

How the percentage of mothers who continue to work after having their first child has increased since 2010 in Japan?

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Despite the stagnation up to 2009, the rate of mothers continuing to work after their first birth has been rapidly increasing in Japan since 2010. This paper describes how this sudden increase occurred, focusing particularly on employment status and educational background with using the data set from the 12th to the latest 16th Japanese National Fertility Survey.

While from 1985–1989 to 1995–1999, mother's job continuity after their first childbirth changed very little, from 1995–1999 to 2005–2009, there was a slight increase. The reason for this slight increase is that, while the number of people with university degrees or higher who continued to work as full-time employees after having children increased, the number of people with high school degrees who continued to work as full-time employees decreased, and the number of people who continued to work as non-regular employees increased. In other words, the difference in educational background widened during this period.

The sharp increase between 2005–2009 to 2015–2020 was due to the increase in full-time employment among those with a university graduates or higher, which accounts for about half of the overall increase. During this period, the number of high school and vocational school graduates continuing to work full-time after having their first child also increased, but not to the same extent as for university graduates.

The rapid increase of job continuity of mothers is due to the widespread use of the childcare leave and childcare facilities since 2010. Mothers continue to work after childbirth at least sometimes with the help of their grandparents.

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