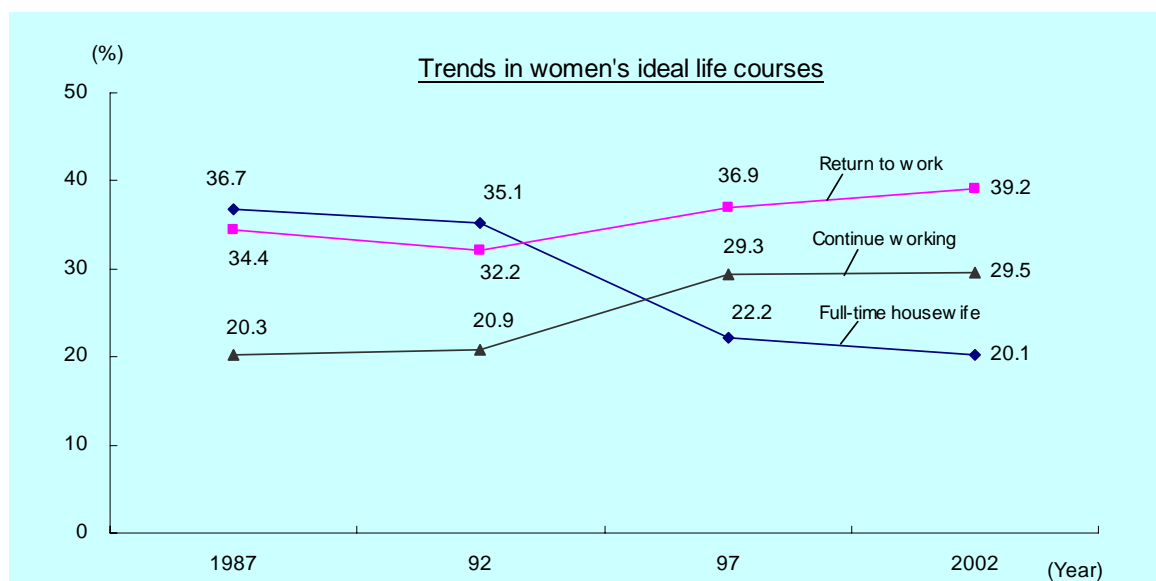


The proportion of women in the child-rearing generation who wish to quit their job after getting married or giving birth, and go back to work when their children have grown up (the 'return to work' path), and those who wish to return to work after childbirth and rear children and work at the same time (the 'continue working' path) are increasing. The proportion of women whose ideal is being a full-time housewife is declining.

Fig. 2-1-1 Women's perception of working is becoming more heightened in the long-term view

