

## Children in Japan: Bibliography

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### Journal Articles

Bacon, William F. and Veronica Ichikawa. 1988. "Maternal Expectation, Classroom Experiences, and Achievement among Kindergartners in the United States and Japan." *Human Development*. 31:378-383.

This article compares Japanese kindergartners to American kindergartners, and scholastic expectations put on them by mothers and schools. Japanese kindergartners out perform American children on math and science tests. Interviews were performed with Japanese and American mothers and teachers to discover the differences in treatments of the two groups of children. Surprisingly, Japanese mothers and teachers demand less from the Japanese kindergartners, and they consider kindergarten a time for learning social skills, rather than math and writing. The authors consider the possibility that it is these realistic expectations that allow the children to learn and understand mathematical and scientific concepts in everyday life in Japan. Young children in Japan seem to have less stress to "grow up" put on them than in U.S. culture, although as they grow, parental and scholastic expectations increase.

Boocock, Sarane Spence. 1989. "Controlled Diversity: An Overview of the Japanese Preschool System." *Journal of Japanese Studies* 15(1):41-65.

Boocock argues that diverse groups with diverse interests are vying for control of the Japanese preschool system. She believes this reflects some fundamental disagreements about early childhood education. She first identifies the major variations in preschools and how these affect the outcomes of early education. She then explains the role of the government, the role of the teacher, and the role of the family in the preschool system and the education of children. Boocock concludes that not only is children's behavior shaped in the classroom, but also preschools themselves are controlled by a variety of agencies. Conflicts arise because of this over how exactly they should be run. Japanese cultural values and norms are always changing and the preschool system reflects this.

Chen, Chuansheng and Harold W. Stevenson. 1989 "Homework: A Cross-cultural Examination." *Child Development*. 60:551-561.

This study seeks to explain why children in Japan and China do better in elementary school than U.S. children. The authors studied children in first, third and fifth grades in each country. The study included tests, interviews of the children, their families, and the schools. They also looked at data on time spent in school or on work and attitudes towards homework. Aspects of elementary school in Japan were uncovered. Generally, the teacher is always in charge and the children are not split into groups. Japanese children are very attentive in school and don't goof off. They don't have a positive attitude towards homework, but they do feel the need to get it done. Japanese spend

more time in school, more time in additional after school classes (juku) and with tutors, and more time on homework than American children. Even so, they have more positive feelings towards school.

Crystal, David S. 1994. "Concept of Deviance in Children and Adolescents: The Case of Japan." *Deviant Behavior: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 15:241-266.

This article describes how specific forms of deviance reflect the cultural values and norms of Japan. It also examines different Japanese concepts of deviance. Crystal begins by discussing parental and social expectations and how the extent to which a child fulfills these expectations affects his or her deviant label. Traditional Japanese values of perseverance, effort, and group harmony are explored as aims of childrearing. Crystal comes up with four main themes regarding deviance in Japan: the changing definition of the "good" child, the fear of falling behind, the role of the mother versus the role of the father, and a lack of independence for children. The tensions arising from these themes contribute to deviant behaviors like the three that are explored: bullying, school refusal, and domestic violence. Despite a low incidence of these deviant behaviors, the Japanese see them as a problem that threatens fundamental cultural ideals.

Fukada, Hiromi, Seiko Fukada, and Joe Hicks. 1997. "The Relationship Between Leadership and Sociometric Status Among Preschool Children." *The Journal of Genetic Psychology* 158: 481-486.

This study explores the relationship between sociometric status and leadership roles among preschool children in Japan. The authors assigned each student a sociometric status through a formula which took into account who reported them as their friends and who rejected them as friends. In other words, they were looking at the popularity of the children in relation to their leadership skills. They inspected the two areas of leadership as the facilitation of play (which included initiating and monitoring play) and "consideration-evaluation of play" (which included giving direction and helping others). Their results show that children of a higher sociometric status scored better in both areas of leadership than those of a lower status.

Hsia, Hsiao-Chan and John H. Scanzoni. 1996. "Rethinking the Roles of Japanese Women." *Journal of Comparative Family Studies* 27:309-29.

This article looks to measure the woman's social position in Japan. The authors point out that Japanese values are very different from western values. In Japan the woman's role of homemaker and mother is considered very important and thus is well respected. The woman's relationship with her children is very important to her. Many Japanese women are able to achieve fulfillment from their household and motherhood duties, and for this reason do not feel pressure to seek outside fulfillment from employment. This article concludes that the Japanese view of women's role is very different, and because of this researchers must be very careful when judging women's position in Japan.

