

Topic 1

Foreign mothers want city halls to provide information in their native language about child-rearing. They also want to be informed of multi-cultural policy in preschool.

The duration of residence in Japan, and the information parents need before their children attend kindergarten and day-care center:

What parents want most: “Information provided in their native language by the ward-office about child-rearing” 35.7%, and “Lists of the day-care center, kindergartens, and elementary schools” 31.4%, “Manuals in native language regarding hospitals, health department, health check” 28.2%. Also, The shorter their stays are, the more people want “information in their native language provided by city halls.” Even 30.9% of those who resided in Japan for ten to twenty years need it. Similarly, information in native language is still needed such as “Information in native language regarding hospitals and so on” “Interpretation services about child-rearing,” although the longer the stay in Japan, the less services are needed.

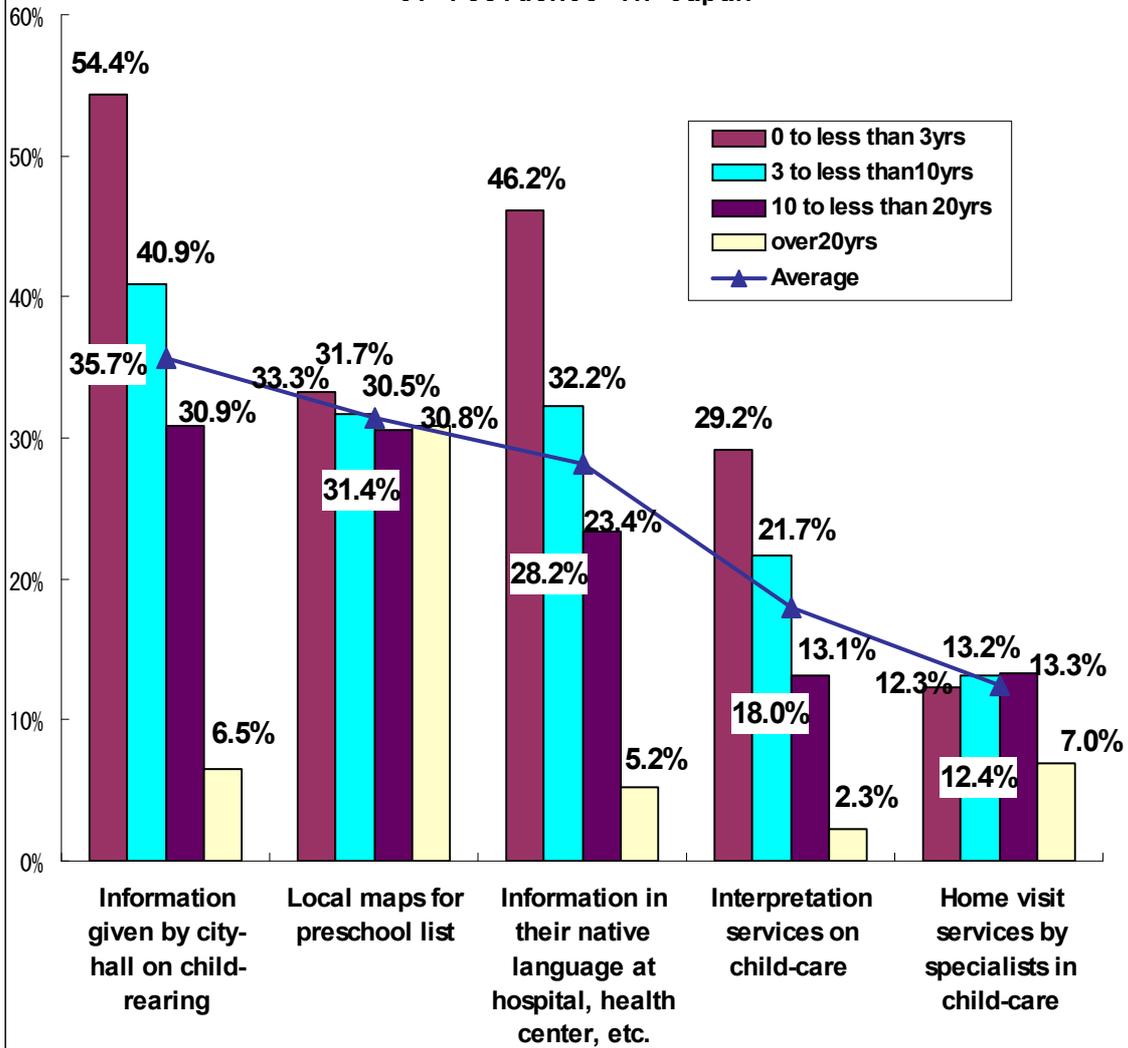
Parents want to be informed of kindergarten activities: (See page 24 for details)

Many parents complain, “I don’t know what goes on in preschool,” and wish they could observe a class firsthand.”

Some say, “I want to know what kind of activities day-care centers provide for my child and what I should be careful about.” Other parents have suggested, “How about presenting educational policies or nursing schedules on the internet?”

Also, appropriate reaction should be required in response to the following demands, such as “I want a manual in Portuguese,” “I want to know the nursing policy or educational policy toward foreign preschoolers.”

Fig.2-4 Information that parents wanted before the preschool entrance as related to the duration of residence in Japan



Topic 2

Children's adjustment and on teachers' consideration are important. Teachers' respectful attitude towards native language and culture of their preschoolers is appreciated.

Helpful elements in getting used to preschool: (See page 30 in details)

Parents hope that their children will get used to preschool as early as possible, thereby enabling them to get along with their peers. How can the preschool staff and the people around them fulfill this wish?