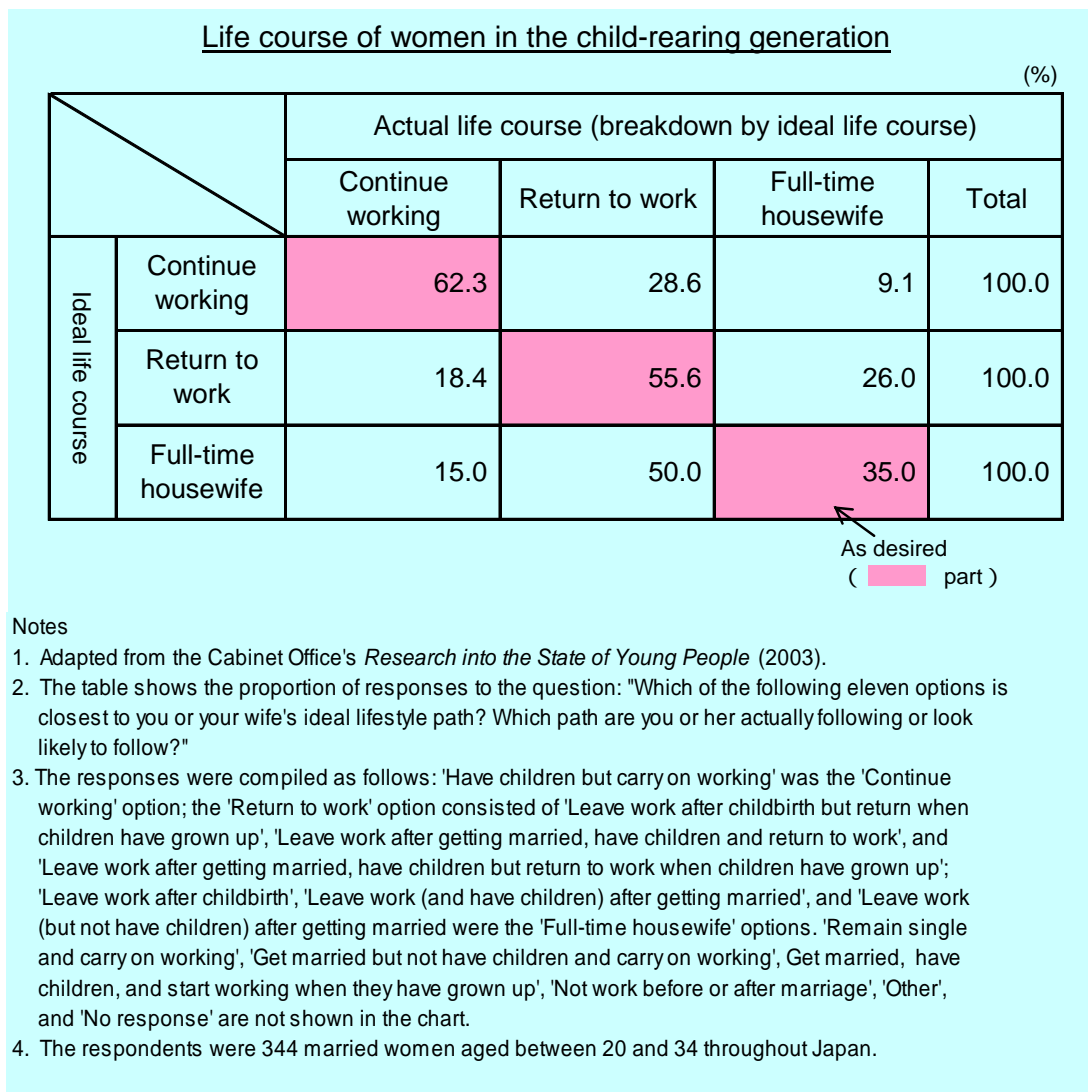


Notes

- Adapted from the National Institute of Population and Social Security Research's (IPSS) *The National Fertility Survey* (1987, 1992, 1997 and 2002).
- The chart shows the proportion of responses to the question: "Which type is your ideal life course?" The six choices are detailed below. The options of 'DINKS' ('double income no kids'), 'work and not marry', and 'others' are not shown on the chart.
  - A 'full-time housewife' is a woman with children, who leaves work after getting married or giving birth, and does not return to work.
  - The 'return to work' group are those with children, who leave work after getting married or giving birth, but return to work when they have finished rearing their children.
  - The 'continue working' group are those who have children but continue to work all their life (described as 'balancing [having children and working] in the main text').
  - 'DINKS' are those who get married but do not have children, and continue working.
  - The 'work and not marry' group are those who remain unmarried and work all their life.
  - The other category was 'others'.
- Respondents were single women aged between 18 and 34 throughout Japan. Those responding 'don't know', and unclear responses were not included in the data. The numbers of respondents were: 2,423 in 1987; 3,371 in 1992; 3,352 in 1997; and 3,271 in 2002.

62.3% of those wishing to follow the 'continue working' path have actually achieved this; 55.6% of those wishing to follow the 'return to work' path have managed to do so, only slightly more than half in both cases.

