

Amended Childcare and Family Care Leave Act

The amended Childcare and Family Care Leave Act, which aims to create a more flexible work environment that fosters a good balance of work and child/family care, will take effect in two stages, in April and October 2025.

■ Coming into Force April 2025

Leave to care for a child

Under the current legislation, an employee can take a maximum of five days' leave (10 days if two or more children) per year upon a child's sickness, injury, vaccination, or health checkup. This right continues until the child enters elementary school.

From April 2025, the age limit will be extended to the end of third grade. In addition, an employee may take leave for:

- Classroom closure due to infectious pandemic or epidemic
- Entrance/graduation ceremony

Before the amendment, only employees continuously employed for six months or more may take leave. This condition will be abolished under the amended rule.

Request for exclusion from working during non-scheduled hours

Before the amendment, an employee who must care for a child younger than three years old could ask their employer to exclude them from working overtime. This age limit will be extended to elementary school age under the new rule.

Statutory disclosure of childcare leave usage

The scope of companies statutorily required to disclose the status of childcare leave will be expanded from companies with more than 1,000 employees to those with more than 300.

Creating a supportive environment

To retain employees and ensure family care leave opportunities, companies should do at least one of the following:

- Conduct internal training on family care leave and related systems
- Create an employee support center to explain and consult on family care leave and related systems
- Compile and provide real-world examples of family care leave usage and related systems
- Announce the company's policies to accelerate the use of family care leave and related systems

An employer should also explain to the employee who has an immediate need of family care how the system works, the contact information for guidance, and the monetary benefits from the government. They should also confirm the employee's intention on using the system. In addition, information about family care support must be provided to employees at an early stage (e.g., at age 40) before they need to use it.

■ Coming into Force October 2025

Flexible work styles during child-rearing

An employer must offer at least two of the following to employees raising a child from age three to the beginning of elementary school:

- Change of start time, such as a flexible or staggered working system
- A telework option, such as working from home or a SOHO, more than 10 days per month
- Childcare facilities and related benefits, such as employer-sponsored babysitting
- More than 10 days of vacation per year to facilitate child-rearing
- Reduced work hours

These measures should be communicated to the employee before the child turns three years old.

Both at the time an employee notifies their employer of pregnancy or childbirth and at an appropriate time before the child turns three, the employer should conduct an interview with the employee about the conditions that will best enable them to balance work and child-rearing, taking the family care or child-rearing situation into consideration.