Parents say the following things are helpful for their children to get used to preschool. "Children's adjustment ability" 45.0%, "Parents' efforts to help their children to adjust themselves to the new environment" 33.5%. Also, parents rated the teachers' consideration toward the children and the parents as significant, seen in the answers such as "Teacher's special attention to the children" 40.6%, "Teacher's close contact with the parents" 31.4%. In addition, parents regard "conversation with Japanese parents and their children" as an important element. Any parents, no matter how old their children are, want "Teacher's special consideration." Therefore, it is assumed that this consideration is understood by parents, and encouraging a child's adjustment.

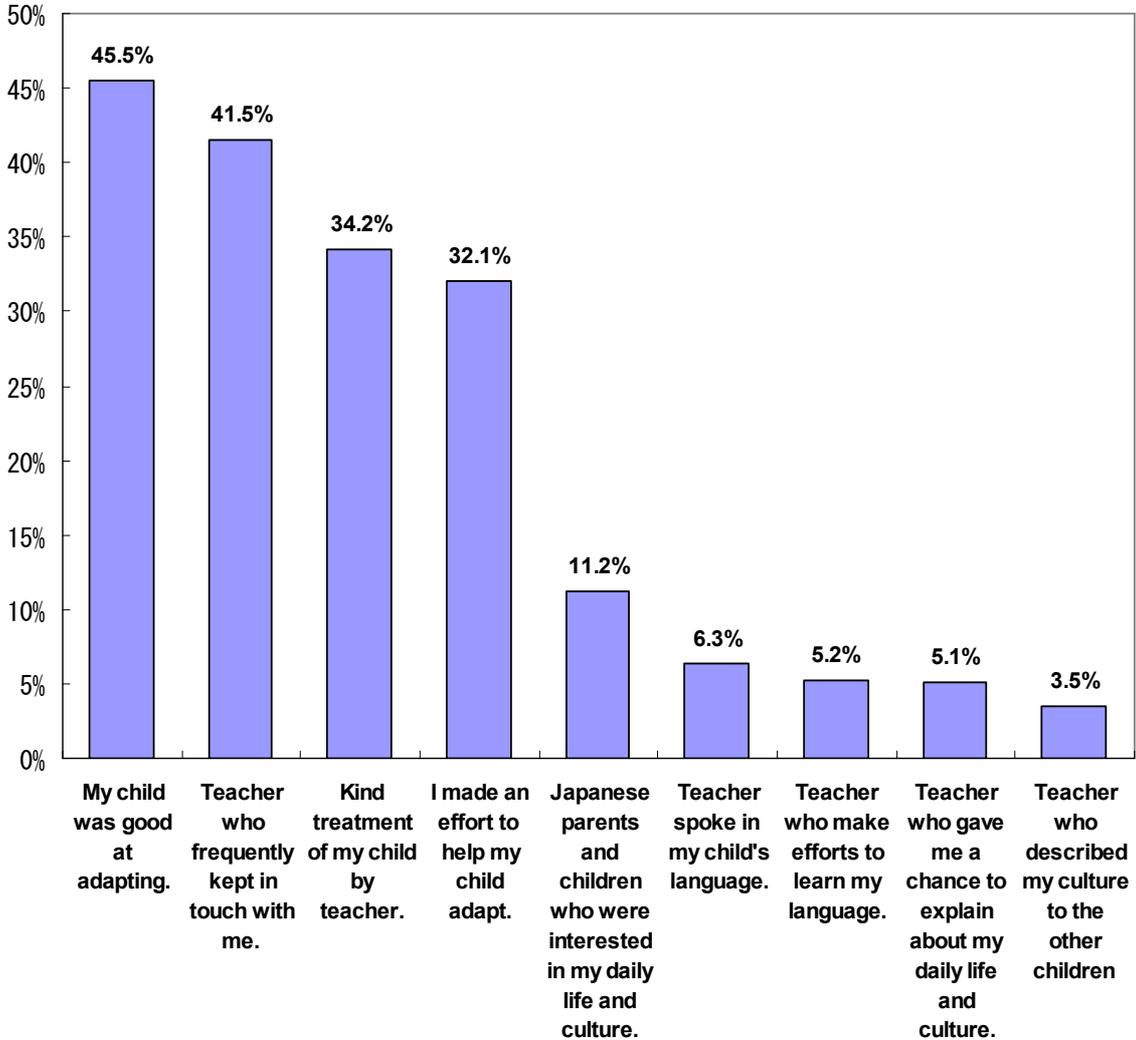
The duration of residence in Japan, and elements that facilitate adjustment:

Some answers such as, "Efforts by the teacher to learn their languages," "Conversing with the children in their native languages," and "Teachers spoke about the children's mother cultures," show that there are some kindergartens indicating an "understanding toward the children's mother cultures." This is significant, as it encourages the children to be proud of their native cultures, as well as reinforce the trust from parents to the preschool policies.

Many parents who lived in Japan for less than twenty years regarded "Efforts by the parents to enhance the children's adjustment" important, which indicates to us the difficulties of parents coping with the tensions of living abroad. Many parents who stayed for a short period appreciated "Teacher's efforts to learn the children's native languages." It is assumed that the teachers must learn the parents' native languages to understand and

converse with those whose Japanese is relatively poor. The preschool staff's attitude to appreciate the parents' mother cultures enhanced the trust of parents whose residence in Japan was relatively short, and also gave them a sense of participating in their children's preschool education.

Fig.3-4 Useful things that children get accustomed to preschool



Topic 3

Children learn Japanese faster than their parents.

This causes a communication gap between children and parents.

The correlation between children's Japanese ability and parents' Japanese ability: (See page 48 for details)

Parents evaluated the Japanese ability of their children over two-years old as "Can speak very well" 60.7%, "Can speak a little bit" 26.3%. 60% of children were evaluated "Can speak very well."

