

## The Second Survey of the Influence of the Great East Japan Earthquake on Child-rearing

Benesse® Institute for Child Sciences and Parenting

### ●Regarding this survey

In addition to devastation caused by tremors and tsunami, the Great East Japan Earthquake (hereafter “earthquake”) of March 11, 2011 also resulted in an accident at the Fukushima No. 1 nuclear power plant. No doubt, conditions in the aftermath of the earthquake have been stressful for parents and children in various ways, affecting even daily life, play, and parent-child relationships.

Surveys were conducted in May 2011 and January 2012 on the condition of children since the earthquake and changes in the mother’s child-raising approach and practices. The surveys targeted mothers with children, 0-6 years old who were not yet attending school, in three regions (Tohoku, the Tokyo metropolitan area, and Other than Tohoku and the metropolitan area). The results compare and analyze changes at the three different times (immediately following the earthquake, 2 months later, and 10 months later) and by region (Tohoku, the Tokyo Metropolitan Area, and Other than Tohoku and the Tokyo Metropolitan Area).

### ●Findings from the result of the survey

Ten months after the earthquake, the survey shows that a tendency of dependence among preschoolers in the Tohoku area has increased as a result of stress due to a change in living environment, especially the reduction of time spent playing outside. This increased feeling of dependence is thought to come from separation anxiety which causes children to fear that once they are separated from someone or something very important, they might never get them back again. On the other hand, surprisingly, children who experienced the earthquake came to know a sense of gratitude and kindness toward others and to foster sympathy despite the stressful life they are living.

Mothers in the Tohoku area are raising their children while making all kinds of efforts in order to protect their child's life; taking counter-measures against radiation and collecting information about it, for example, which they did not have to do at all before the earthquake. More than half of the mothers responded that they still feel depressed, however, at the same time a relatively high percentage of them also feel happy about the fact that they can raise their children. The earthquake is thought to have made mothers in the region feel the preciousness of life much more deeply than before.

Since the mothers' depressed feelings have a direct effect on their children, improvement is urgently needed. The depression stems from concerns over radiation, delay in the reconstruction, change of the father’s employment and overall domestic finance, many of which are beyond the capacity individuals can handle and need continual measures and support from society as a whole. At the same time, mothers in the region tend to feel that it is essential to create an environment that soothes stress. Providing places where mothers can speak their mind or talk about their concerns and make opportunities or events that they can enjoy should be included in this crucial support. We, as adults, have to continue to address this situation in order to realize a secure and safe society for children.

## ● Survey design

|                   |  |
|-------------------|--|
| <b>Theme</b>      | <b>The Second Survey of the Influence of the Great East Japan Earthquake on Child-rearing</b>  |
| <b>Sample</b>     | Mothers who have preschoolers (0-6)  |
| <b>Area</b>       | Tohoku-area: Iwate prefecture, Fukushima prefecture<br>The metropolitan-area: Saitama prefecture, Chiba prefecture, Tokyo, Kanagawa prefecture<br>Other than Tohoku and the Metropolitan area: Hokkaido, Aichi prefecture, Osaka, Hyogo prefecture, Fukuoka prefecture |
| <b>Population</b> | 3,138  |
| <b>Period</b>     | 13 - 16 January, 2012  |
| <b>Method</b>     | Online questionnaire   |
| <b>Topics</b>     | Life and situation of children after the earthquake, feelings toward child-rearing, concerns about life, reliable information, what they expect Japan to do, relations with others and so forth  |

## Sample

### ·By prefecture

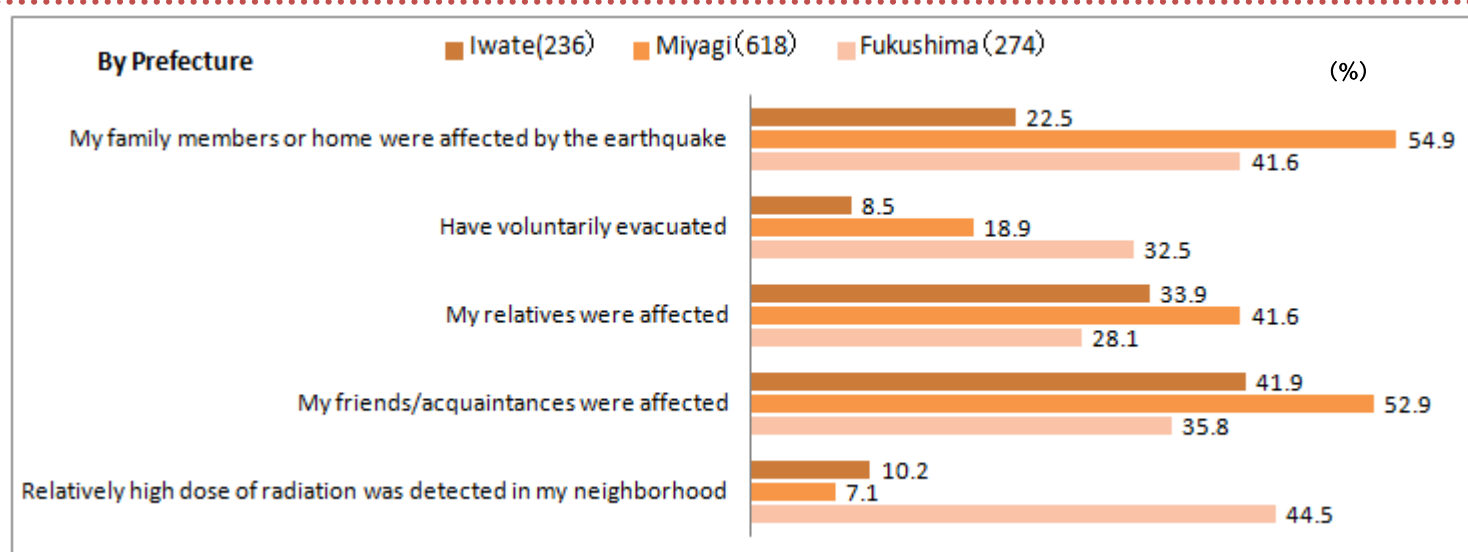
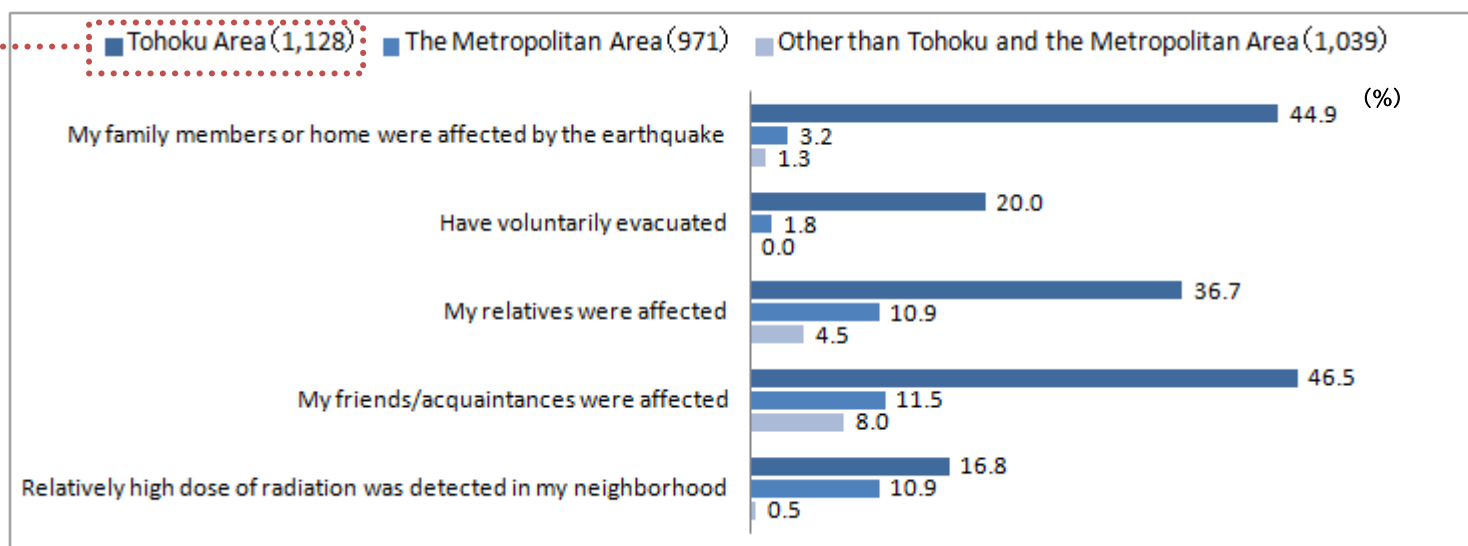
|           | Tohoku Area | The Metropolitan Area | Other than Tohoku and the Metropolitan Area |
|-----------|-------------|-----------------------|---|
| Iwate     | 236         | —                     | —   |
| Miyagi    | 618         | —                     | —   |
| Fukushima | 274         | —                     | —   |
| Saitama   | —           | 174                   | —   |
| Chiba     | —           | 155                   | —   |
| Tokyo     | —           | 339                   | —   |
| Kanagawa  | —           | 303                   | —   |
| Hokkaido  | —           | —                     | 169   |
| Aichi     | —           | —                     | 247   |
| Osaka     | —           | —                     | 302   |
| Hyogo     | —           | —                     | 175   |
| Fukuoka   | —           | —                     | 146   |
| Total     | 1,128       | 971                   | 1,039                                       |