Fig. 2-1-2 Only around half of women can follow their ideal life course

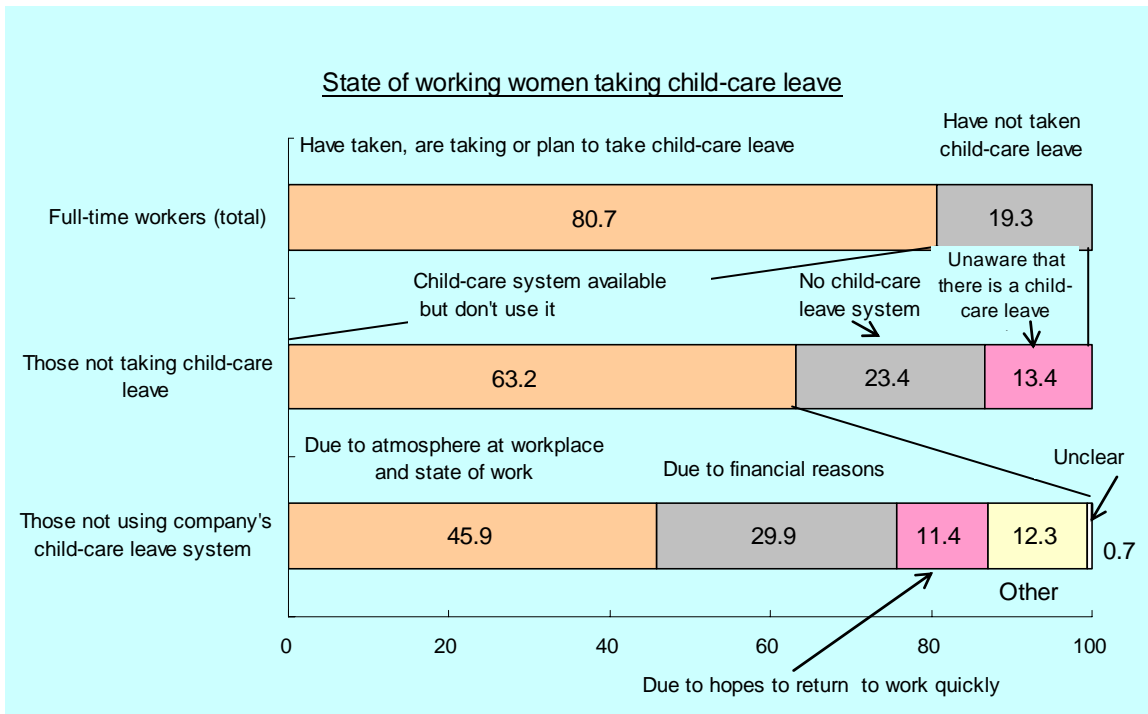


Part 2 Barriers that prevent women from continuing to work

Barriers that prevent women from continuing to work (1)  
 Even if an employee has a child-care leave system, many people find it difficult to use because of the atmosphere at the workplace or the state of their work.

Barriers that prevent women from continuing to work (2)  
 The employment rate of women is lower in prefectures where there are long waiting lists for nursery schools; lack of child-care facilities is another barrier to that keeps women from continuing to work.

Fig. 2-2-9 Atmosphere at the workplace or the state of their work makes women hesitate to take child-care leave



Notes

1. Adapted from MHLW's *First Longitudinal Survey of Babies in 21st Century* (2001).
2. The chart shows the degree to which child-care leave is taken.
3. Respondents were 7,208 women in full-time employment who gave birth between January 10th-17th or July 10th-17th 2001.

Barriers that prevent women from continuing to work (3)

Men with children tend to work longer hours than men with no children, making it difficult for them to participate in raising children.

Barriers that prevent women from continuing to work (4)

Around 40% of mothers, even those with small children, work long hours including overtime. It is possible that this dissuades many women from continuing to work.