Even though all parents maintain that their children speak well "for their age," still, the percentage of children who actually speak Japanese very well were in the majority.

When children speak Japanese "very well," usually their parents also speak Japanese "very well" (55.6%,) however, 9.4% of the parents speak Japanese "not so well" or "not at all." It is observed that children learn Japanese faster than their parents. Note the following comment: "Even though my husband and I improve our Japanese, my child's Japanese fluency is better. Therefore, the mental distance becomes greater and greater" (a Vietnamese parent), parents who are not good at Japanese, often feel anxiety as their children become fluent in Japanese.

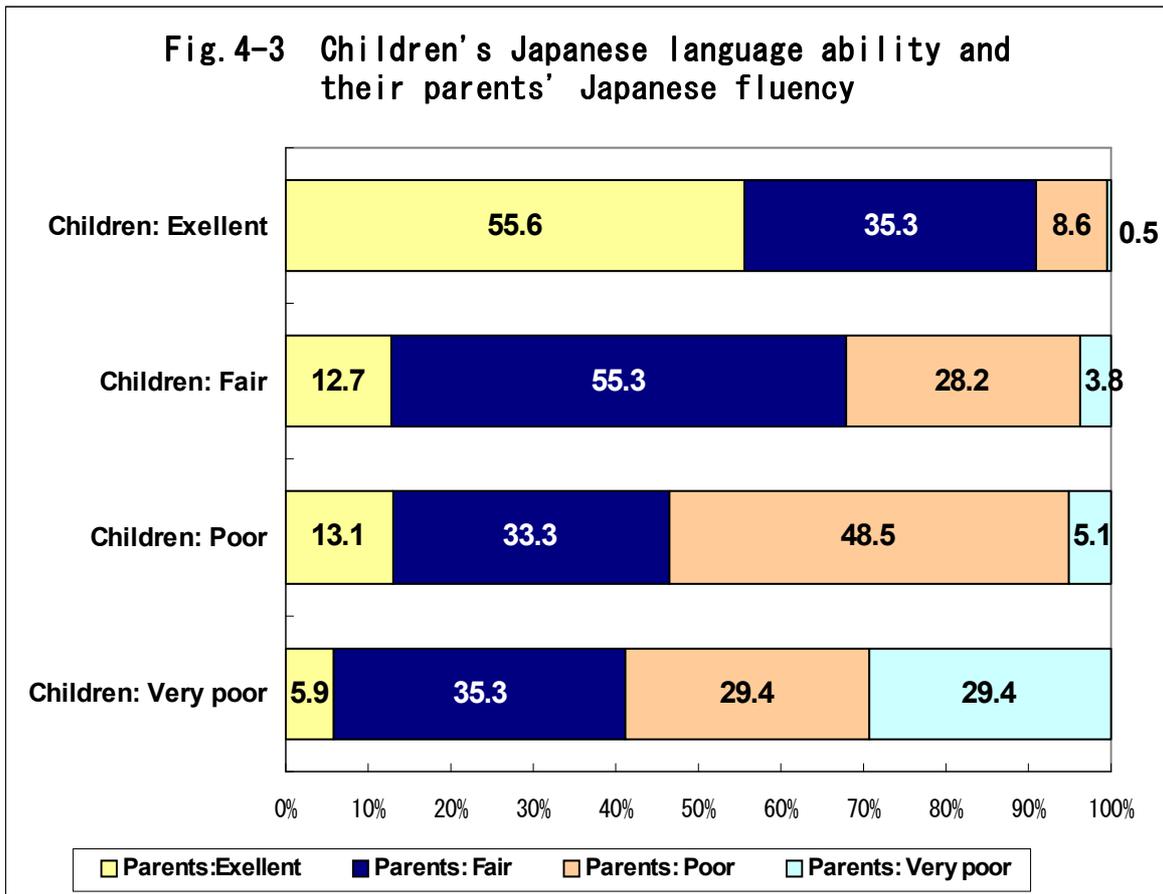
Language used at home and the children's Japanese:

In families where Japanese is spoken, some speak Japanese only at home, and others speak multi-languages, such as their native language as well.

"My children speak two languages at the same time, and I wonder if that will result in a learning disorder." (day-care center, 4 years old, boy/ mother 33 years old/ China/ one-year stay)

In this way, when children are raised speaking two to four languages, such as their parents' native language plus Japanese, some parents are concerned that their children will be overburdened. Many parents speak their native language at home to reinforce their cultural identity. (We will later refer to the anxieties of child-rearing, and how each family handles the language problem.) Even if children do not speak Japanese at home, many still

excel in Japanese. (“Can speak very well” 47.0%, “Can speak a little bit” 40.3%) As long as they attend preschool where Japanese is exclusively spoken, they can excel in acquiring the language.



Topic 4

Parents are concerned about “Native language education and culture” and “Eating habit.” Parents also worry about “Sickness and injury.”

Child-rearing and worries: (See page 58 for details)

Parents listed in multiple-answer style their fears regarding child-rearing, and their anxiety about discipline and education.

The most common worries are: “not learning the native language and culture” 38.0%, second, “Eating little and disliking certain foods” 30.4%, third, “Sickness and injury” 28.4%, “Getting along with friends” 25.6%, “Praising and scolding” 25.6%. Also, “Cleaning up after playing” 23.8%, “Getting up in the morning and going to bed at night on time regularly” 20.5%, “Greeting others, with “good morning,” etc.” 20.5%, “Educational expense” 19.0%, “Slow in learning language” 16.4%.

The gender difference of concerns is seen as many parents worry about girls “Cleaning up after play,” and “Having bad habits,” and about boys “Slow in learning language.”

