

Evaluation of the Policies for Work-Family Balance

Summary

I . Overview

1. Background and Purpose of the Analysis

- While South Korea has promoted various policy initiatives to address low birth rates for many years, it has continuously experienced a decline in total fertility rate.
 - In 2023, the total fertility rate recorded its lowest point since statistical records began, at 0.72, slightly rebounding to 0.75 in 2024 (provisional).
 - Trends in the total fertility rate (number of births) of South Korea: (2022) 0.78 → (2023) 0.72 → (2024 (provisional)) 0.75
 - Lower rates than OECD averages from 1983 to 2022 with an increasing disparity trend.
 - Average total fertility rate (number of births) of OECD countries: (1983) 2.11 → (2003) 1.66 → (2022) 1.51
 - Total fertility rate (number of births) of South Korea: (1983) 2.06 → (2003) 1.19 → (2022) 0.78
- Considering the rebound in total fertility rate in 2024 and work-family balance being a pivotal factor in decisions regarding marriage and childbirth, the importance of support policies to maintain the trend is emphasized.
 - In 2023, the total fertility rate was the lowest in 50 years, possibly influenced by the base effect from delays in marriage and childbirth due to COVID-19.

- A 2024 survey by the Presidential Committee on Ageing Society and Population Policy on perceptions of measures to address low birthrates and the Ministry of Education’s 2024 childcare survey indicated work-family balance as a key determinant in marriage and childbirth decisions, requiring prioritized support.
- Hence, this report provides an in-depth analysis and evaluation of work-family balance support policies and projects addressing and adapting to the population crisis and shrinking society, while reviewing major issues and improvement measures.

2. Structure and Methodology of Analysis

[Composition and Key Content of the Evaluation of the Policies for Work-Family Balance]

Classification		Key Points of the Analysis
I . Overview		• Background and Purpose of the Analysis • Structure and Methodology of the Analysis
II . Key Status		• System of the Policies for Work-Family Balance (Related Laws and Main Plans) • Current Status of Major Financial Projects Supporting Work-Family Balance
III . Key Issue Anal ysis	Comprehensive Analysis of the Policies for Work-Family Balance	• Analysis of the implementation system for the policies for work-family balance • Analysis of financial resources for work-family balance
	Analysis of Performance and Improvement Measures by Key Indicator	• Overview of key performance indicators related to work-family balance • Analysis of key performance indicators and improvement measures for support policies related to career-interrupted women, parental leave, reduced working hours for childcare, flexible working arrangements, and workplace daycare centers

III. Key Issue Anal ysis	Need to Review Measures to Enhance System Utilization	• Comparison of the level of key work-family balance systems in South Korea versus OECD countries • Review of labor market reform directions to spread social consensus on work-family balance • Analysis of remedial directions regarding reported incidents and other adverse action
	Need to Explore Ways to Alleviate Disparities in System Utilization Across Sectors	• Analysis of system utilization in the public and private sectors and improvement measures for the disclosure system in the private sector • Analysis of measures to enhance utilization of work-family balance systems by company size
	Analysis of Measures to Minimize Blind Spots in the System	• Review and analysis of blind spots in work-family balance • Analysis of measures to increase participation rates in work-family balance programs by industry
	Analysis of Key Projects	• Analysis of issues and performance by key projects • Analysis of the current situation of fraudulent claims
IV. Conclusions and implications		• Comprehensive Recommendations

II. Key Status

1. System of the Policies for Work-Family Balance

- The scope of work-family balance includes “parental leave, reduced working hours for childcare, pre- and postnatal leave, spousal leave, infertility treatment leave, support related to childbirth for individuals not covered by Employment Insurance, workplace childcare facilities, and leave cover assistance.”

