

## The Parental Viewpoint of Women Who Do Not Have Children

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In 2013, in collaboration with the Benesse Educational Research and Development Institute, we conducted an interview investigation with 12 married women, aged 30 to 37, who do not have children in order to discover how they feel about having a child.

Some interviewees could imagine themselves having children in the future, while others did not have a realistic image of having any children. Regardless of their viewpoints, all of the participants stated that child-rearing is a subject closely related to economics and educational expenses.

The rate of Japanese public spending on families when compared to the GDP is small, and the burden of educational expenses is high. However, the survey showed that economics does not necessarily cause people to avoid having children. There is a straightforward relationship such as “Education will cost money, so we will save money for the future.”

In addition to negative elements reported in previous quantitative investigations, such as restraint, a drop in living standards, a lack of free time, or anxiety about hard work, the interviewees stated other negative influences such as changes in marital relationships, aging of the body, and environmental changes.

Finally, women who had little experience with being close to children found it difficult to imagine becoming a parent in reality. Social changes in families and their activities, isolated parenting, and a lack of places for mothers and children can prevent these women from having contact with a child. Negative information from mass media regarding social issues about parenting enhances negative viewpoints among those women.

This investigation revealed women’s attitudes about economic challenges, negative

images of having a child, and associations with experiences of having contact with a child.