### ·By children's age

| Age   | Tohoku Area | The Metropolitan Area | Other than Tohoku and the Metropolitan Area |
|-------|-------------|-----------------------|---|
| 0     | 175         | 29                    | 38  |
| 1     | 229         | 185                   | 182   |
| 2     | 184         | 164                   | 180   |
| 3     | 167         | 158                   | 161   |
| 4     | 151         | 155                   | 166   |
| 5     | 134         | 169                   | 194   |
| 6     | 88          | 111                   | 118   |
| Total | 1,128       | 971                   | 1,039                                       |

## The Condition of Affected People

◆Q. Answer "yes" to all of the items that apply to your situation regarding the earthquake



※Excerpted 5 items from 14 items

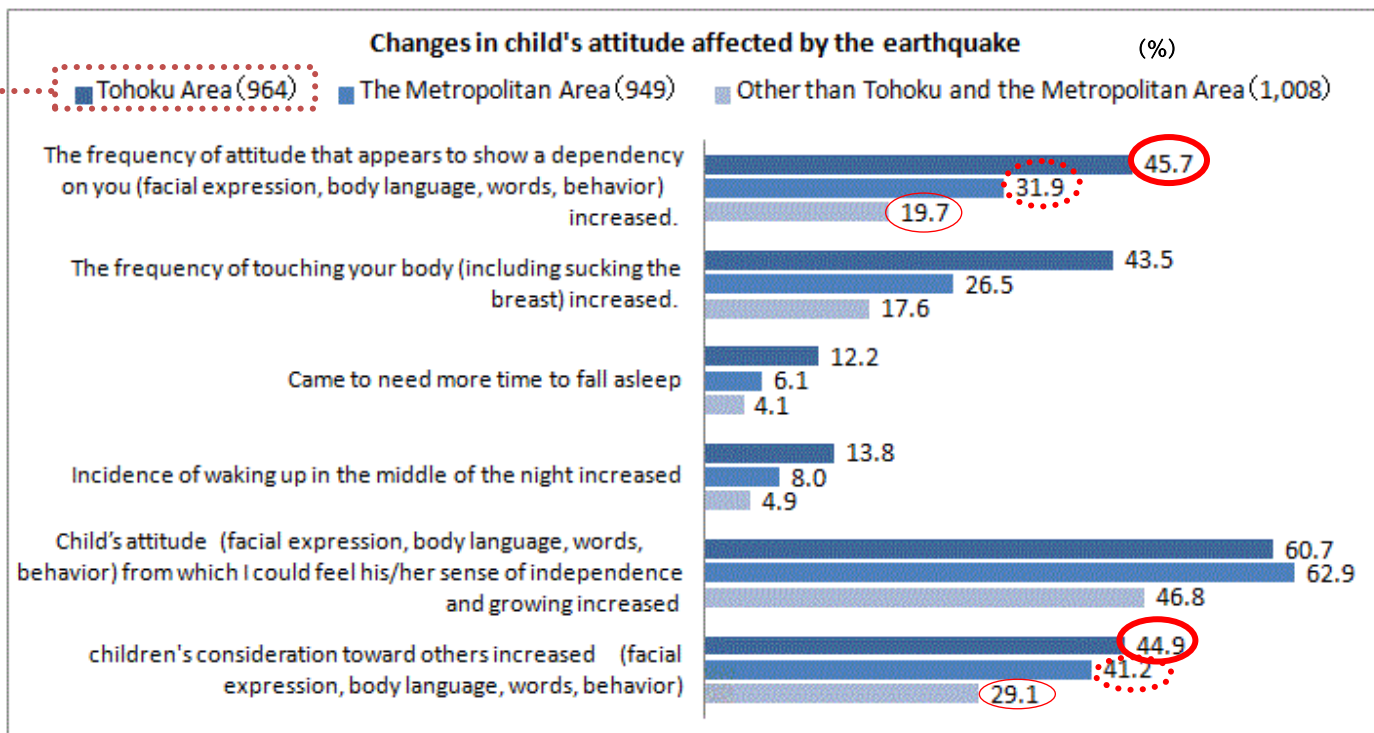
## ●Survey result: details

1. When the survey was conducted, January, 2012, one of the signs of stress in children, “increased tendency of dependence” was seen in descending order of percentage: Tohoku 45.7%, the metropolitan area 31.9%, other than Tohoku and the metropolitan area 19.7%

By prefecture: Iwate 41.3%, Miyagi 43.2%, and Fukushima 55.4%, Fukushima’s percentage was the highest.

Mothers who noticed a sense of independence and growing in their children's attitude were: Tohoku 60.7%, the metropolitan area 62.9%, other than Tohoku and the metropolitan area 46.8%. Children in Tohoku and the metropolitan area occupy more than 60 percent respectively.

