

VI-2 Day-care

1. Day-care in Japan

Day-care is available in three forms in Japan; (1) Day-care centers (Hoikusho) certified by the local government (for infants whom the government administration has certified as eligible due to receiving insufficient care), (2) Uncertified day-care facilities that are run independently, and (3) Day-care services operated by private companies.

Certified day-care centers can be public or private. Generally, day-care centers do not operate in the early morning or late evening, nor do they offer overnight, Sunday or holiday service.

Applications are generally made at facilities in the respective municipality within which the applicant resides, and, in principle, children are permitted to go to day-care centers within their own area or district. Please inquire at the division in charge of day-care at the public office in your municipality for information on matters such as how to apply, the period for applications and the cost of day-care.

Additionally, a relatively new type of childcare facility called “Certified center for early childhood education and care” is available, irrespective of parents’ work engagement. These centers provide both education and childcare to preschool children aged 0 and older. For information about admission, call the center you wish to send your child to or Day care section of your city hall.

2. Private Services

There are various types of day-care services that are run by the private sector including those run by volunteers with their own children and others operated by private companies. There are also some companies or organizations that offer day-care in the evening and on holidays or even dispatch babysitters to the home. Applications are by the parents of children in need of day-care and are made to the respective companies or organizations directly. Of course, you can apply to day-care centers outside of your municipality. Feel free to inquire at these companies or organizations for information about these services.

3. Family Support Center

Some municipalities offer a family support center program. Under this program, each member helps mutually, providing childcare before or after kindergarten or day-care center hours, sending or collecting children to and from day-care facilities childcare for a short amount of time, as emergency help when parents/guardians of children have urgent matters to attend to. Please inquire at your municipality office for further details. (Appendix IX—1)

4. Policies to make preschool education and day-care services free

Since October 2019, Japan has started to offer free education at all authorized preschools including kindergartens, nursery schools and certified child center for children aged between 3 and 5. Children 2 years old and under from financially struggling households have also been given free day care services. As for kindergartens, a monthly fee cap of ¥25,700 has been set. Fees of transportation, food and events remain be paid by parents (though there are exceptions to this). For more information, please inquire at your municipality office. (Appendix IX—1)

5. Child Benefits System

Child benefits shall be provided to parents/guardians of children who will be up to age 15 until the March 31 following their 15th birthday (before completing their junior high school). However, people earning more than a certain amount will not receive this benefit. Instead, a monthly exceptional allowance of 5,000 yen per child will be paid. For details, please inquire at your local municipal office. (Appendix IX—1).