

Japan

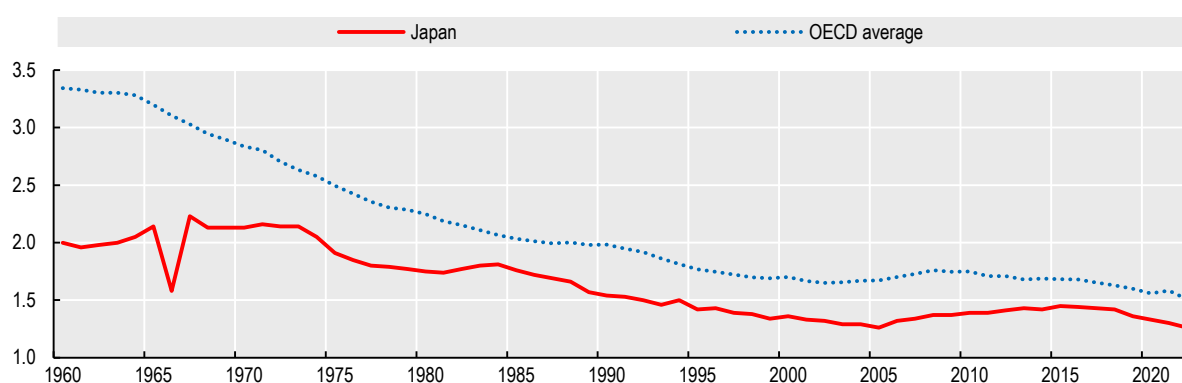
Spotlight on fertility trends

In 2022, 770 759 babies were born in Japan, corresponding to a total fertility rate (TFR) of 1.26 children per woman, which is below the OECD average of 1.51.

Across the OECD on average, the TFR steadily declined from 1960 until 2002. There was a small fertility rebound in the 2000s until 2008, upon which the TFR dropped to an all-time low of 1.5 in 2022. Fertility rates in Japan have been below the OECD-average since 1960. The TFR fell to 1.26 children per woman in 2005 and despite a small rebound afterwards, the TFR in 2022 was back at its 2005-level.

Figure 1. In Japan total fertility rates have been below the OECD average over the past decades

Number of children per woman aged 15 to 49, Japan and OECD average, 1960 to 2022



Note: Births dropped 26% in 1966 in Japan because of the “Hinoe-Uma (Fire-Horse)” superstition.

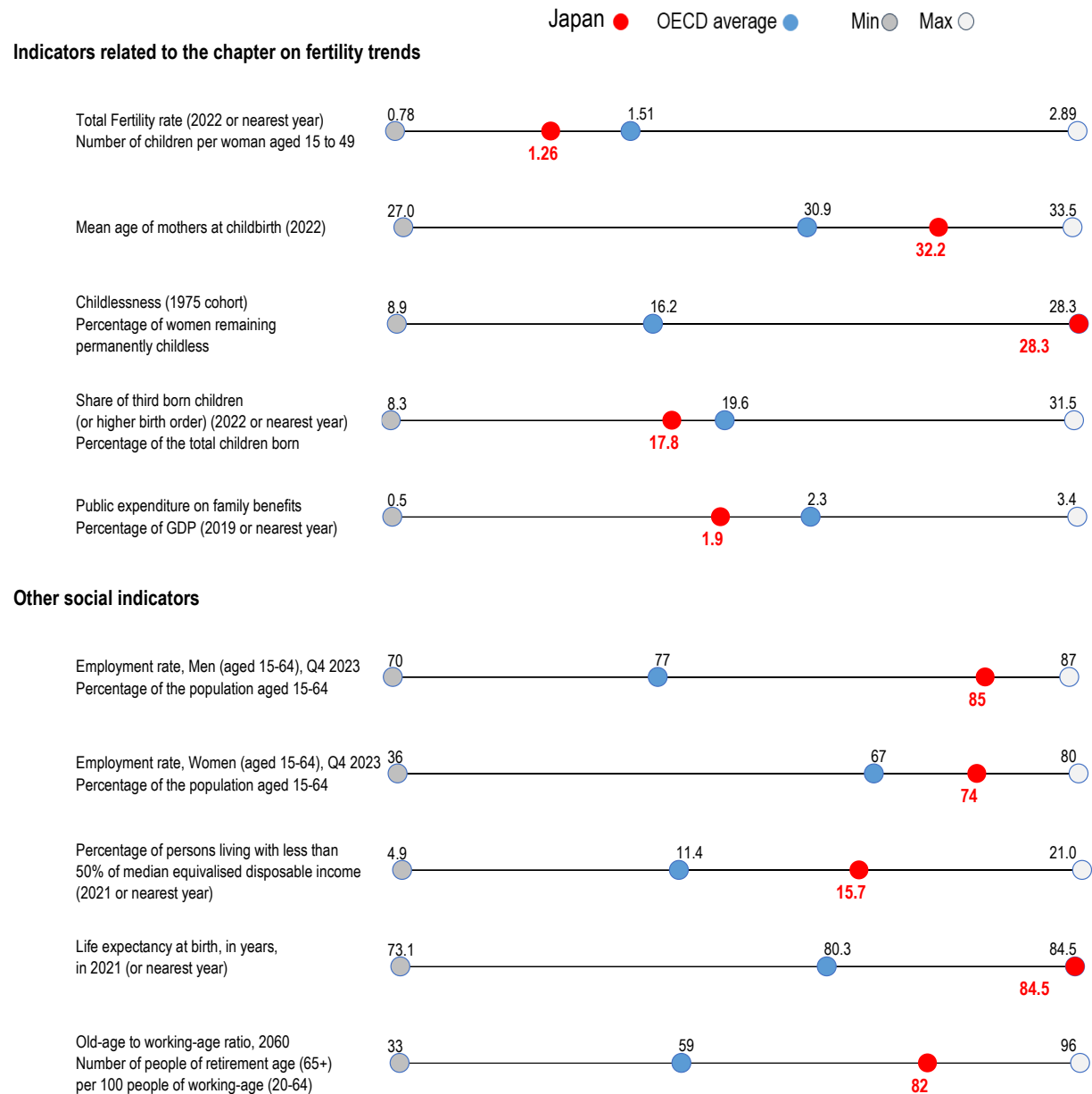
Source: Figure 1.1 in OECD (2024), *Society at a Glance 2024*, <https://stat.link/vxdinc>.

Many factors affect fertility choices, including employment of both men and women, unemployment, financial support for families (e.g. paid parental leave and childcare supports) and housing costs (Figure 1.7, <https://stat.link/8zu7m3> and Figure 1.14, <https://stat.link/ois3k8>). However other factors such as (financial) uncertainty as well as norms and attitudes also play a role. In many OECD countries, the desire to establish oneself in labour and housing markets have contributed to a delay of childbearing. In Japan, the mean age of mothers at childbirth rose from 29.6 years in 2000 to 32.2 years in 2022, about one year above the OECD on average (Figure 1.5, <https://stat.link/163n2d>).

The fall in TFRs is related to women having fewer children and/or none at all. Childlessness has been on the rise across the OECD, but there is cross-national variation in timing and extent. In Japan, there was a significant rise in permanent childlessness from 12% for women born in 1955 to 28% for women born in 1975 – the highest incidence of childlessness across the OECD (Figure 1.3, <https://stat.link/mvkw3b>).

How does Japan compare?

Selection of indicators related to the chapter on fertility trends and other social indicators



Source: OECD (2024), *Society at a Glance 2024*, <https://stat.link/vxdInc>.