Fig. 2-2-15 Men with children tend to work longer hours

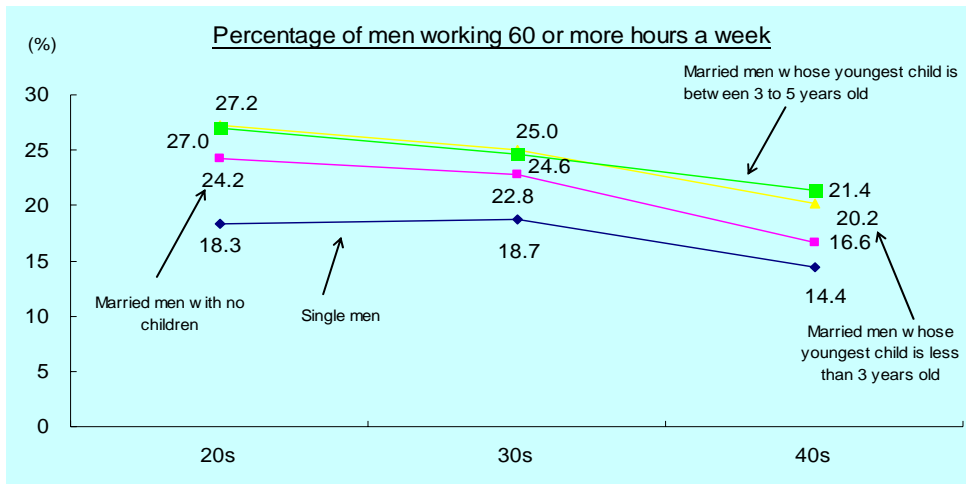
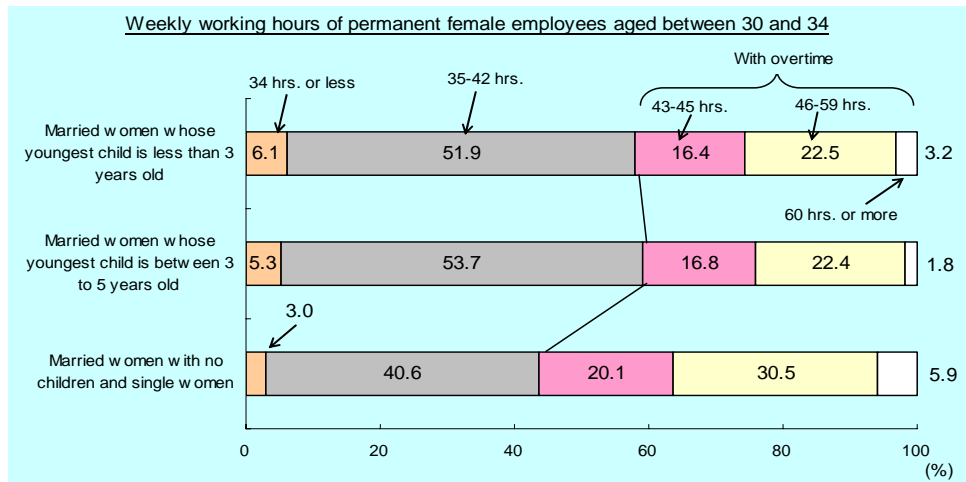


Fig. 2-2-16 Around 40% of women with young children are working overtime



Notes

1. Specially calculated according to MIC's *Employment Status Survey* (2002).
2. The respondents in Fig 2-2-15 were permanent male employees working 200 days or more per year; the chart shows the percentage working 60 hours or more a week in the four groups of 'Single men', 'Married men with no children', 'Married men whose youngest child is less than 3 years old', 'Married men whose youngest child is between 3 to 5 years old'.
3. The respondents in Fig 2-2-16 were permanent female employees aged between 30 and 34 working 200 days or more per year; the chart shows the proportion of weekly working hours in the four groups of 'Single women', 'Married women with no children', 'Married women whose youngest child is less than 3 years old' and 'Married women whose youngest child is between 3 to 5 years old'.
4. 'Single' people are those with no spouse.
5. Married people with no children are those with a spouse who do not live with a child under the age of 14.
6. Married people whose youngest child is less than 3 years old are those with a spouse who live with a youngest child under the age of 3.
7. Married people whose youngest child is between 3 to 5 years old are those with a spouse who live with a youngest child aged between 3 and 5.