- The main relevant laws include the Framework Act on Low Birth Rate in an Aging Society, Equal Employment Opportunity and Work-Family Balance Assistance Act, and Labor Standards Act, although the concept of work-family balance is not defined by law.
- Main related plans encompass the Basic Plan for Low Birth Rate in an Aging Society, Basic Plan for Equal Employment Opportunity and Work-Family Balance Assistance, and Measures to Reverse the Low Birth Rate Trend, collectively portraying work-family balance as a support system for establishing a healthy balance between home and the workplace.

2 Current Status of Major Financial Projects Supporting Work-Family Balance

- Major financial projects related to work-family balance by the Ministry of Employment and Labor include “Maternity Protection and Parenting Support,” “Employment Stability Incentives,” “Support for Workplace Childcare Facilities,” “Maternity Allowance for Individuals Not Covered by Employment Insurance,” “Support for Reemployment of Career-Interrupted Women,” “Support for Gender Equal Workplace Culture.”
- The budget size for six major financial projects related to work-family balance increased from KRW 1,932.4 billion in 2020 to KRW 4,556.4 billion in 2025, with annual execution rates exceeding 99% from 2020 to 2024.
 - Main Project Budget Size (Aggregate, KRW billion): (2021) 2,132.9 → (2023) 2,621.6 → (2025) 4,556.4
 - Budget by project (2025): “Maternity Protection and Parenting Support” is the largest (KRW 4,022.5 billion).

- Budget by subproject (2025): “Parental Leave Allowance” for “Maternity Protection and Parenting Support” is the largest at KRW 3,403 billion.
- Main project execution rate (aggregate, %): (2020) 99.1 → (2022) 99.8 → (2024) 99.7

III. Key Issue Analysis

1. Comprehensive Analysis of the Policies for Work-Family Balance

a. Analysis of the implementation system

- It is necessary to review progress and outcomes with a focus on the statutory “Basic Plan for Low Birth Rate in an Aging Society,” respond to changes in the policy environment by revising and supplementing the Basic Plan, and thereby enhance alignment with relevant laws, as well as the predictability, and consistency of policy implementation.
- There is a lack of a clear structure between the Basic Plan for Low Birth Rate in an Aging Society and other major plans, and the implementation, evaluation, and task setting of low birthrate response policies, including work-family balance, are being promoted mainly through Measures to Reverse the Low Birth Rate Trend, which is a non-statutory plan.
 - Failure to ensure close linkage between major plans should be avoided, as it may be difficult to maintain consistency in aspects such as related budget scale, project scope, and policy direction. Additionally, policies might be implemented by individual ministries, making integrated management challenging.

- The most appropriate way to enhance alignment with relevant laws and other plans as well as the consistency and predictability of policies is to respond by revising and supplementing as necessary in light of changes in the policy environment, etc. with a focus on the statutory Basic Plan for Low Birth Rate in an Aging Society.
 - The Framework Act on Low Birth Rate in an Aging Society stipulates that other low birth rate policies should consider the Basic Plan for Low Birth Rate in an Aging Society.
 - The 1st (2006-2010) and 3rd (2016-2020) Basic Plans for Low Birth Rate in an Aging Society were revised and supplemented to reflect the changed policy environment, including a paradigm shift in low birth rate and aging society policies, and were announced and implemented accordingly.
 - *(Previous) First Basic Plan for Low Birth Rate in an Aging Society (Jul. 2006)
 - (Supplemented) First Basic Plan for Low Birth Rate in an Aging Society – Saeromaji Plan 2010 (Dec. 2008)
 - *(Previous) Third Basic Plan for Low Birth Rate in an Aging Society (Dec. 2015)
 - (Revised) Third Basic Plan for Low Birth Rate in an Aging Society Revised Plan (Feb. 2019)

- The Basic Plan for Low Birth Rate in an Aging Society and Basic Plan for the Promotion of Women's Economic Activities and the Prevention of Career Interruption have similar aspects in their policy tasks, so it is necessary to closely examine ways to ensure distinction between the plans and to operate them in an integrated manner (strengthening linkage).

