



Japan expands childcare leave entitlement

By Fiona Webster and Stephanie Rosseau
13 Oct 2021

Measures aimed at increasing parental use of childcare leave and other leave entitlements passed Japan's parliament and will phase in from April 2022. The measures feature in an amended Act on Child and Family Care Leave.

Highlights

- Fathers will be entitled to a new paid paternity leave period of up to four weeks following the birth of their child. This measure is due to take effect no later than December 2022. Fathers must provide two weeks' notice to their employer and can take the time in a single period of four weeks, or in two leave periods.
- Employers must inform their employees about the maternity leave system and arrangements from 1 Apr 2022, and confirm their leave intentions. Employers also must take measures to encourage employees to apply for and take childcare leave. The Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare will publish further details.
- Parents can take childcare leave in two leave periods after their child reaches its first birthday under a measure that will be introduced no later than December 2022 — currently, the leave must be taken before the child reaches its first birthday unless there are exceptional circumstances (such as the child cannot be enrolled in day care). From 1 Apr 2023, companies with 1,000 or more employees will have to disclose annually their employees' use of childcare leave, and further details about the disclosure are forthcoming.
- Fixed-term contract workers will be entitled to childcare leave from 1 Apr 2022, and the current minimum eligibility criteria will generally be abolished. However, labor-management agreements will still be allowed to exclude employees employed for one year or less.

Related resources

Non-Mercer resource

- [Revised Act on Child and Family Care Leave Act](#) (Japanese) (Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, June 2021)

Mercer Law & Policy resource

- [Japan makes it easier to take time off for child, family member care](#) (19 Oct 2020)

Note: Mercer is not engaged in the practice of law, accounting or medicine. Any commentary in this article does not constitute and is not a substitute for legal, tax or medical advice. Readers of this article should consult a legal, tax or medical expert for advice on those matters.