Many parents worry about: “Sickness and injury,” “Vaccination and health checkups” (zero-year-old infants), “Play well with friends,” “Educational expenses,” (one-year-old boys), “Cleaning up after play,” (girls over two years old), and finally, “Greeting others,” (six-year old girls.)

Concerns about child-rearing and age difference of the children: (See page 59 for details)

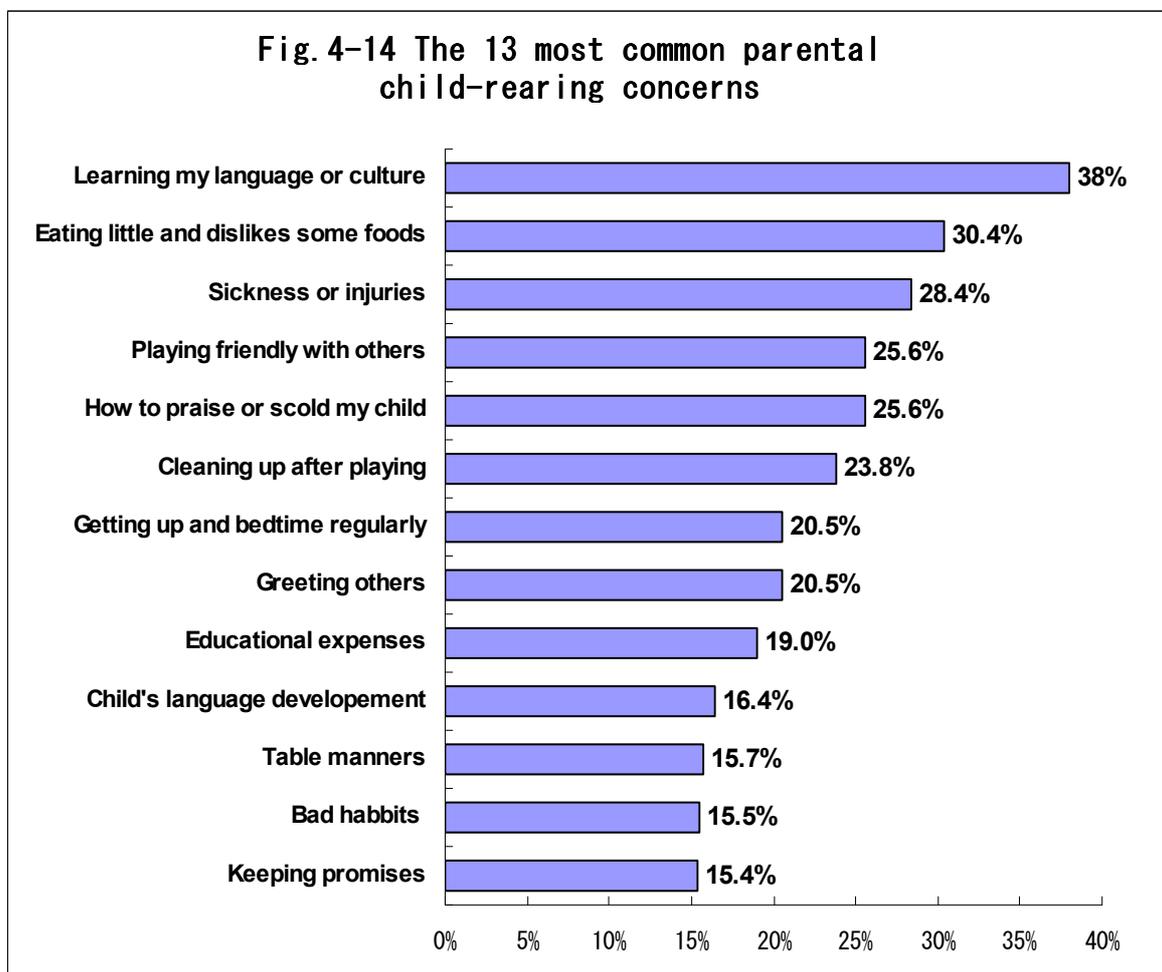
The most common concerns are about learning native language education, and learning native cultures, which rank first and second, no matter how old the children are. The younger the children are, the more mothers worry about “Sickness and injury.” “Eating little and disliking some foods” constantly ranks high with children over a year-old.

It is characteristic that the primary worry of parents of zero-year-old infants are first, “Sickness and injury,” third, “Vaccination and health check,” and fifth, “Allergy.”

The characteristic concerns of parents of one-year-old infants are seen in the third problem, “Eating little and disliking some food,” and the fifth problem, “Slow development of

language ability.” Many parents of children over one-year-old also worry about “Eating little and unbalanced diet.”

The fifth problem of parents of two-year-olds, “Playing well with friends,” and the sixth, “Excretion and the use of the bathroom.” For three-year-olds, “Eating little and disliking some foods,” are primary concerns. For children over four-years-old, the biggest problem is “Native language education and culture,” and for five-year-old children, the second problem is “Cleaning up after play.” For six-year-old children, the second problem is “Getting up in the morning and going to bed at night on time regularly.”



Topic 5

Teachers and people around foreign parents need to address mothers who tend to be inactive about dealing with others related to child-rearing.

Tendency to be active and affiliate in dealing with others related to child-rearing

Even when they are born and brought up in Japan, without any language problems, many Japanese mothers are reluctant to deal with others involved in child-rearing and under stress.

No matter what country they are from, one's personality, the awareness of child-rearing, and behavioral style are crucial elements in dealing with others related to child-rearing.

Thus, six questions with four-level evaluation were asked regarding the awareness of dealing with others related to child-rearing, social and behavioral tendencies. The calculated results of all six questions, named "Active and affiliate in dealing with others related to child-rearing," were divided in the same ratio into two groups, high-scored parents, and low-scored parents.

