

## 2 Income Security and Childcare Services for Households with Children

**Child Allowance:** Under the system of Child Allowance, an allowance is paid to parents and others (including operators of children's homes) who raise children domiciled in Japan. The allowance is paid monthly until the child graduates from junior high school (age 15), the amount paid each month depending on the child's age and an income cap. The allowance is a flat 15,000 yen for children aged 0-2, 10,000 yen for children aged 3 until leaving elementary school, and 10,000 yen for junior high school pupils. The amount for children whose parents earn more than the income cap (9.6 million yen p.a.) is a flat 5,000 yen per month.

**Child Rearing Allowance:** Under the system of Child Rearing Allowance, an allowance is paid to children aged up to 18 (i.e. until they graduate from senior high school in March) in single-parent households (including single-mother and single-father families) if earnings are within the income cap, and single-parent households subject to court protection orders following domestic violence from a spouse. As of 2012, the amount paid is a basic monthly 41,430 yen for the first child, the basic amount plus 5,000 yen for the second child, and the basic amount plus 3,000 yen for the third child onwards.

**Special Child Rearing Allowance:** Under the system of Special Child Rearing Allowance, an allowance is paid to disabled children and young people up to age 20, according to the degree of disability, in households with disabled children if earnings are within the income cap. The amount paid is 50,400 yen per month for the severest type of disability and 33,570 yen for the next most severe type. For disabled people aged over 20, Basic Disability Pension is paid if earnings are within the income cap.

**Childcare Services:** Based on the Child Welfare Act, child welfare services in Japan consist of services provided at facilities for children and young people who cannot live with their families due to various problems (children's homes, nursery homes

and maternal and child living support facilities), childcare services at daycare centers, and services provided to children with disabilities both at home and at facilities. This section discusses childcare services that relate to combined support for child-rearing and employment. Childcare services are mainly provided by daycare centers. Daycare centers aim to look after children each day when their guardians (mainly their parents) cannot look after them, due to such reasons as having to work; there are daycare centers that are licensed by local authorities based on the Child Welfare Act, and those that are not licensed (daycare centers that have filed a notification to the local authority). The fees are calculated based on the income of the child's guardians during the previous fiscal year, the situation regarding the taxes levied on the guardians, such as income tax and residential tax, and the age of the child concerned.

As to the state of childcare services, according to "On the State of Daycare Centers, etc. (April 1, 2009)" by the Daycare Division of the Equal Employment, Children and Families Bureau, Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, there were 23,711 daycare centers, 2,176,802 children using them, and 24,825 children on waiting lists. The children on waiting lists are those who, even though they lack childcare and have applied to enter a daycare center (licensed daycare center), are unable to enter a daycare center because, for example, the daycare center that their guardians would like them to enter would exceed the maximum number of children for whom it can care. The existence of children on waiting lists suggests that it is necessary to further enhance childcare services, by such means as increasing the maximum number of children who can be cared for by increasing the number of daycare center staff and increasing the number of daycare centers in areas with many children on waiting lists, in order to provide combined support for child-rearing and employment.