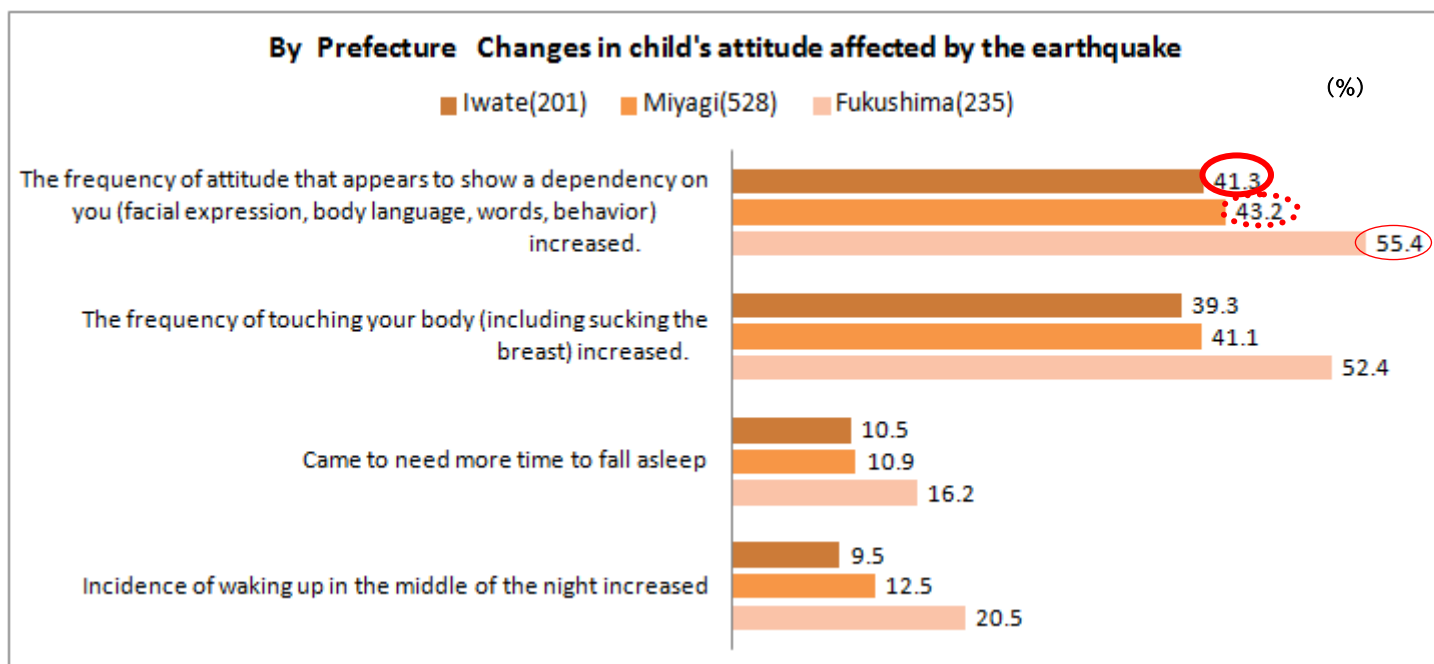
◆Q. Please answer comparing your child's attitude before the earthquake and the last two weeks. Did you see any change of attitude in your child regarding each of the following items?



※Percentage of "really applies" + "somewhat applies"

※Only mothers who have a child older than 11 months answered

※Excerpted 6 items from 20 items



※Percentage of "really applies" + "somewhat applies"

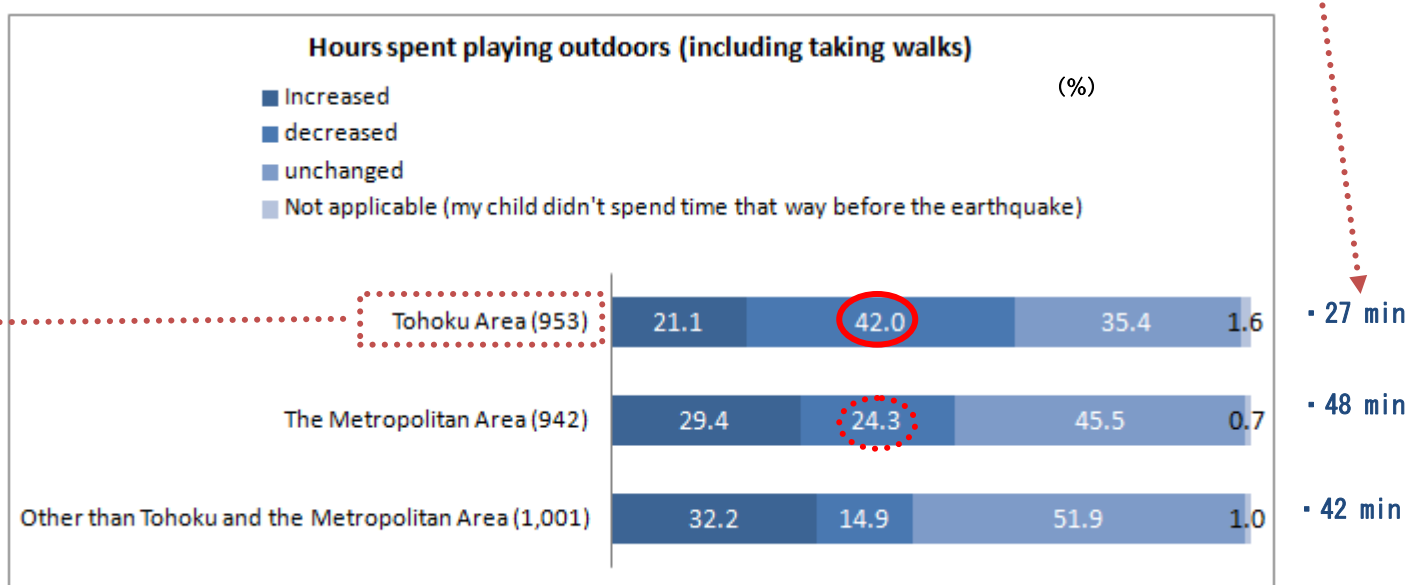
※Only mothers who have a child older than 11 months answered