- In fact, the policy aim is set to promote the compatibility of work and family life, support women's career maintenance, and encourage economic activity, and due to similar aspects in major policy tasks, it is difficult to see significant differentiation between the two basic plans.
 - Major policy tasks of the 7th Basic Plan for Equal Employment Opportunity and Work-Family Balance Assistance: Supporting women's career maintenance and preventing labor market discrimination, utilizing work/parenting support systems without hesitation, etc.
 - Major policy tasks of the 4th Basic Plan for the Promotion of Women's Economic Activities and the Prevention of Career Interruption: Creating a foundation for promoting women's economic activities, preventing women's career interruptions, spreading a culture of work-family balance, and supporting life-cycle-based career planning for women, etc.
- If similar basic plans are implemented with insufficient differentiation, it may result in administrative burdens, and if tasks with a regulatory nature are included in the basic plans, there is potential exposure to issues of inefficient policy operations such as double regulation.
- It is necessary to disclose related project details transparently as they may hinder smooth monitoring and evaluation of low birth rate-related budget sizes and fiscal projects.
- Measures to Reverse the Low Birth Rate Trend (Jun. 2024) sought to categorize and manage the low birth rate budgets as negotiation (B1), international comparison (B2), and broad sense (B3) through budget restructuring, as the previous low birth rate-related budget had issues such as being excessively high due to fiscal projects in the implementation plans being collectively

classified under the low birth rate budget, and the inclusion of multiple projects that are not directly linked to low birth rate response.

- Thus, the Presidential Committee on Ageing Society and Population Policy is required to disclose newly categorized low birth rate-related budget structures and project details, but it stated that it cannot submit the related data to the National Assembly as the data is kept confidential as reference materials for the development of policy measures in relation to the establishment of the Ministry of Population Strategy and Planning (tentative).
- Given that low birth rate-related budgets are being reclassified due to issues such as overbudgeting and the inclusion of projects with little direct relevance to low birth rates and in this light, the Presidential Committee on Ageing Society and Population Policy needs to promptly and transparently disclose the results of the low birth rate response budget restructure and project details.
 - This can act as a factor hindering the systematic review and evaluation of outcomes for budgets responding to low birth rates, as well as understanding which projects are included in such budgets.

b. Analysis of financial resources

- Expenditure for maternity protection benefits, including parental leave, has been continuously expanding. However, considering that the ratio of general account transfers to expenditure on maternity protection benefits remains at a level similar to that in 2021 and 2023 as of 2025, it is necessary to thoroughly review plans to increase the proportion of general account transfers.
- Recently, expenditures on maternity protection benefits have been steadily increasing.

- Maternity protection benefit expenditures (in billions): (2023) 2,261.5 → (2024) 2,573.8 → (2025) 4,022.5
- Although the scale of general account transfers related to maternity protection showed an increasing trend, the ratio of general account transfers to maternity protection expenditures increased from 11.5% in 2020 to 14.4% in 2022, after which it fluctuated and decreased to 13.7% by 2025.
 - General account transfers related to maternity protection (in billions): (2023) 300 → (2024) 400 → (2025) 550
 - Ratio of general account transfers to maternity protection benefit expenditures (%): (2021) 13.1 → (2022) 14.4 → (2023) 13.3 → (2024) 15.5 → (2025) 13.7
- Therefore, it appears necessary to discuss adjusting the ratio of general account transfers, which is currently at the low 10% level upward, with the relevant authorities needing to explore systematic plans to facilitate such discussions.
 - Following the expansion and restructuring trend of expenditure payments for maternity protection benefits, including parental leave, there is a possibility that the scale of expenditures on maternity protection benefits will increase.
 - Regarding this, the Initiative for Expansion of Social Cost Sharing for Maternity Protection Expenses resolution passed by the National Assembly (2001) directs the government to implement pre- and postnatal leave benefits for all women and to promptly develop mid-to-long-term fiscal strategies and institutional improvement measures with general accounts and National Health Insurance bearing the costs.