Active and affiliate parents and child-rearing: (See page 72 for details)

Active and affiliate mothers appreciated the interactions by people around them, and often said, "The teacher was in close contact with me," "Japanese parents and children talked to us." Less active and affiliate parents, however, took it for "One's own efforts," which indicates the necessity of the communication and special attention of the teachers in preschool, as those mothers felt it was helpful that "The teacher spoke in their native language." Active and affiliate mothers tried to speak to the teachers, and were willing to participate in all school events, and joined parent associations. On the contrary, less active and affiliate mothers were under stress, and they had to socialize with Japanese parents and participate in many events, and in some serious situations they had difficulty socializing with others.

Fig.5-1 Useful factors for adjusting to preschool (Percentage)

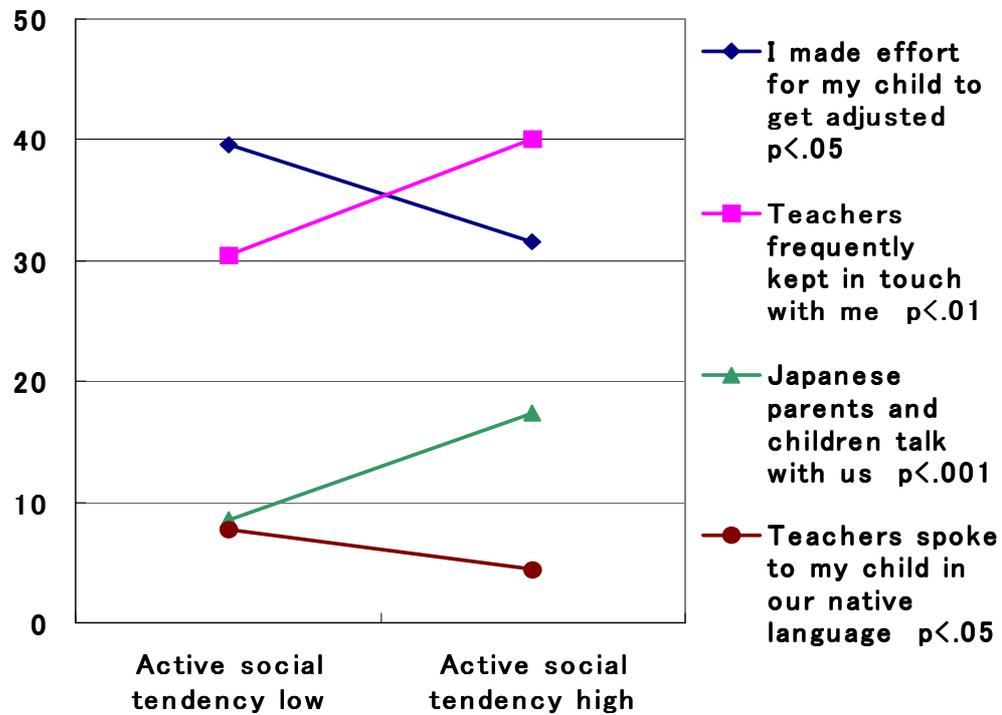
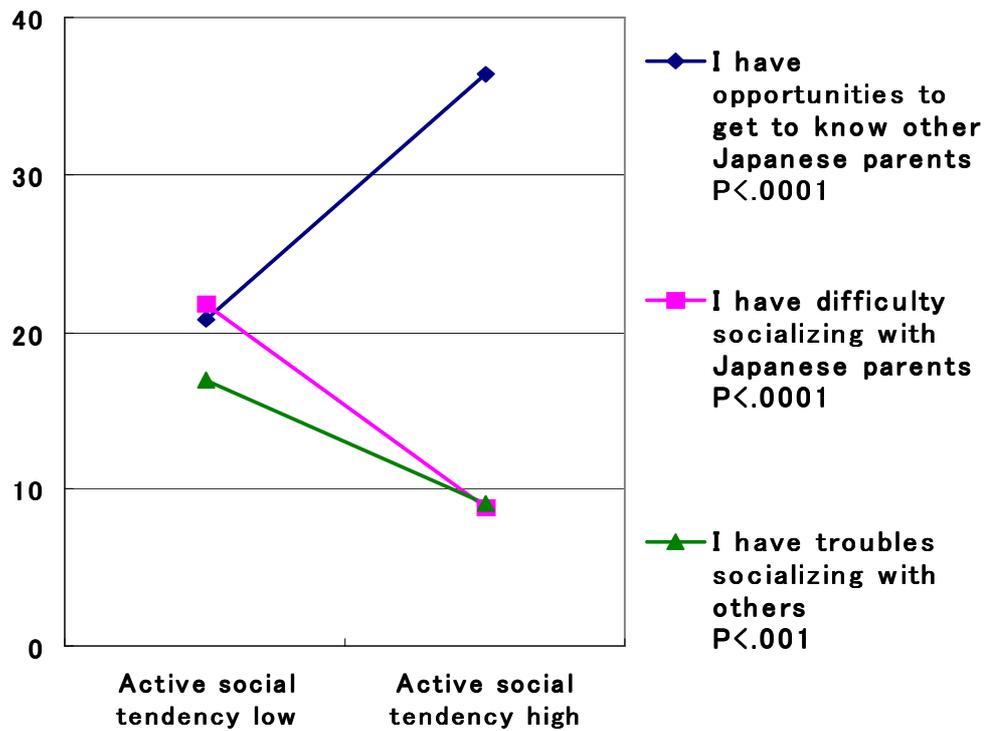


Fig.5-2 Parent perceptions of child daily preschool life (Percentage)



Topic 6

Housewives feel alienated from society.

Working mothers are fatigued from family and work.

How mothers regard their child-rearing:

Eighteen questions were asked about how they regard their child-rearing in Japan, and what they feel about their children. The four-level evaluations ranged from “Very true” to “Not true at all.”