※Excerpted 4 items from 20 items

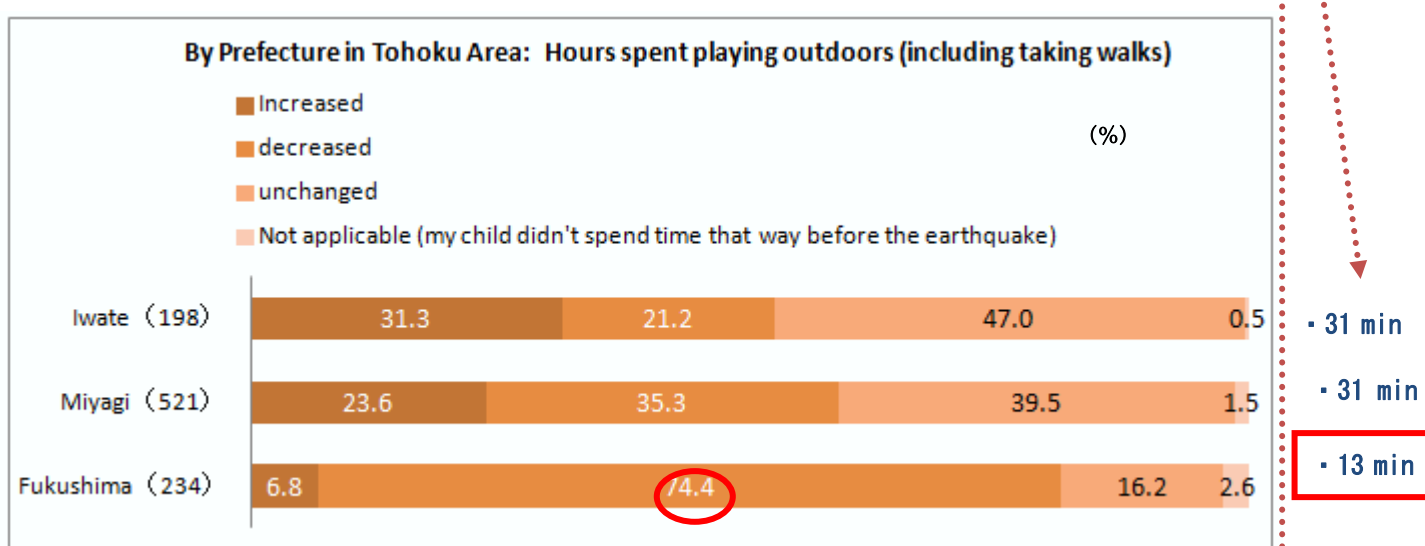
2. When the survey was conducted, in January 2012, the percentage of mothers who answered that time spent playing outside decreased in comparison with one year ago was: Tohoku 42.0%, the metropolitan area 24.3%. By prefecture the percentage of mothers in Fukushima was the highest, 74.4%. As for its reason, 97.1% of mothers in Fukushima mentioned their concerns over the effects of radiation on their child's health. (The table is not shown.) It can be seen that a reduction in time spent playing outdoors affects a child's attitude and daily habits.

- ◆ Q. Comparing this time last year with the last two weeks, how has your child's way of spending time doing the following things changed? (not including the time the child spent at kindergarten or nursery school)
- ◆ Q. Please answer about weekdays during the last two weeks. How much time does your child spend doing the following things? (not including the time the child spent at kindergarten or nursery school)

The average length of time spent playing outside (including walking)



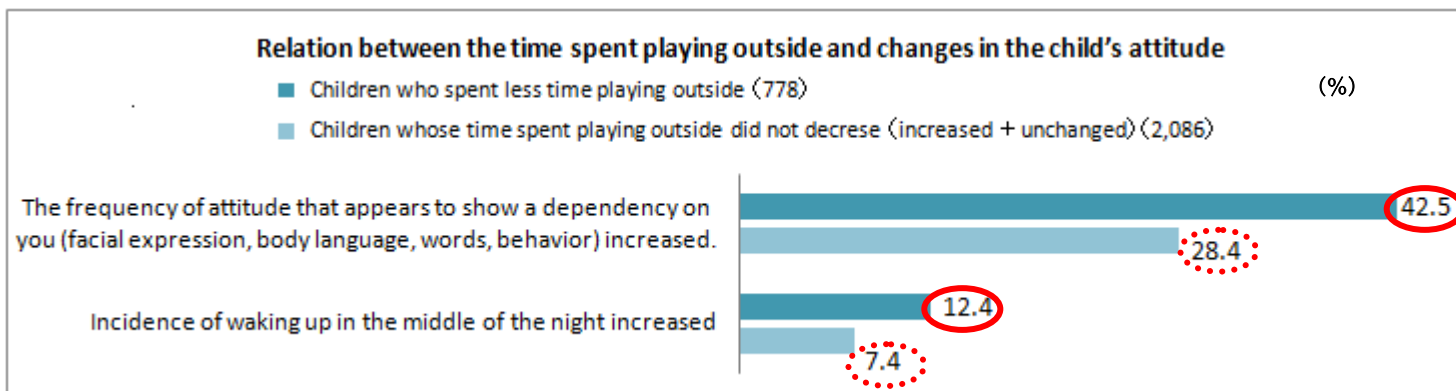
The average length of time spent playing outside (including walking)



※Only mothers who have a child above the age of one answered.

※The average length of time spent playing outside (including walking) was calculated as 0 minutes, 15 minutes (approximately 15 minutes), 60 minutes (approximately one hour), or 300 minutes (more than 4 hours). Excluded were respondents who did not spend any time (at present or one year before) that could be considered playing outside (including walking) and those who did not know the time spent per day.

▼Children who spent less time playing outside are likely to show “an increased dependant attitude” and “an increase in cases of waking in the night”.



※Only mothers who have a child above the age of one answered.

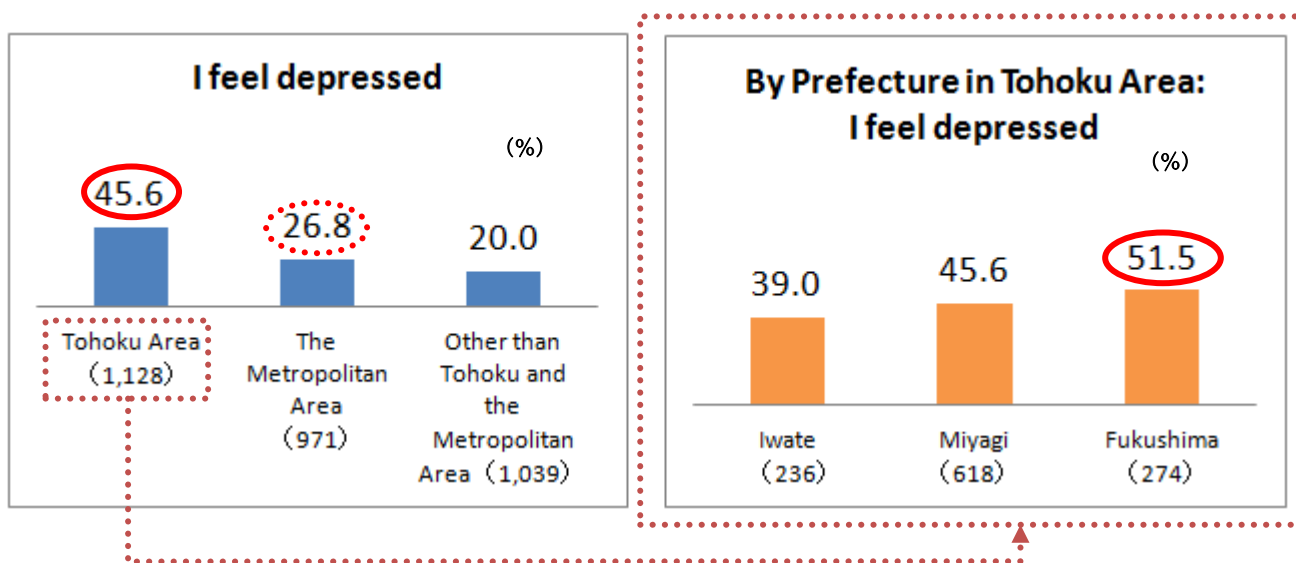
※Percentage of "really applies" + "somewhat applies" to the items of “The frequency of attitude that appears to show a dependency on you (facial expression, body language, words, behavior) increased” and “Incidence of waking up in the middle of the night increased”.

3. When the survey was conducted, January 2012, in comparison with the situation before the earthquake, the percentage of mothers who answered that they feel depressed (frequently + sometimes) was as follows: Tohoku 45.6%, the metropolitan area 26.8%. By prefecture, mothers in Fukushima were 51.5%, the highest.

