

Daycare Supports Gender Equality at Home*

Michihito Ando[†] Masako Maeda[‡] Shintaro Yamaguchi[§]

January 31, 2024

Preliminary Draft. Please do not cite without permission.

Abstract

In this study, we assess the impact of daycare enrollment on how childcare and household tasks are shared between mothers and fathers. Utilizing survey data from a Japanese municipality and observing all key variables influencing daycare enrollment, we employ a quasi-experimental approach to infer causal relationships. Our findings reveal that daycare enrollment leads to greater involvement by fathers in housework and childcare, concurrently with a reduction in mothers' participation in these areas. Notably, the shift in household labor dynamics appears to stem primarily from a direct influence of daycare enrollment on fathers' behavior, rather than from an increase in maternal employment.

JEL classification: D13, H42, J13, J22

Keywords: Daycare, Childcare, Household labor, Maternal Labor Supply, Gender roles

*This work was supported by JSPS KAKENHI Grant Number 16K21743, 17K03792, 20H01510, 20K02690, 20K01733.

[†]Rikkyo University, Department of Economics. Email: michihito.ando@rikkyo.ac.jp

[‡]Konan University. Email: m.maeda@konan-u.ac.jp

[§]University of Tokyo, Faculty of Economics. Email: syamaguchi@e.u-tokyo.ac.jp