Ishii-Kunts, Masako. 1992. "Are Japanese Families "Fatherless"?" *Sociology and Social Research* 76:105-200.

Japanese men spent a lot of time at work through out the period of Japan's economic recovery from WWII. In fact, Japanese families were even thought of being 'fatherless'. This lack of a fatherly figure has often been blamed for youth problems such as violence, suicide, and refusal to go to school. This study looks at the roles of fathers in their children's lives and that the children's perceptions of their fathers. The presence of fathers is strongly felt in Japanese families despite less direct contact. In the father's absence, Japanese mothers take on the job of building up an authoritative image of the father for the children. Although fathers are more absent in Japan than in the US and Germany, Japanese children feel that their fathers are dependable and they care about their well being and enjoy talking to them.

Jiro, Saito. 1999. "Grownups Should Listen to the Kids." *Japan Quarterly* 46(April-June):83-88.

Jiro argues that the recent trend of classroom disintegration in Japan is not the fault of the children, but that of the school. He describes a classroom mentality that is unsympathetic to children. He explains that children grow out of their "blind obedience" to adults much earlier now and that schools need to reflect this. Lessons are too boring for contemporary Japanese children. Also, Jiro believes that every school should serve three functions. It should be a daycare facility, a kind of social club for children, and an educational institution. The educational function of school has been blown out of proportion to the extent that Japanese children do not want to learn or go to school. Schools must switch to lessons that are not necessarily "proper," but allow children to explore topics of interest to them.

Kamo, Yoshinori and Rebecca L. Warner. 1997. "The Effect of Children's Sex on Parent's Gender-Role Attitudes: An Extension Using Japanese Data." *Journal of Comparative Family Studies* 28: 204-219.

This study addresses the how the sex of children in Japan affects their parents' attitudes about gender roles. The authors hypothesize that men having daughters in Japan will cause the men to reinforce the traditional gender roles because Japanese fathers are known to be very protective of their daughters. Through a survey of around 1,000 Japanese families around Tokyo, the authors determined this to be true. Fathers with any daughters were less likely to encourage gender equality of the roles in the household and the division of household work than if they had only sons. Mothers who had only daughters, on the other hand, tended to support more of an equality of roles than if they had any sons.

Kariya, Takehiko and James E. Rosenbaum. 1987. "Self-Selection in Japanese Junior High Schools: A Longitudinal Study of Students' Educational Plans." *Sociology of Education* 60: 168-180.

Because of the educational system in Japan, students are forced to select their career tracks at a young age. They have to apply to get in to a good high school, and if they are not accepted into a university-track high school, their chances to get into college are almost ruined. They still have to perform well once being accepted into a good high school, but the race begins in junior high so that they can even get to that point. The authors think that this system is beneficial because it

encourages students to analyze their progress and choose their plans accordingly. It forces them to be realistic. However, it does not encourage them to retain hope if they do not stay on top of the system.

Kitamura, Toshimori, Masumi Sugawara, Satoru Shima, and Mari Toda. 1998. "Relationship of Order and Number of Siblings to Perceived Parental Attitudes in Childhood." *The Journal of Social Psychology* 138:342-350.

This study examined the link between the gender and number of children in a family and the attitudes toward parenting. The researchers found that as the number of siblings increased, the children viewed their parents as less loving and more neglectful. The study also found that the gender of the children affected the children's attitudes toward the parents. Both the number of older sisters and the number of younger brothers reduced the overprotection of parents. The study also found that when parents have already had one or more sons they are more likely to reduce care for their future children, especially if they are girls. This study points to the existence of a strong gender bias in Japan.

Kojima, Hideo. 1986, "Japanese Concepts of Child Development from the Mid-17<sup>th</sup> to Mid-19<sup>th</sup> Century." *International Journal of Behavioral Development*. 9:315-329.