Included in the background of their depressed feelings are “delayed reconstruction”, “concerns over effects of radiation on health”, “husbands’ increased working hours” and “decrease in income”.

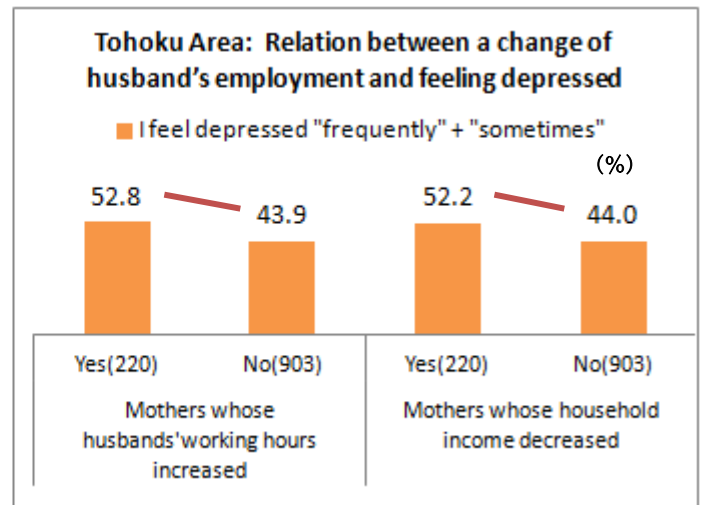
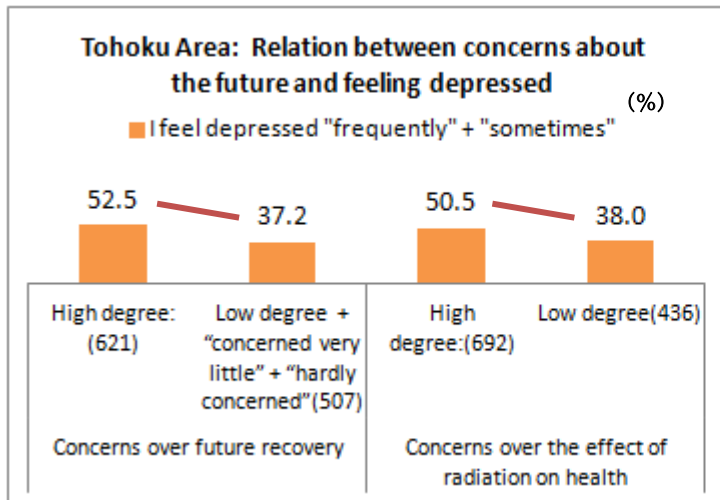
Furthermore, their depression turned out to be related to their child’s changed attitude or behavior.

◆Q. Please answer by comparing the time before the earthquake and the last two weeks. Have you experienced any of the following as a result of the earthquake?



※The percentage of “frequently” and “sometimes”

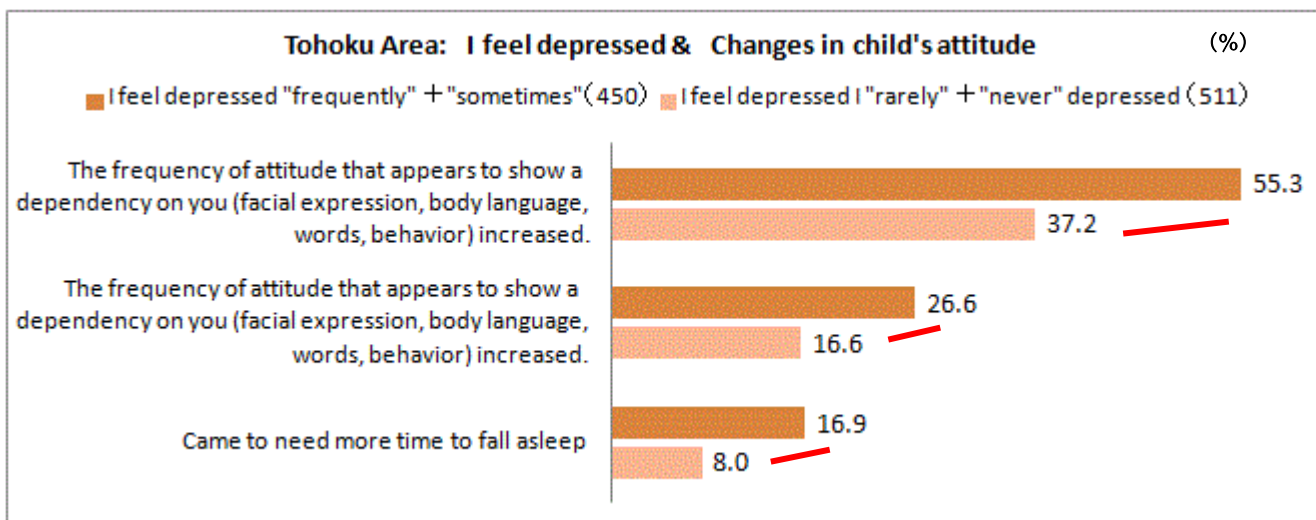
▼Mothers who have greater concerns over reconstruction and the health risk due to radiation and whose husbands' working hours increased or whose household income decreased are more likely to "feel depressed" "frequently + sometimes".



※Based on their answers regarding future recovery and the effect of radiation on health, respondents were divided into two groups: the high group was "very concerned" while the low group comprised those who were "concerned very little" and "not concerned at all."

※Only mothers who have a husband answered.

▼Furthermore, children whose mothers answered "frequently + sometimes concerned" are more likely to show "increased dependence" "increased irritation" and "need more time to fall asleep" than children whose mothers answered "concerned very little" + "not concerned at all".