- Considering that the reserve ratio of the Employment Insurance Fund's unemployment benefit account supporting maternity protection falls below the statutory reserve ratio and the actual reserve amount of the Employment Insurance Fund is at a deficit level, it is necessary to review measures to comply with the statutory reserve ratio and enhance financial soundness.
 - The statutory reserve ratio for the unemployment benefit account, which serves as the financing source for maternity protection projects through the Employment Insurance Fund, is less than 1.5-2.0 times its annual expenditures. However, during the years 2020-2025, the actual reserve ratio was at 0.3-0.4 times the annual expenditures, failing to meet the statutory reserve ratio.
 - Failure to comply with the statutory reserve ratio of the unemployment benefit account may hinder achieving its original accrual objective of mitigating risks of unforeseen unemployment or a mass unemployment occurrence.
 - As of the end of 2024, comparing the year-end reserve funds of the Employment Insurance Fund with its principal repayment balance to the Public Capital Management Fund shows that the Employment Insurance Fund is effectively at a deficit of KRW 710.4 billion.
 - Year-end reserve funds of the Employment Insurance Fund (2024 year-end): KRW 8,394.5 billion
 - Employment Insurance Fund's principal repayment balance to the Public Capital Management Fund (2024 year-end): KRW 9,104.9 billion¹⁾
- *Employment Insurance Fund's Deposit in the Public Capital Management Fund (end of 2024): KRW 10.6581 trillion.

1) As of March 2025, the entire principal repayment balance of KRW 1,384.2 billion for the Job Stability and Human Resource Development Project account has been repaid; however, the principal repayment balance for the Unemployment Benefit account stands at KRW 7,720.8 billion.

*Repayment amount of principal in the Public Fund Management Fund (2024 year-end): KRW 1.5532 trillion.

- Employment Insurance Fund's (Year-end reserve funds - Principal repayment balance to the Public Fund Management Fund) (2024 year-end):
△ KRW 710.4 billion.
- The relevant authorities need to continuously promote the improvement of the fund operation and management system to secure an appropriate scale of reserves for ensuring the financial soundness of the Employment Insurance Fund.

2. Analysis of Performance and Improvement Measures by Key Indicator

a. Regarding career-interrupted women

(1) Current status of key performance indicators related to career-interrupted women

- The number and ratio of career-interrupted women have been continuously decreasing. However, it is necessary to conduct continuous monitoring and evaluation to derive policy implications as to whether this declining trend is a positive result of structural changes in the labor market or strengthened low birth rate measures or whether it also implies negative aspects due to low birth rates.
- Regarding career-interrupted women, Measures to Reverse the Low Birth Rate Trend (Jun. 2024) set the proportion of career-interrupted women aged 30-44 as a performance indicator.
- During 2020-2024, the proportion of career-interrupted women aged 30-44 declined.
 - Proportion of career-interrupted women aged 30-44 (%): (2020) 25.3 → (2022) 24.9 → (2024) 22.3

(2) A need to enhance support for reemployment or job transitions of career-interrupted women

- It is necessary to continuously pursue a transition to a pregnancy and childbirth-friendly social environment by strengthening support for career-interrupted women returning to quality jobs such as regular employment, personalized support for reemployment or job transitions by age group, and improving corporate receptivity.
- The main reasons for career interruption of women aged 30-40 over the past 10 years (2014-2023) are identified as marriage, pregnancy and childbirth, and childcare.
 - The proportion of career interruptions due to marriage, pregnancy and childbirth, and childcare among women aged 30-40: exceeds 7/10 of the total number of career-interrupted women
- Women face potential wage reductions due to career interruptions caused by marriage, pregnancy and childbirth, and childcare, influenced by tenure loss upon labor market re-entry and the potential regular to non-regular job transition.
 - During 2014-2024, the ratio of non-regular workers among male wage earners aged 30-40 was around 4.7%-5.9%, whereas for women, it was 6.0%-7.0%, consistently higher than that of men.
 - By employment types (regular and non-regular positions), males demonstrated higher wage levels compared to females, and irrespective of the tenure, wages in non-regular positions tended to remain lower.
 - *Wage gap for regular positions (male-female, tenure over 5 years, thousand won): (2013) 1,390 → (2023) 1,703
 - *Wage gap for non-regular positions (male-female, tenure over 5 years, thousand won): (2013) 817 → (2023) 1,197
 - For both regular and non-regular positions, the average monthly total wage amount increased with longer tenure.