Overall, 74.3% of the mothers answered “I want my child to be more educated than I was”, 72.9% “I feel it is my fault when my child misbehaves,” and another 61.5% answered “I scold my child just according to my emotional mood at the moment.”

The result of the same questionnaire is presented on page 112, and the comparison between Chinese mothers living in China is presented on page 80.

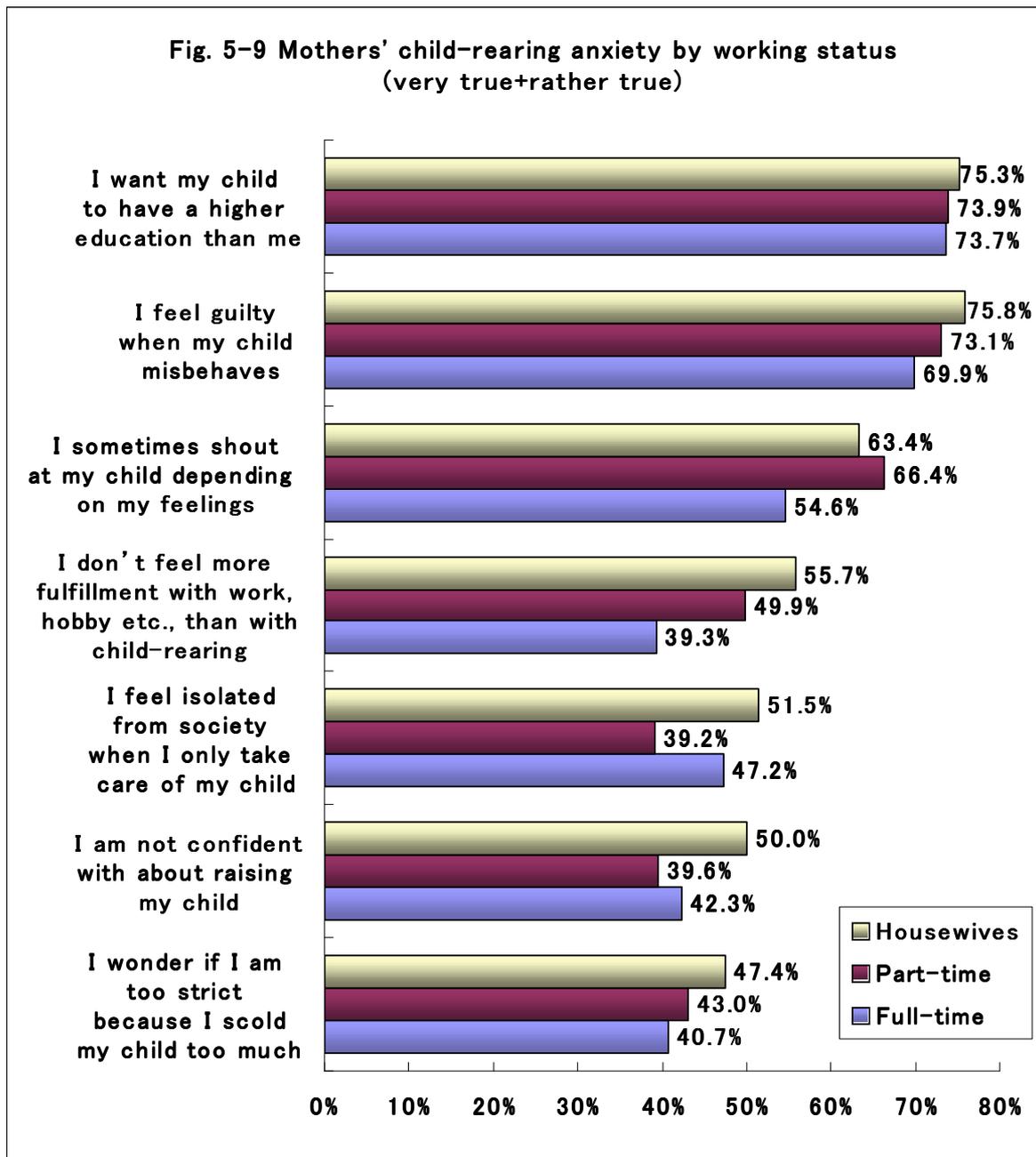
The working situation and child-rearing anxieties: (See page 78 for details.)

Analyzing the way mothers take their child-rearing from the perspective of anxiety about child-rearing, many parents feel the responsibility and anxiety for discipline and education, frustration about the status quo, and the sense of guilt, in not being able to praise their children.

No matter what kind of titles they have, mothers want their children to be well-educated. Housewives showed more anxiety than working mothers on any topic.

Significantly, more part-time working mothers answered, “I scold my child according to my emotional mood at the moment,” compared to other mothers.

Many working mothers describe in the free-remarks in the questionnaire, that they reflect themselves, and realize that they were exhausted by their jobs, child-rearing, and house-chores every single day, which understandably made them, feel pressured, and behave in an emotional matter to their children.



Topic 7

Spouses, preschool teachers, and people from the same country are the top three information sources.

14.3% of parents use the internet to obtain information on child-rearing.

Information sources parents use (See page 82 for details.)

The most popular information source, 69.8% of parents use is “Spouse.” Then, 62.4%, “Preschool teachers,” 52.8%, “Friends from the same country.”