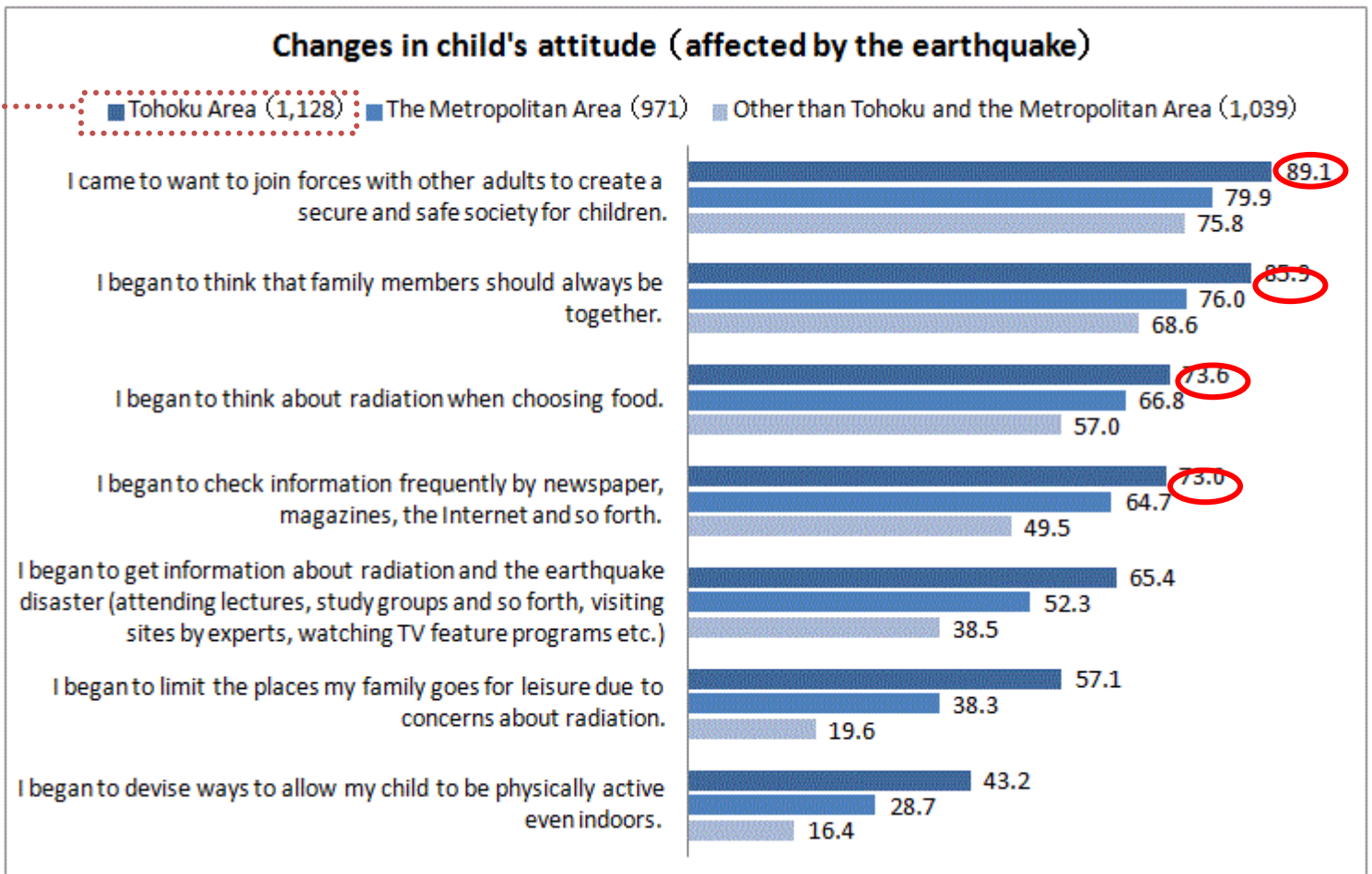


※Only mothers who have a child older than 11 months answered.

※The percentage of "really applies" + "somewhat applies" to the items of "The frequency of attitude that appears to show a dependency on you (facial expression, body language, words, behavior) increased", "Child's irritated attitude (facial expression, body language, words, behavior) increased" and "Came to need more time to fall asleep".

4. Changes in raising children after the earthquake are biggest in every respect in the Tohoku area. Many mothers reported changes in their feelings or actual lifestyle. 89 percent of mothers responded that “as an adult, they came to want to make a concerted effort to create a secure and safe society for children”. 85.9 percent came to think that “family members should always be together”. 73.6% were concerned about radiation when choosing food. 73.0% started to check information frequently by newspaper, magazines, the Internet and so forth. By prefecture, mothers in Fukushima in particular showed a higher percentage regarding items on taking counter-measures against radiation and collecting information.

◆Q. Regarding child-rearing, have you experienced any of the following as a result of the earthquake?

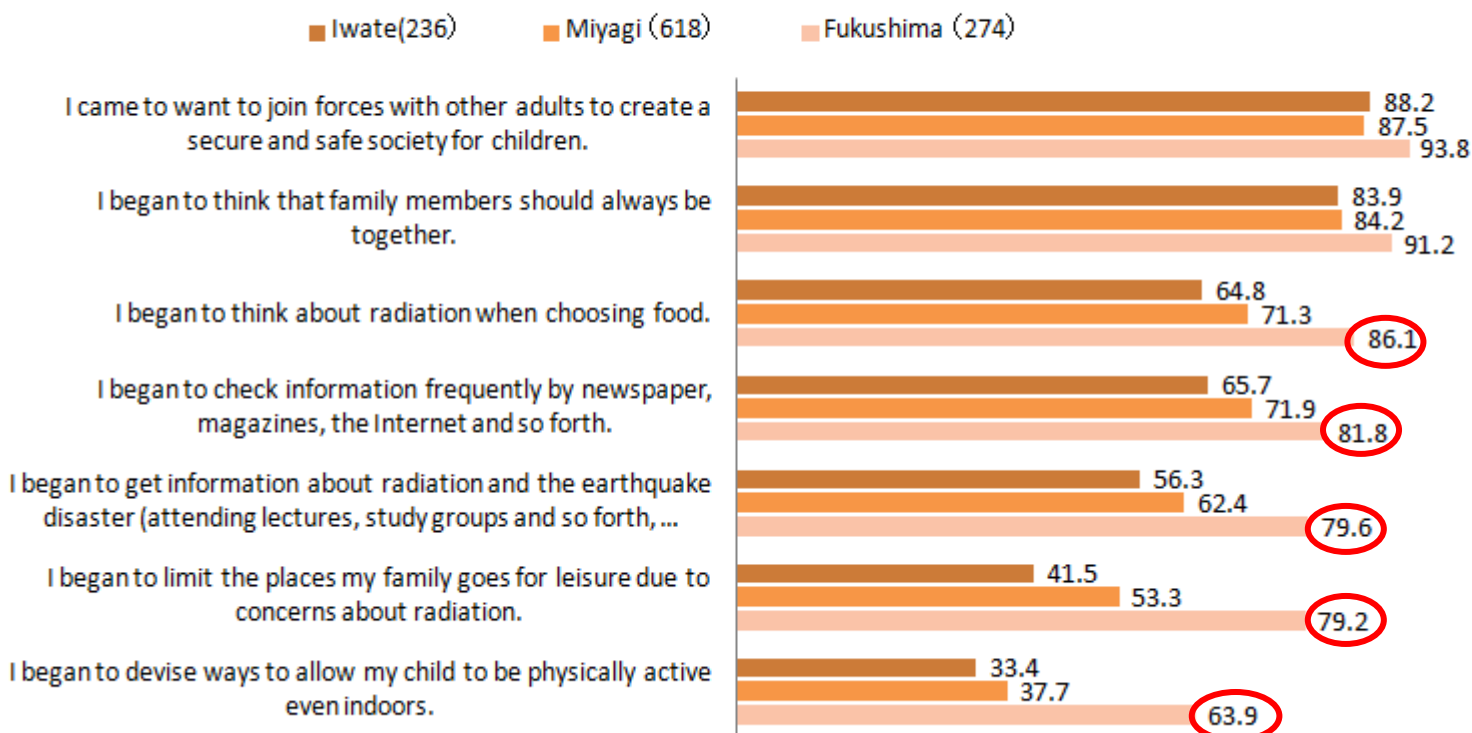


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By Prefecture in Tohoku Area: Changes in child's attitude (affected by the earthquake)



