online platforms now accounts for around 20% of relationships, ranking second only to “meeting at school.” For both genders, the most common ideal lifestyle is one where women balance work and childrearing. Support for traditional gender roles, in which men shoulder economic responsibilities and women handle child-rearing, is fading.

Desire for marriage among the older unmarried demographic of age 35-49 is declining along with that of the younger population. However, among those age 35-49 who are divorced or widowed, the proportion who are currently dating is higher than among those who have never been married. While divorced or widowed men show a stronger desire for marriage than never-married men, divorced or widowed women show a weaker desire than never-married women. Divorced or widowed women, like couples in first-time marriages, are increasingly likely to have one child or no children at all.

Among couples entering their first marriages in the 2020s, the proportion who met via dating apps or online reached 20%, doubling since the previous survey. In addition to meeting at work or school or through friends, online channels are becoming a primary way for people to meet their spouses.

For couples married 15-19 years, the average number of children born was 1.86, which was a slight decline from the previous survey, with approximately 10% having no children. In examining the prospects for having additional children, the transition from first to second childbirth remains sluggish, suggesting the existence of a “second child barrier.” One in three couples failed to have the number of children originally planned, and this figure rises to nearly 50% among couples with wives 30 or older at the time of first marriage. A significant number of couples are unable to realize the life plan envisioned for themselves.

Like unmarried individuals, married couples are also showing a decline in the desire to have children, as evidenced by a drop in the ideal number of

children. There has also been an increase in the proportion of couples planning to have only one child. The perceived financial, psychological, and physical burdens associated with child-rearing remain significant. At the same time, child-rearing trends are shifting dramatically. Among employed wives, 80% continued working when their first child reached age one. Rates of childcare leave among both parents have risen, and over 50% of husbands were involved in daily child-rearing for children born between 2020 and 2022. With the rise of dual-income and dual-caregiving couples, there is an increase in the use of childcare leave for raising first- and second-born children.