*Wage gap for regular positions (tenure over 5 years vs. less than 5 years, thousand won): (2013) 1,657 → (2023) 1,955

*Wage gap for non-regular positions (tenure over 5 years vs. less than 5 years, thousand won): (2013) 438 → (2023) 602

- Consistent policy efforts are needed to support the return of career-interrupted women due to marriage, pregnancy, childbirth, and childcare to quality jobs such as regular positions, expand tailored reemployment and career change support programs, and improve policy acceptance among companies regarding career-disrupted women.

b. Regarding parental leave

(1) Current key performance indicators related to parental leave

- Parental leave usage rates have shown continuous increases for both men and women, demonstrating positive changes; however, the usage rate for men stands at a low figure of 7.4% as of 2023, indicating a widening gap compared to women's rate.
- The usage rate for women (mothers) rose from 64.6% (2019) to 73.2% (2023), which exceeds half of the eligible individuals; in contrast, men's (fathers) usage increased from 3.0% (2019) to 7.4% (2023), remaining at one-tenth the rate observed for women.²⁾
 - The increasing trend of (female-male) parental leave difference: (2019) 61.6%p → (2023) 65.8%p

2) Here, parental leave usage rates are calculated as follows: (Number of parents with children born in the year t who used parental leave in the year t / Number of eligible individuals meeting parental leave criteria among parents with children born in the year t * 100(%)). Considering that as of 2024, male and female employees with children aged 8 or under (or in grades 2 or below) can use up to one year of parental leave divided into three intervals (extended to 1.5 years divided into four intervals by 2025), employees (parents) without childbirth in the year t may also utilize parental leave; however, such cases are not reflected in the parental leave usage rate calculations, warranting careful interpretation.

- In 2023, unlike other years, there was a decrease in the number of both male and female eligible individuals and users of parental leave compared to the previous year.
- It is necessary to examine the limitations men face in utilizing parental leave, establish a systematic process for incorporating feedback on policy revisions, and investigate recent factors leading to the decline in parental leave usage among both genders so policymakers can continue efforts to expand the user base and usage rate.
- Efforts are needed to seek expansion and refinement of current parental leave statistics.
 - Current parental leave statistics provide statistics on parental leave usage rates, etc. with a focus on such metrics as the number of parental leave users among parents with children born in the year t ; additional statistics focusing on the entire eligibility period (0-8 years) of parental leave usage are also partially offered.
 - In current statistics for parental leave usage rates in the year t based on the number of parents with children born in the year t , parental leave usage rates are calculated based only on the year of birth and there is concern about underestimating the parental leave metrics compared to statistics based on all eligible employees with children under 8 years old (elementary school grade 2).³⁾
 - Statistics for the entire eligibility period (0-8 years) calculate statistics only based on single-child households. However, in reality, two-child households account for a larger portion of

3) However, it should be noted that the scope of minor children (children aged 18 or younger) is broader than that of children eligible for parental leave (children aged 8 or younger, or up to the second grade of elementary school). As a result, when household distribution by number of children is calculated based on parental leave eligibility, it may differ from the distribution shown above.

households with minors, suggesting that considering only single-child households when calculating statistics for the entire parental leave eligibility period would limit comprehensive statistical analysis regarding parental leave.

- Relevant authorities such as the Ministry of Employment and Labor, Statistics Korea, and Ministry of Health and Welfare need to expand and refine current parental leave statistics to develop policy suggestions for enhancing parental leave policies based on more comprehensive data.