This article looks at Japanese conceptions of children and child development during a time in history when the influence of Western values was low. Kojima studied childrearing techniques during the Edo period (1600-1867) using articles written by men from all social statuses during that time. These articles were mainly addressed to fathers, who were thought responsible for decisions in childrearing and education, though a mother's influence on a child's personality was addressed. The Japanese view children, even infants, as autonomous beings who learn things early through imitation. It was thought that children needed to be surrounded by positive models: children were thought to be born good beings, who can only be tarnished by negative stimuli. With young children, the practice was to observe the children and assign appropriate tasks for their age when they appear ready, rather than to force them into learning. Gender expectations became apparent after the age of 7, when girls were taught to become obedient, quiet, subtle, and good at housework. Kojima believes that most of these practices have encountered little change.

Kojima, Hideo. 1996. "Japanese Childrearing Advice in its Cultural, Social, and Economic Contexts." *International Journal of Behavioral Development* 19(2): 373-391.

This article describes childrearing advice and theories through five eras in Japanese history. It relates these theories to their cultural, economic, and social contexts. The social conditions of each epoch provide the basis for prescribed childrearing techniques. From the mid 17<sup>th</sup> to early 18<sup>th</sup> century, the goals of childrearing and education were based on Confucian moral teachings. From the late 18<sup>th</sup> to mid 19<sup>th</sup> century, a moral movement based on the universality of morality and the equality of the social classes was injected into childrearing teachings. The next era was marked by an importation of Western ideas and teachings. During the 1910s and 1920s, educational success was the most important aspect of raising a child and the child study movement became popular in Japan. Finally, modern Japanese childrearing techniques reflect a fiercely competitive struggle to have the smartest child.

Although in each time period new theories about children are introduced, the basic elements of Japanese childrearing have remained relatively consistent.

Kouno, Akihisa and Charles F. Johnson. 1995. "Child Abuse and Neglect in Japan: Coin-Operated-Locker Babies." *Child Abuse & Neglect* 19:25-31.

This article emphasizes the necessity of improved child welfare organizations and laws in Japan. Before the modern era, it was impossible for many Japanese families to raise more than one or two children and so infanticide was a common practice. Child abuse was also much more prevalent as it was not always recognized as criminal activity. Although the occurrence of infanticide has decreased, reports of abuse cases are increasing in Japan. Recently, the media has paid more attention to child abuse and neglect and organizations have been formed to deal with the problem. However, old laws that do not distinguish between discipline and abuse and the insufficient number of social workers are hindering progress. Social welfare budgets and priorities need to be revised.

Kumagai, Fumie. 1995. "Families in Japan: Beliefs and Realities." *Journal of Comparative Family Studies* 26:135-163.

This article examines the difference between the traditional and the modern family. Japan has acquired a unique mix of tradition and acceptance of the current times. Some of the factors that have influenced their culture are women in the workforce, lack of residential space, and a shift from rural to urban living. Although Japanese culture is moving in a similar direction as other industrial nations, there is still strong indications of their past belief system. Women are pressured to stay home when they have children. When women decide to have children, they usually leave the workforce until childrearing is complete.

Lewis, Catherine C. 1984. "Cooperation and Control in Japanese Nursery Schools." *Comparative Education Review*. 28:69-84.

This was a very interesting study on Japanese nursery schools: a place where 3 to 6 year old children go to be prepared for elementary schools. These schools are run very differently than those in America: the adult gives the role of authority, peace maker, and punisher to the children themselves. A popular Japanese concept is at work in these schools: children under the age of 6 don't purposely do wrong. Thus, teachers in nursery schools don't scold children or tell them to stop doing things. They believe that if children understood that what they were doing was wrong, they wouldn't do it, and that you can't tell children what to do. They have to believe and understand the rules of society. Children in the schools are told to consult other children for answers, help, or advice.

Mann, Leon, Hiroataka Mitsui, Gery Beswick, and Rosslyn V. Harmoni. 1994. "A Study of Japanese and Australian Children's Respect for Others." *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology* 25(March):133-145.

This study examines cultural differences in the amount of respect paid to adults, teachers, friends, and neighbors. The results challenge cultural stereotypes about strict Japanese rules of etiquette. Japanese children showed fewer tendencies to be respectful in all categories than Australian children.

The discussion of the results suggests that (in Japanese families), children have a secure and well-defined relationship with their parents and so occasional lapses of respect are tolerated. Teachers and parents command a significantly higher level of respect than friends and neighbors. This supports the notion that Japanese children are more centered on their own lives and so have not developed necessary respect for others. The article suggests that perhaps the best explanation for the results gained is that Japanese social rules are not universal, but dependent on the situation and people involved.