### By Prefecture in Tohoku Area: Changes in child's attitude (affected by the earthquake)

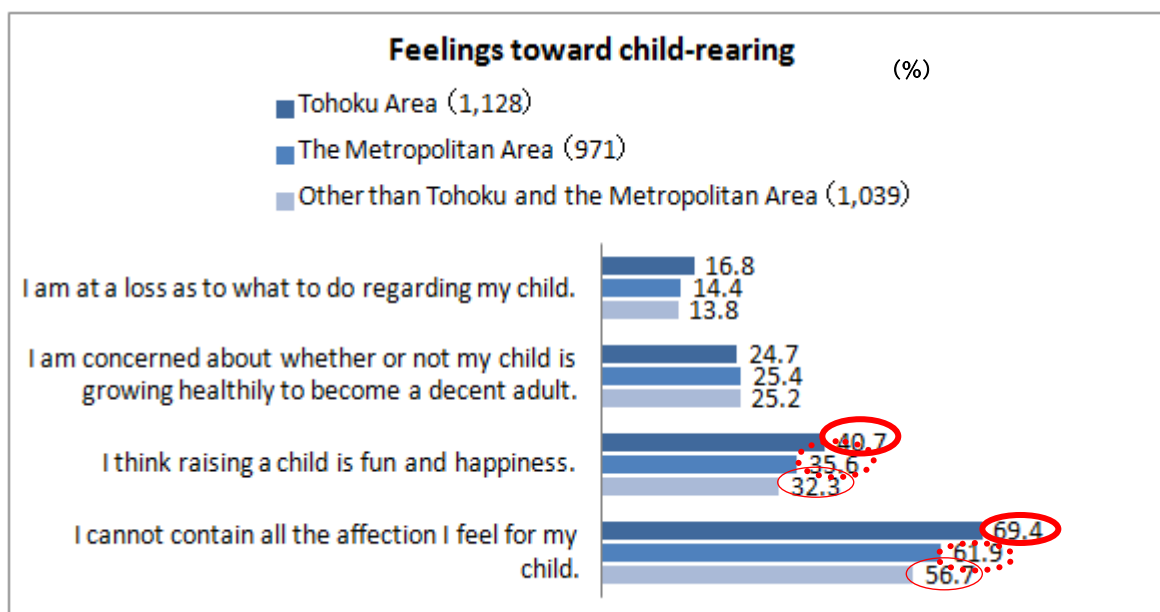


※Percentage of "really applies" + "somewhat applies"

※Excerpted 7 items from 26 items

5. The percentage of mothers who answered that "I often think raising a child is fun and happiness" was 40.7% in the Tohoku area, 35.6% in the metropolitan area, and 32.3% in areas other than those areas. And the percentage of mothers who answered that "I often feel I cannot contain all my affection for my child" was 69.4% in the Tohoku area, 61.9% in the metropolitan area and 56.7% in areas other than those areas. To both questions, the percentage was the highest in the Tohoku area.

◆Q. Have you recently felt any of the following things about raising children? Please answer each item?

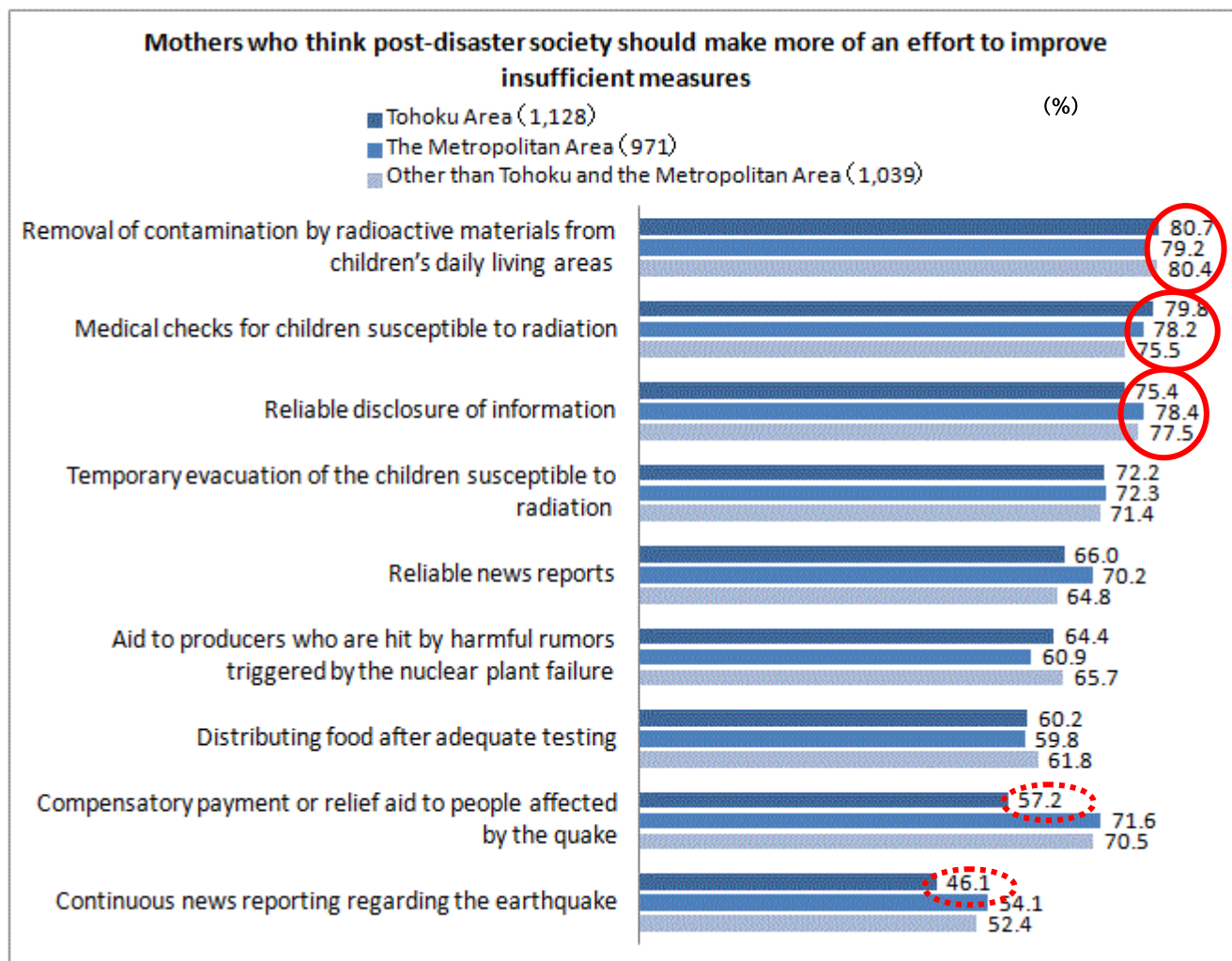


※The percentage of mothers who answered "often".

※Excerpted 4 items from total of 14 ones.

6. The top three inadequate measures to which mothers think society should make much more effort to deal with are “removal of contamination by radioactive materials”: Tohoku 80.7%, the metropolitan area 79.2%, areas other than those 80.4%, “medical checks for children susceptible to radiation”: Tohoku 79.8%、 the metropolitan area 78.2%, areas other than those 75.5%, and “reliable disclosure of information”: Tohoku 75.4%, the metropolitan area 78.4%、 areas other than those 77.5%. On the other hand, the percentage of mothers who answered "not sufficient" to the items, “compensatory payment or relief aid to people affected by the quake” and “continuous news reporting regarding the earthquake” is relatively lower among mothers in the Tohoku area.