(2) Investigation into conflicts between parental leave duration and employment retention rates

- Although the available duration of parental leave and the size of parental leave benefit payments has been expanding, there are observable differences in the actual usage period between genders. Furthermore, longer periods of parental leave usage correlate with reduced post-leave employment retention rates, and some enterprises are still failing to support parental leave usage.
- Average duration of parental leave usage (2018-2022): Overall, men used around 7 months of parental leave while women used 9 months, indicating that the average duration for men is comparatively shorter.
- Employment retention rates by duration of parental leave usage: In general, shorter parental leave usage periods correspond to higher employment retention rates at both 6 months and 1 year post-leave.⁴⁾

4) The Ministry of Employment and Labor explains that the employment retention rate data for the duration of parental leave usage in this section is extracted based only on cases where the employment relationship is maintained at the original workplace, without distinguishing between voluntary and involuntary reasons for job changes, and does not take into account inter-workplace moves due to personal choices after parental leave, necessitating cautious interpretation.

- 6-month employment retention rate: The employment retention rates for those using parental leave for 180 days or more but less than 365 days (89.7%) and less than 90 days (89.4%) were relatively high, while it was the lowest for 365 days or more (84.3%).
 - 1-year employment retention rate: Employment retention rates were relatively high for 180 days or more but less than 365 days (82.4%) and less than 90 days (82.1%), and the lowest for 365 days or more (74.6%).
- The expansion and restructuring of parental leave duration by implementing the Three Key Acts on Maternal Protection is expected to positively impact childbirth and childrearing, but given that prolonged periods of parental leave have sometimes shown a declining trend in employment retention rates, the potential negative impact of prolonged parental leave on returning to work needs close monitoring.
- Upon examining the 6-month and 1-year employment retention rates post-parental leave, it is difficult to rule out the possibility that extended periods of parental leave may decrease employment retention rates post-job return.
 - It is necessary to monitor the impact of policy reforms on employment retention rates, return-to-work rates post-utilization of the work-family balance system, including the impact of any revisions to the work-family balance system on post-return-to-work employment retention rates, and to discuss improvement plans if necessary.
 - Additionally, there are recent research cases⁵⁾ that explain the need to consider concerns that excessively long periods of leave

5) Ministry of Economy and Finance Research Project (Korea Institute of Public Finance), "Analysis of Fiscal Projects and Tax Expenditures Related to Population Policy," August 2024

from utilizing the work-family balance system may negatively impact return to work.

- However, it is challenging to exclude the possibility that reducing parental leave periods may not align with the initial intention of the system's introduction to create an environment conducive to focusing on childcare due to it becoming an economically advantageous choice, necessitating multidimensional and comprehensive review during system revision.

(3) A need to review measures to prevent disadvantages upon reinstatement after parental leave

- Although the law stipulates that the period of parental leave is included in the legally recognized continuous service period, there is a growing number of businesses (reaching approximately half of all respondents) excluding it from the duration required for promotion, requiring thorough review of measures to prevent promotion-related disadvantages due to parental leave and efforts to strengthen management/supervision and compliance awareness among enterprises.
- Excluding the period of parental leave from continuous service duration and service duration required for promotion may violate the Equal Employment Opportunity and Work-Family Balance Assistance Act.
- However, the proportion of businesses excluding the period of parental leave from service duration required for promotion (Work-Family Balance Status Survey) shows a continuous increase, at 38.9% (2021) → 46.0% (2023).
- Relevant authorities need to review measures to prevent disadvantages in promotion for users of parental leave due to non-inclusion of the leave period in continuous service duration,

and to strengthen management/supervision and the compliance awareness of businesses.