Mizuta, I., C. Sahn-Waxler, P.M. Cole, N.Hiruma. 1996. "A Cross-cultural Study of Preschoolers' Attachment: Security and Sensitivity in Japanese and US Dyads." *International Journal of Behavioral Development*. 19:141-159.

This study examined the behaviors of American and Japanese children and their mothers when separated and then reunited. Independence and a taste for exploration are characteristics that are valued by Americans, and not surprisingly, children were less clingy and more apt to continue their games when their mothers returned than Japanese children. In Japan, 'self' is defined by the sum of relationships, rather than by an individual alone: interdependence, respect and caring are highly held values. Japanese children showed more *amae* (a Japanese term roughly translated to mean a desire for bodily closeness) and were more likely to cling to their mothers. Japanese culture accepts and indulges in this sort of behavior, while in America it is seen as an immature quality. Because *amae* is enjoyed and accepted in Japanese culture it cannot be perceived as a lack of self-confidence.

Morgan, S. Philip and Kiyosi Hiroshima. 1983. "The Persistence of Extended Family Residence in Japan: Anachronism or Alternative Strategy?" *American Sociological Review* 48:269-281.

This article examines whether extended family residence is just a tradition that is fading or if it is actually a practice that is beneficial in modern society. The authors conclude that extended family residence actually serves to promote many modern day practices such as women entering the work force. When the extended family lives at home it allows the wife to get a job and not worry about finding quality childcare. At the time the research was done there was a lack of quality childcare available. The study concluded that beyond childcare there are many practical benefits for extended family residence, and this is the reason it is still prominent in Japan.

Ohbuchi, Ken-ichi and Kobun Sato. 1994. "Children's Reactions to Mitigating Accounts: Apologies, Excuses, and Intentionality of Harm." *The Journal of Social Psychology* 134: 5-13.

This article is based on a study about children's perception of harmdoers and their forgiveness of them. The authors performed the study on second and fifth graders in Japan. In the study, the harmdoers either apologized, made excuses, or gave no account for their actions. The study was performed in both the situation of intentional or unintentional harm being done. The authors found that with the older children, apologies were quite effective in obtaining forgiveness, more so in the case of unintentional harm. Excuses were less effective, but still merited forgiveness at times. The younger children, on the other hand, tended to think badly of the harmdoers no matter what the mitigation attempts, implying that they did not quite understand the mitigation process.

Okano, Kaori. 1995. "Rational Decisions Making and School-based Job Referrals for High School Students in Japan." *Sociology of Education* 68:31-47.

The school-based job-referral system in Japan helps place students in the workplace immediately after high school graduation. The companies who need employees work directly with the vocational high schools to recruit students. The students work with their teachers to decide on a company that fits their skills and whose entrance exam they will be likely to pass. Some claim that this process limits the students' flexibility to choose what type of job they will have, but the author (through her observation at two Japanese vocational high schools) argues that it helps students to make logical, informed decisions about where they want to work.

Power, T.G., H. Kobayashi-Winata, M.L. Kelley. 1992. "Childrearing Patterns in Japan and the United States: A Cluster Analytic Study." *International Journal of Behavioral Development*. 15:185-205.

These researchers collected data from mothers of three to six-year-old children in Japan in the United States. The families were from middle to upper class status. The authors discovered that Japanese mothers set less rules, tolerate more misbehaviors, and are more likely to use reasoning with their children than American mothers who set rules and punish by yelling or taking away possessions. The Japanese mothers reported that they believed that young children are not mature enough to understand rules, and therefore should not have many rules placed upon them. Respect for others and authority is highly valued by the Japanese, and the harshest punishments come from disrespect for authority. They also found that American childrearing techniques are more common in Japan than Japanese techniques are in America.

Rosenbaum, James E. and Takehiko Kariya. 1991. "Do School Achievements Affect the Early Jobs of High School Graduates in the United States and Japan?" *Sociology of Education* 64: 78-95.

In Japan, employers work closely with the high schools to recruit employees, but in the United States they do not. Consequently, the early jobs of students in Japan are affected by the grades that they earn in high school, whereas grades play virtually no part in this in the United States. These facts are based on looking at samples of the High School and Beyond survey in the United States and its equivalent in Japan, as well as interviews with teachers and employers and a survey of teachers. The authors maintain that the hiring system in Japan provides clearer information for the employers and better incentives for high scholastic achievement in school, and that the United States should try to adopt a similar system.