## Chapter 2, Part 2 Continuous employment for women: efforts to break down the barriers (case studies)

### (1) Developments concerning child-care leave

#### *Sweden, where the securing of stand-in staff is common practice*

In Sweden, where the female uptake rate for child-care leave is 84%, three-quarters of businesses employ temporary staff when their employees take child-care leave. This is much more than the Japanese rate of 39.7%, and contributes to a workplace atmosphere conducive to taking child-care leave.

#### *Using former employees as stand-in staff - an insurance company based in Tokyo*

The company registers those leaving the company in advance, and rehires them as stand-in workers when employees take child-care leave. As these people have company-specific skills and know-how they can get started on their work straight away.

### (2) Developments concerning child-care facilities

#### *The Scandinavian countries have particularly improved child-care services*

The mothers' employment rate in Scandinavia is high, and in some countries the employment rate is actually higher for women with children than for women without children. In Sweden 82% of children between the ages of one and five receive some sort of child care services.

#### *Establishment of in-house nursing facility combined with the short working hour system - a fashion sector company based in Tokyo*

In order to enable women to continue working, the company established an in-house nursery. Taking into consideration the commuting needs of mothers with children, the company established a short working hour system that allows them to avoid the rush hour.

### (3) Developments in ways of working

#### *Overseas measures to balance work and family life*

In the United Kingdom and the United States many measures have been taken mainly by businesses considering that balancing work with family life is important in order to secure excellent human resources. In the United Kingdom, the government launched its 'Work-Life Balance Campaign', to raise public awareness about the issue.

#### *Implementation of various ways of working including a short working hours system a comprehensive electrical equipment manufacturer based in Tokyo*

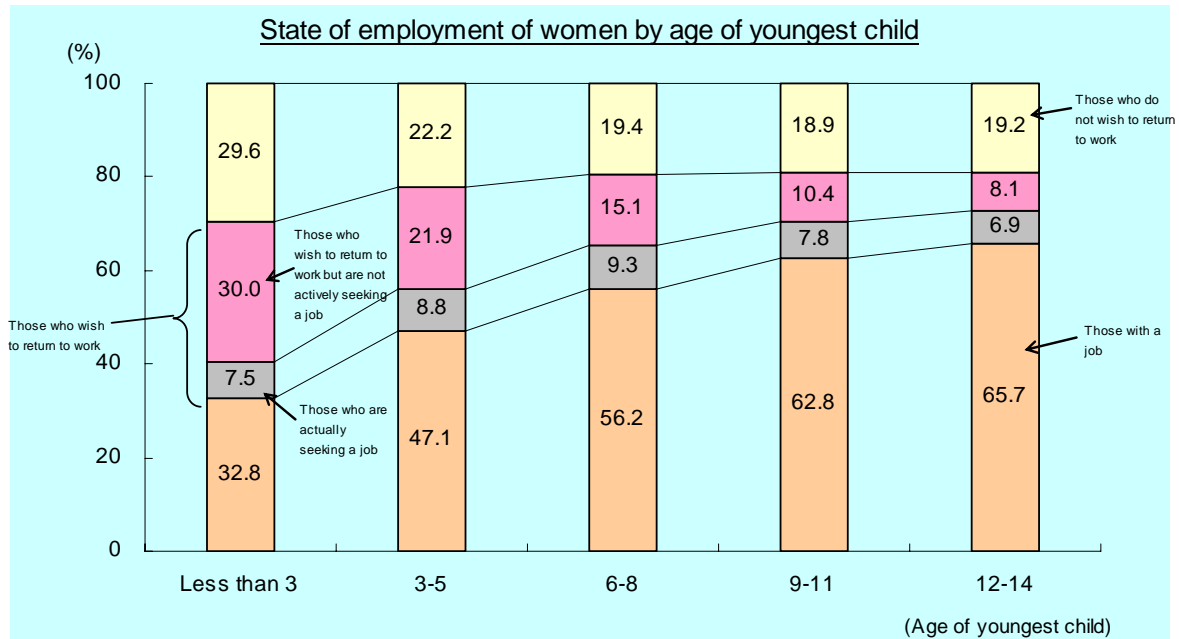
In order to reduce the employee turnover rate and to cut the costs of recruiting and re-training people, the company established a scheme enabling varied ways of working, including short working hours, a scheme which has produced effective results.