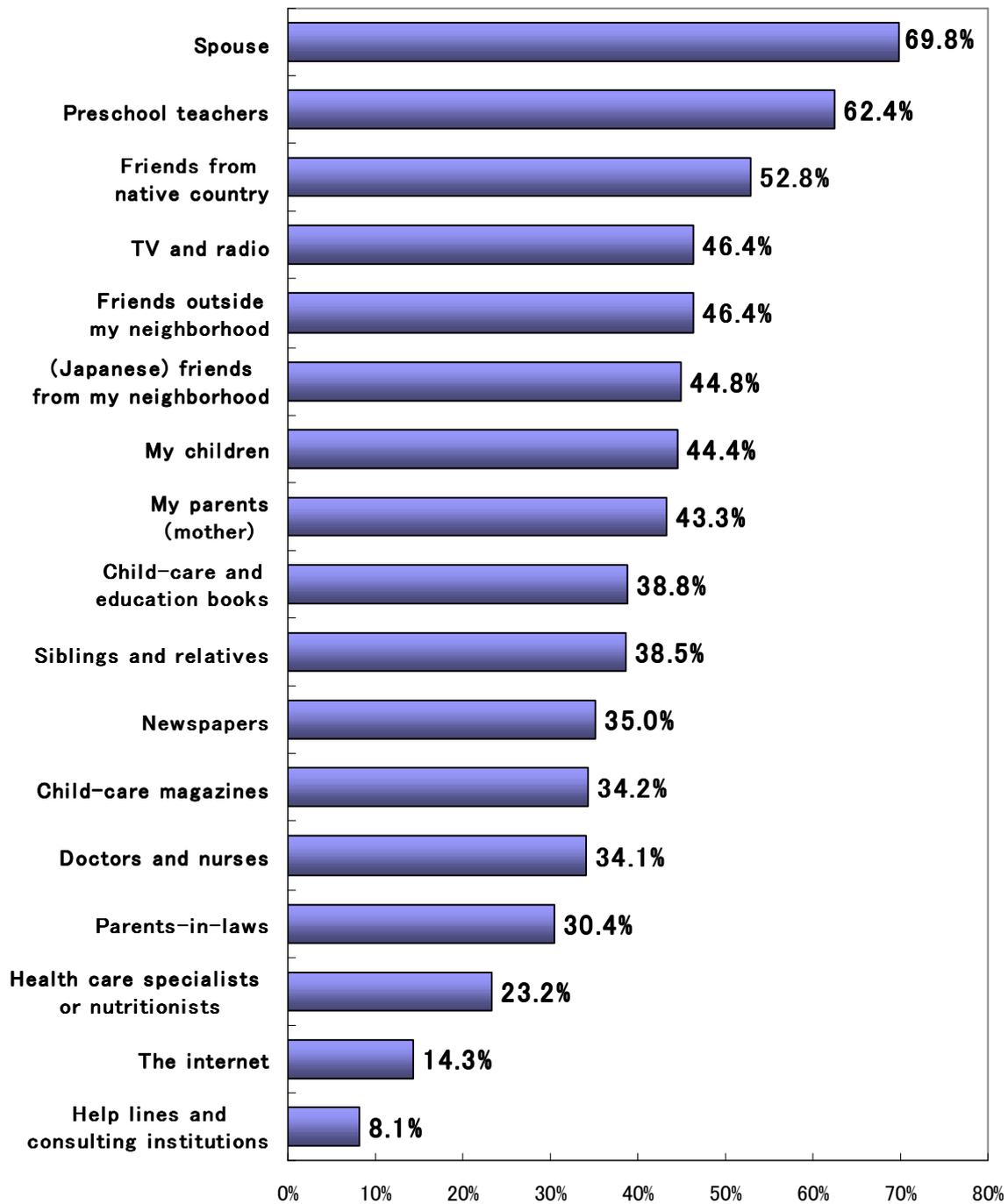
Parents talk to “Spouses” and “Preschool teachers” who take care of their children as close counselors. Also, they get information from “Friends from the same country”, “Friends outside the neighborhood” (people who belong to the same office, same schools, same religions, circles of same interests), and “Television and radio” which provides the latest information.

44.8% of parents get information from “Japanese neighbors,” probably because 10.9% of respondents have resided in Japan over twenty years, including the second and the third generation of immigrants, and 33.8% of respondents speak Japanese very well.

Information source classified by the parents’ nationality and areas:

The following characteristics are noticeable when the answers are classified by nationality and area. Although the numbers of the respondents are not even, the characteristics indicate some tendencies to us. Every American parent listed “Spouse” as the prime information source. 87.2% of North Korean parents get information from “Preschool teachers,” and following North Korean parents in sequence, parents from Taiwan, Japan, and China obtain information from “Preschool teachers.” Japanese “Television and radio” and “Newspapers” are used, as well as newspapers written in Korean or Chinese for those who live abroad, and other broadcasting media. 30.6% of Taiwanese_parents, 27.6% of American parents use the “Internet,” and it is assumed that they also use information from Chinese or English websites.

Fig. 6-1 Information sources most frequently used by Parents (very + somewhat often)



Topic 8

Child-care books and one's own parents are the reliable information sources for parents who have zero-year-old infants.

Spouses and preschool teachers help parents get information.

Information sources classified by children's age: (See page 85 for details.)

83.2% of the respondents are mothers. Here are the top four information sources mothers trust the most, classified by the children's age.

Mothers of zero-year-olds rely on "Books on child care and education."

Compared to other parents, more parents of four-year-olds have lived in Japan for less than three years. Also, their children's Japanese ability was significantly low. Therefore, parents of four-year-olds rely on "Spouses" the most.

Working mothers depend mostly on "Preschool teachers" as information sources. Also, parents of two-year-olds trust information given them by "Preschool teachers." In the process of language development of two-year-olds, parents might face the problem of dealing with children's native languages and Japanese. Parents rely on "Their own Parents" at every important stage of children's growth, which indicates that one's own parent is always the best support.