Seagoe, May. 1962. "Children's Play as an Indicator of Cross-Cultural and Intra-Cultural Differences." *Journal of Educational Sociology* 35: 278-283.

This article details a study in which children's play was observed amongst first and sixth graders in both Japan and the United States. The play was categorized into different types depending on whether it was individual or group, formal or informal, or involving the participation of adults. The researchers examined age, gender, and rural versus urban environment to find both cross-culture and intra-culture differences in the most common type of play. The results show that Japanese

children are most often engaged in informal group play than any other type, and that play involving adults was the least common.

Shotaro, Takahashi. 1999. "Chaos in Elementary Classrooms." *Japan Quarterly* 46:78-82.

This article examines the increasing problem of classroom chaos in Japan. The elementary school system in Japan had been very stable since its establishment in the late 1800's, but Shotaro argues that the age of the system is precisely the problem. He explains that there has been a recent transformation of children since the years of economic growth in the 1960s. Children used to treat teachers with an almost religious respect. Children's behavior in school and towards teachers has changed because of several factors. These include extra contact with more than one teacher, large class size, and an antiquated traditional style of instruction. Class disintegration, Shotaro says, will spur reform in the Japanese educational system.

Stevenson, David Lee and David P. Baker. 1992. "Shadow Education and Allocation in Formal Schooling: Transition to University in Japan." *American Journal of Sociology* 97: 1639-1657.

Shadow education is a method used by Japanese students to enhance their education and give them an edge in the competition to be accepted into a university. They are educational activities that take place outside of regular schooling, and consist of practice examinations, correspondence courses, private tutors, private after-school classes, and full time preparation after high school. The authors find that families are more likely to involve their children in this costly supplication to their education if their children are male, already have good grades in school, or if the family is of a higher socioeconomic status. They also find that students who participate in practice examinations, correspondence courses, or full time training after high school are more likely to be accepted into prestigious universities. Those who have a tutor, though, are less likely to be accepted, and after-school classes do not seem to affect the numbers much one way or the other.

Vereijken, Carolus M.J.L., J. Marianne Riksen-Walraven, and Cornelis Van Lieshout. 1997. "Mother-Infant Relationships in Japan - Attachment, Dependency, and *Amae*." *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology* 28(July):442-462.

This article describes the concepts of attachment, dependency, and *amae*, and explains how they apply to the Japanese mother-child relationship. Dependency is defined as the constant need for comfort, approval, or attention. Attachment, a more positive concept, allows the child to develop more autonomy. Behaviors like crying or following are only used to ensure safety and survival. *Amae* is a Japanese concept that is more emotional. It implies a desire for close contact and love. In Western cultures, autonomy is more highly valued and children are taught to suppress any sort of dependence. In Japanese society, *amae* is not suppressed in early childhood and even encouraged. The researchers found that Japanese mothers favor attachment security over dependency or *amae*. The behavior of a securely attached child was the most desirable for the mother.

Zahn-Waxler, C., R.J. Friedman, P.M. Cole, I. Mizuta, N. Hiruma.1996. "Japanese and United States Preschool Children's Responses to Conflict and Distress." *Child Development* 67:2462-2477.

These researchers studied a possible origin of the differences in child behaviors in different countries. Researchers look to the ways American and Japanese children deal with conflicts and social problems, and how their manners relate to their culture's childrearing techniques, to see if there a tie, thereby strengthening the argument of nurture over nature. Differences in socialization techniques are presented: Japanese mothers act soothingly, while American mothers interact with their children more with more active activities. Japanese people value more interdependence in their culture, while Americans value independence above all. Japanese children showed a tendency to be less aggressive, and showed more regulation over their emotions. In addition, Japanese mothers encouraged less expressiveness with emotions than American mothers.

### **Selected Books**

Ben-Ari, Eyal. 1997. *Body Projects in Japanese Childcare: Culture, Organization and Emotions in Preschool*. Richmond, UK: Curzon Press.

Peak, Lois. 1991. *Learning to Go to School in Japan: The Transition from Home to Preschool Life*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Tobin, Joseph J., David Y. H. Wu, and Dana H. Davidson. 1989. *Preschool in Three Cultures: Japan, China, and the United States*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

White, Merry. 1993. *The Material Child: Coming of Age in Japan and America*. Berkeley: University of California Press.