Part 3 Barriers preventing women from returning to work

Barriers preventing women from returning to work (1)

Due to the heavy burden of raising small children, and the difficulty of balancing child-rearing with work, many women give up even looking for a job.

Fig. 2-3-3 The smaller their children are, the stronger their mother's wish to return to work is



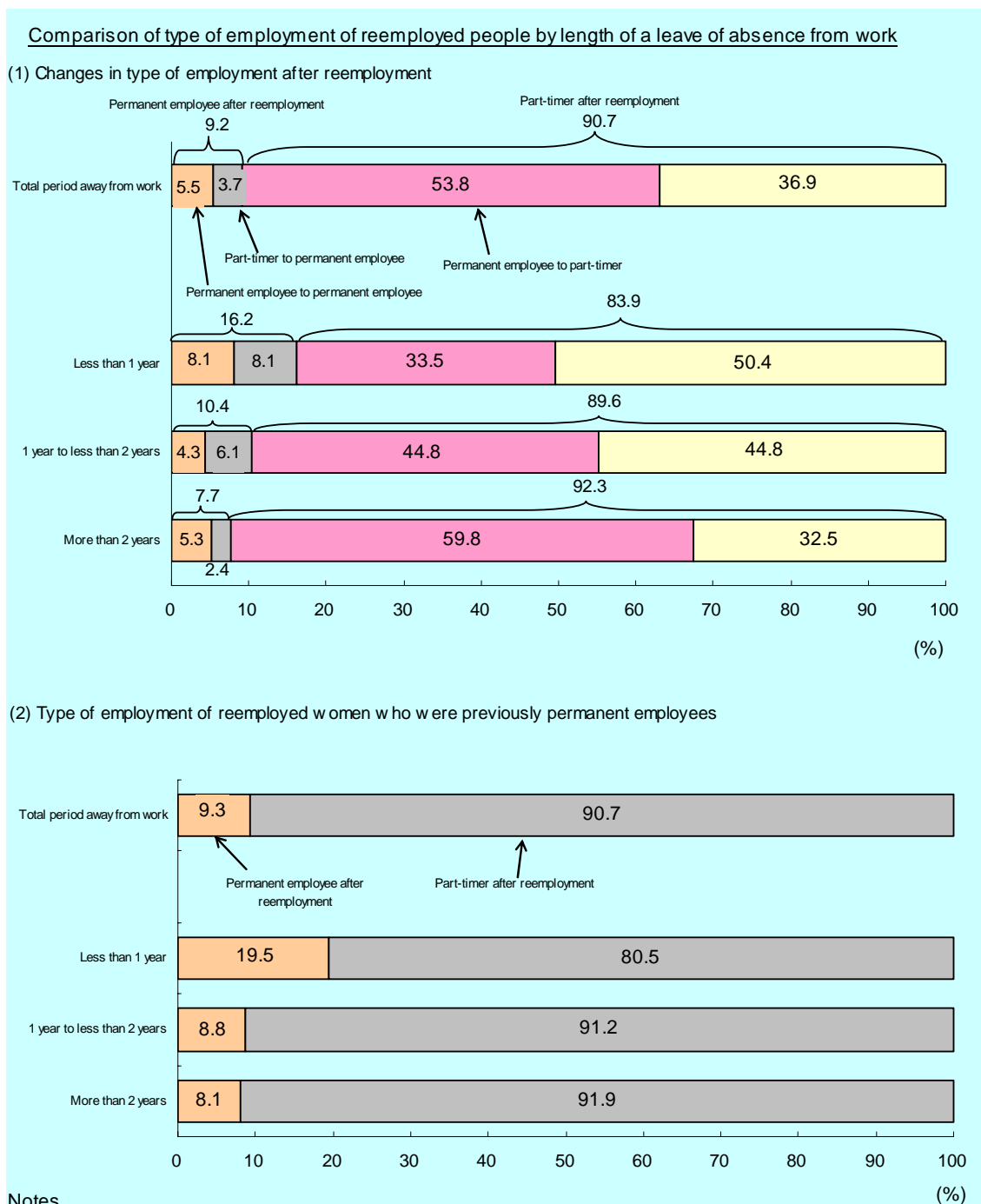
Notes

1. Specially calculated according to MIC's *Employment Status Survey* (2002).
2. The chart shows the state of employment of women by age of youngest child.
3. Respondents were women with spouses who live with a youngest child aged under 14.

## Barriers preventing women from returning to work (2)

Those who left work to rear children find that the longer they have been away from work the harder it is to gain reemployment as permanent employees. This is thought to be because their vocational skills gradually decline while they are away from work.

Fig. 2-3-11 The rate of reemployment as a permanent employee decreases the longer that women are away from work



## Chapter 2, Part 3 Women returning to work: efforts to break down the barriers (case studies)

### (1) Developments to rebuild vocational abilities while away from the workplace

#### *Efforts made by the Vocational Skills Development Centers and others*

Though public vocational training institutions have tended to focus on the development of manufacturing skills until now, they currently provide a wide range of training programs including administrative skills through outsourcing to the private sector. The employment rate of vocational trainees who left a job and are given institutional training is 76.6%, and 59.8% for those given commissioned training.

#### *Vocational skills evaluation system*

The United Kingdom has established its National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) in order to objectively judge the abilities that employers are seeking and the abilities that workers have gained. In a similar effort, the Japanese government has, in collaboration with the business world, formulated vocational ability evaluation standards for 23 types of job descriptions.