(4) A need to examine options to make the usage of parental leave more flexible

- While receiving parental leave benefits, generation of earned income is usually not allowed, despite the increasing household expenditure size including parenting costs. However, only 45.7% of income is replaced through parental leave benefits, and only about 68.5% of recipients are eligible for the maximum parental leave benefit (2022).
 - In general, generation of earned income is not allowed while receiving parental leave benefits⁶⁾. Therefore, parental leave users must consider not just parenting expenses but also other household expenditures and plan their spending accordingly.
 - In 2024, two parents combined were eligible for up to KRW 36 million in parental leave benefits, assuming that the maximum parental leave benefit is received continuously during a 12-month parental leave, but the average annual household expenditure is in the mid- to high KRW 40 million range. That means household expenditure may be offset in part, but not entirely.⁷⁾
 - Nominal household expenditure is continually rising, and if the children's age group approaches the upper age limit for parental leave (8 years old or elementary school grade 2 or younger),

6) However, according to the Employment Insurance Act and its Enforcement Rule, it is possible to receive parental leave benefits if the weekly working hours during parental leave are less than 15 hours or monthly income earned through provided labor is less than KRW 1.5 million

7) In 2025, if parental leave is used by parents separately, the maximum annual amount is KRW 46.2 million (KRW 23.1 million × 2 parents), and if parents with children under the age of 18 months take parental leave together for one year, the maximum increases to KRW 59.2 million for both parents combined.

households might face increased parenting costs leading to expanded household expenditure.

- As of 2024, elementary school children may incur additional parenting expenses of KRW 196,000 on average per month (an annual average of KRW 2.352 million (KRW 196,000/month × 12 months)) compared to preschool children.
 - Considering research findings indicating that 68.5% of parental leave benefit recipients received the maximum amount (2022), it is likely that some recipients did not receive the maximum amount.
 - Research findings also suggest that from 2018 to 2022, average parental leave benefits were less than half, or only 43.9-46.8%, of average ordinary wages.
- Together with the economic burden associated with parental leave, and considering the current demand in the field for flexible utilization of parental leave, it becomes necessary to review measures such as revising laws to allow for weekly short-term parental leave to foster a more flexible parental leave system.
- In the Measures to Reverse the Low Birth Rate Trend (June 2024), the core tasks for work-family balance include the allowance of short-term parental leave in annual two-week periods to address the demand for short-term parental care.
 - The Equal Employment Opportunity and Work-Family Balance Assistance Act proposed in November 2024 also includes the introduction of weekly units of parental leave.
 - However, amendments to relevant legislation regarding weekly short-term parental leave have not been made, and under the current Employment Insurance Act, if parental leave is not granted for 30 days or more, the individual is still excluded from the eligibility for parental leave benefits.⁸⁾

8) In this regard, the Ministry of Employment and Labor has stated that the specific details of

- Considering factors such as a study indicating that weekly paid parental leave in California enhanced men's parental leave usage and parental participation, it seems necessary to discuss the introduction of weekly parental leave tailored to South Korea's conditions.
- Given the reality of low uptake of parental leave by men and the diverse range of work environments, it is necessary to review measures to enhance flexibility in system operation, such as expanding options for parental leave benefits based on parents' willingness to work and desired duration.
- For example, Germany has introduced Parental Allowance Plus and Partnership Bonus systems to diversify the way parental allowance (parental leave benefits) is received.
 - Since the introduction of parental allowance (parental leave benefits) in 2006, the number of users of parental leave systems has increased, and the number of male recipients of parental leave benefits has generally tended to rise.
 - *Men: Compared to 2016, the number of recipients of parental allowance in 2023 increased by 1.7 times.
 - *Women: Compared to 2016, the number of recipients of parental allowance in 2023 increased by 1.4 times.

(5) A need to promote employer support systems related to parental leave and review the adequacy of the scale of peer sharing subsidies

- Considering that over 16% of employers are unaware of support policies for employers related to parental leave, and a high percentage handle absences due to leave with remaining staff, it is

short-term parental leave will be designed through on-site opinion-gathering and that they are supporting the legislative amendments for the introduction of short-term parental leave.

necessary to strengthen the promotion of employer-targeted systems and concurrently review the adequacy of the job-sharing subsidy, set at KRW 200,000 per month, to enhance the corporate acceptance of parental leave systems.