From the free description answers about the information parents trust:

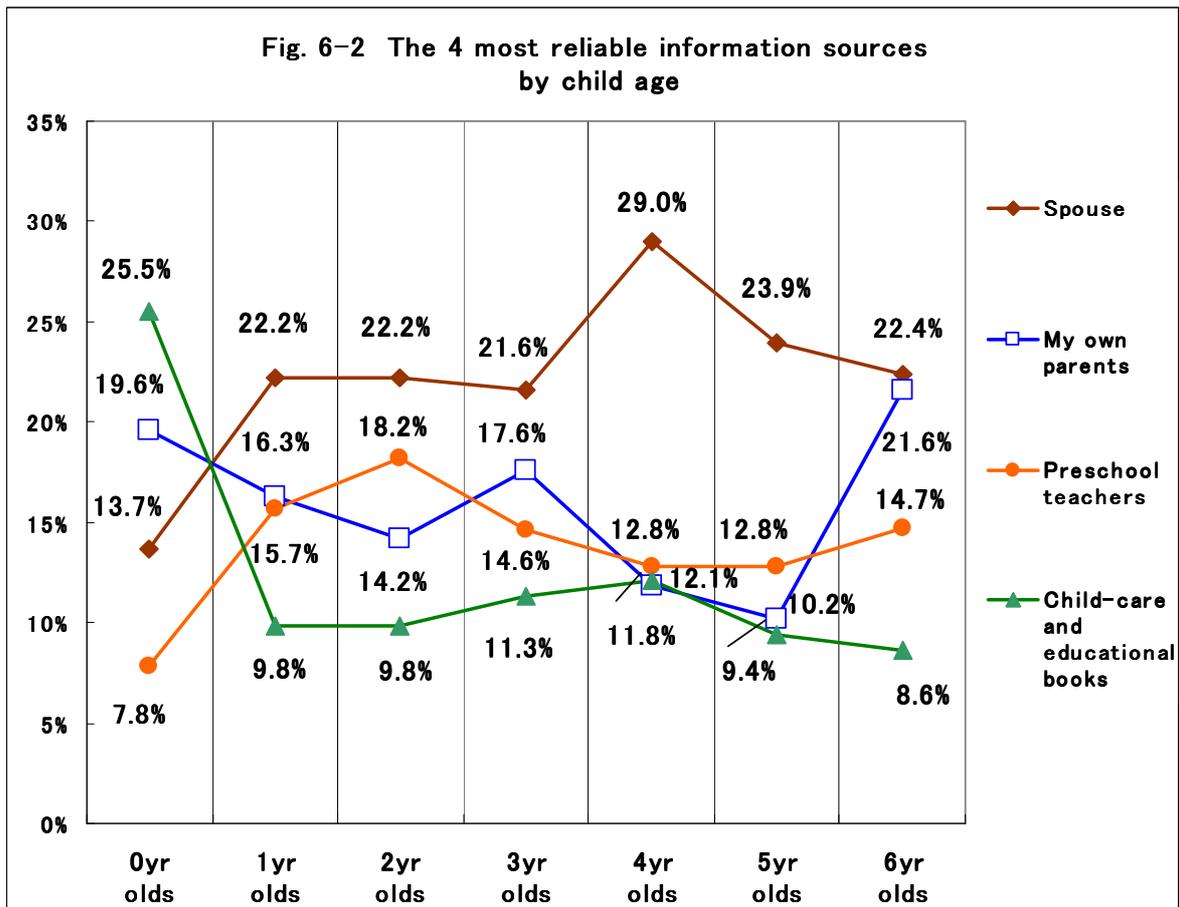
Spouse: "Since I live away from my parents and siblings, I mainly speak with my husband

We are advisers to each other." (day-care center, 4-year-old, boy/ mother, 39 years old/ 3 months)

Parents in home town: "I stay in touch with my mother once in a while by letters and telephone calls, although she is in Peru." (day-care center, 3-year-old, boy/ mother, 33 years old/ 11 years)

Preschool teachers: "I get information from the day-care center teacher's notebook, which tells me how my child behaves every day. I can trust this information the most, and I really appreciate the teacher's effort." (day-care center, 2-year-old, boy/ father, 39 years old/ Korea/ 4 years)

Books on child care: “I use technical books on infant education and child-rearing. I trust the books written by Brazilians, since they are from my own culture.” (,day-care center 3-year-old, boy/ mother, 35 years old/ Brazil/ 9 years)



Topic 9

The longer the residence, the more complaints parents have about discipline and educational views. More parents have anxieties about discrimination, bullying, and children's futures.

Free-description answers classified by the duration of residence in Japan: (See page 95 for details.)

The duration of residence determines the parents' concerns about preschool, child-rearing, worries about child care, and information network on child-rearing (as the main text shows you in Chapter 2 to Chapter 7).

It is assumed that the contents of the free-description answers show some characteristics classified by the duration of residence in Japan. Therefore, we set three categories. First, the issues that increase as parents reside longer in Japan, second, the issues that decreases as parents reside longer in Japan, and third, the issues that reappear when parents have resided three to ten years in Japan as shown in chapter 4.

1. Issues that increase in proportion to the duration of residence:

- *Frustration about Japanese discipline and views on education
- *Worries about children's futures in Japanese society
- *Necessities for education on international understanding and history
- *Racial discrimination and bullying
- *Japanese nationality and one's social caste in Japan

2. Issues that decrease in proportion to the duration of residence:

- *Requests for more information on child-rearing
- *Too busy to take enough care of the child
- *Socialization with Japanese parents
- *Worries about parents' own Japanese language ability
- *Hope for children to improve Japanese language ability
- *Requests for more understanding toward foreigners

3. **Issues that increase in a 3 to 10 year's residence and then decrease:**

- *Frustration about nursing and educational system
- *Hope for children to learn native language and culture
- *Compliments on Japanese nursing, health protection, medication.