### (2) Developments towards rebuilding vocational skills while working

#### *An example of actively promoting former female workers a financial institution based in Chiba Prefecture*

As well as employing part-time female workers who were once bank employees, the institution has a 'full-time staff system' under which they can be in charge of a wide range of work, and work the same hours as the permanent employees. They have also launched a system that promotes full-time staff, fulfilling certain conditions, to permanent employees.

#### *A positive appraisal of child-care experience a construction company based in Saitama Prefecture*

Women who have been away from work for child-care reasons are positively regarded because they have a superb understanding of customer needs, and the company offers mid-career recruitment for a large number of middle-aged and older women. The company also actively invests in developing the vocational skills of these women through OJT programs and assistance in gaining qualifications.

#### *Helping middle-aged and older women to find work through awareness training a staff placement company based in Tokyo*

The company helps middle-aged and older women to find or change jobs as permanent employees. They train women who have been away from the workplace for a long time in awareness and self expression, and help them recover a sense of vocation about their work.

\* \* \*

Achieving the desired life course can lead to a halt in the declining birthrate

- Regardless of whether the child-rearing generation wants to continue working or return to work, if they can feel safe in the knowledge that following the life course they want to can be easily done, it will make it easier for them to choose the option of having children.
- If men and women can achieve an appropriate balance between work and family life, if the sense of burden about child rearing can be reduced, and if couples can start to share their duties, there is a hope that the trend of the declining birthrate can be halted.