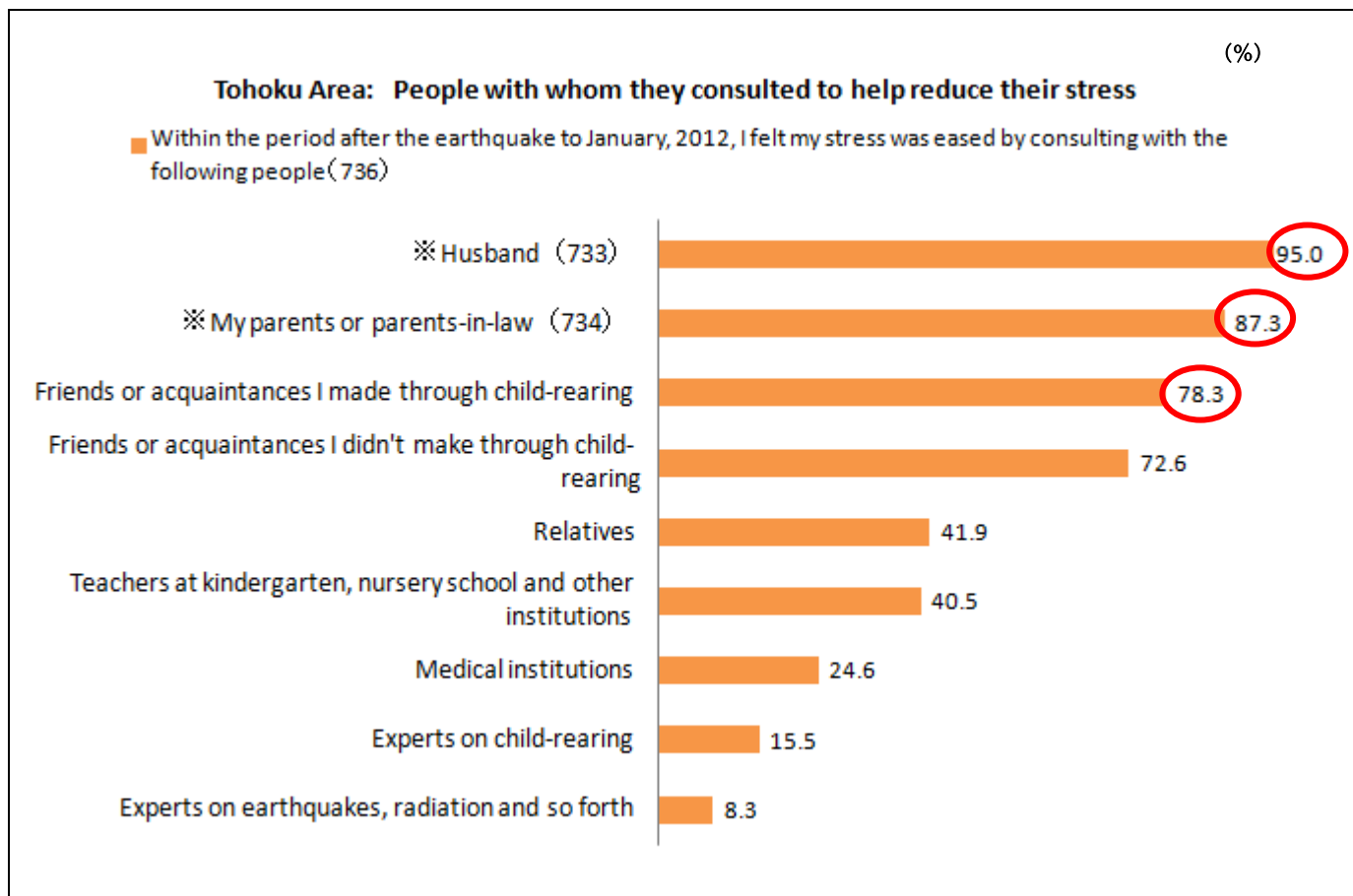
◆Q. Regarding post-disaster society, how sufficient do you think the following measures have been? Please answer each item?



※Excerpted 9 items from total of 14 ones.

※The percentage answering “insufficient and more needed” from four possible answers: “sufficient,” “sufficient, but more needed,” “insufficient and more needed,” “unnecessary”

7. Within the period after the earthquake to January, 2012 (when the survey was conducted), mothers mentioned the following top three as people with whom they consulted to help reduce their stress: husband 95.0%, their parents or parents-in-law 87.3%, friends or acquaintances they made through child-rearing 78.3%. As effective services mothers used after the quake and thought good for stress-release, they mentioned “events children or both child and parent could enjoy” (38.4%) and “gatherings for children or both children and parents” (32.2%).

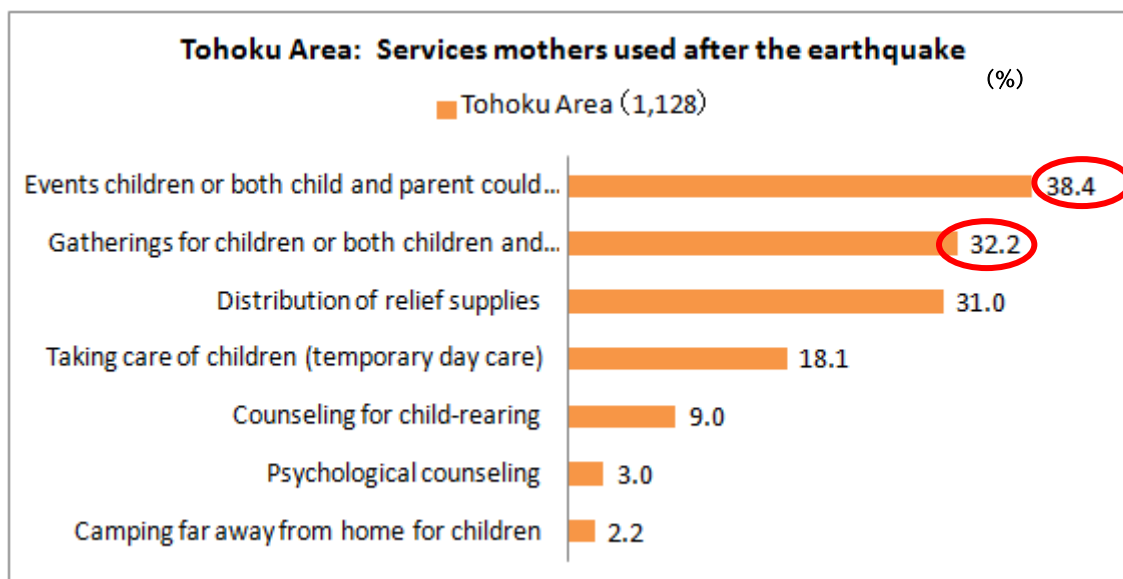


※ Respondents were asked about stress immediately after the earthquake and at the time of the survey. Responses were then scored and totaled. “Decrease in stress” refers to a decrease in total points when compared.

※ The figures are the percentage of the mothers who answered that they had sought consultation “by phone,” “by e-mail,” “directly,” or “by other means.”

※ The figures for “Husband” and “My parents or parents-in-law” represent only mothers with husbands and parents or parents-in-law, respectively.

- ◆Q. From the time of the earthquake until now, have you experienced any of the following services or events? Please answer each item?



※The percentage of mothers who used the services

- Over 80% of the users of the above services found them “very useful” or “somewhat useful.” They were all considered useful by those who needed them.

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