

Social Isolation of Elementary and Junior High School Children: A Focus on Children with Immigrant Backgrounds

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This study analyses the data of fifth-grade elementary and second-grade junior high school students in nine municipalities in the Tokyo metropolitan area (2016-2019) to examine whether children with immigrant backgrounds face a higher risk of social isolation than native Japanese children. The analysis used a question asking about the frequency with which children talk to others about their problems, worries, happy experiences, and sad feelings, and defined social isolation as a situation where the frequency of such conversation was low with all the people listed in the question. The results of the logistic regression analysis revealed that children with parents who are both foreign nationals are more likely to be socially isolated than children with parents who are both Japanese nationals. On the other hand, children with only one foreign-national parent were not more likely to be socially isolated relative to children whose parents were both Japanese nationals. The study also found that conversation frequency with parents is low for children with a foreign-national mother, and that conversation frequency with friends is low for children with foreign-national parents, compared to children with Japanese-national parents.

Keywords: children with immigrant backgrounds, social isolation