- In a survey investigating the awareness of major support systems among employers who support parental leave, 16.3%-19.4% of all respondents said they were unaware of the replacement staff support system and subsidy payment system for hiring (employing) replacements due to parental leave.
- At 44.4% (2023), the proportion stating that remaining staff divides the workload due to absences during parental leave was the highest, indicating that from an employer's perspective, remediating parental leave absences through new employment appears challenging or not preferable.
 - Since 2025, a new parental leave work-sharing subsidy system was introduced, and there is a need to continuously monitor the adequacy of the scale of the subsidy for work-sharing with coworkers on parental leave, set at KRW 200,000 per month.⁹⁾

c. Regarding parental working-hour reduction

(1) Current status of key performance indicators related to parental working-hour reduction

- The number of recipients of parental working hour reduction benefits is increasing, but the male proportion among total

9) Interviews of parents and business representatives in relation to their experience of utilizing the parental work hour reduction system found that "opinions on the parental work hour reduction subsidy" included "a low subsidy amount" and "document processing is cumbersome compared to the subsidy amount." (Data: Rewritten based on the Korea Institute of Child Care & Education, "Study on the Utilization Status and Improvement Methods of the Parental Working-hour Reduction System," November 2023)

recipients remains low at only about 1/10.

- Over the past five years (2020-2024), the number of recipients of parental working hour reduction benefits has consistently increased from 14,698 in 2020 to 26,627 in 2024, but the male proportion among recipients is only about 9.8%-12.3%.
 - The female share of recipients of parental working hour reduction benefits is overwhelmingly 87.7%-90.2%.

(2) A need to raise awareness about the parental working hour reduction system and revise associated work systems

- The awareness of the parental working hour reduction system is low, and a considerable 15-23% of respondents said that not even those in need can use the system at all, with actual usage being as low as 3-5%.
 - Although the system has been in place for more than 10 years, survey results show that more than a quarter of respondents are unaware of the system (29.4% in 2022, 26.3% in 2023).
 - In 2023, among businesses eligible to use the parental working hour reduction system, only 3.0% reported actual utilization.
- There are practical constraints such as an increased workload for colleagues and managers and workplace atmosphere or culture, and difficulties may arise in managing employees. Thus, work management system support projects for users of the parental working hour reduction system need to be managed meticulously.
 - Main reasons for inability to utilize the parental working reduction system (2023)
 - The highest response rate was for “increased workload for colleagues and managers” (27.4%), followed by “difficulty in

finding replacement personnel” (25.0%) and “workplace atmosphere or culture that does not allow utilization” (20.1%).

- Considering that managing employees during parental working hour reductions is being named as a significant issue, projects to support the establishment of attendance and work management systems need to be managed meticulously.
 - “Difficulty in managing employees working reduced hours” had the highest response rate at 38.1%.
 - The associated “Support for Work-Family Balance Infrastructure” program has a low execution rate of 43.0% (2024) due to lack of demand.

d. Regarding the flexible work system

(1) Current status of key performance indicators related to flexible work systems

- The usage rate of the flexible work system decreased from 15.0-16.0% among all wage-earning employees, with higher usage rates among regular employees compared to non-regular ones.
 - The usage rate of the flexible work system was 16.0% among all wage-earning employees in 2022, but it has continuously decreased to 15.6% in 2023 and 15.0% in 2024.
 - In 2022, the rate among regular employees was 2.2 times that of non-regular employees, rising to 2.9 times in 2024.

(2) A need to promote the flexible work system based on field demand and explicit regulations

- Policies need to be developed to address deficiencies in the current flexible work system by clearly stipulating procedures, methods, and details through employment and labor management regulations, collective agreements, etc.

- Among companies that have implemented the flexible work system, the percentage responding that they have introduced and operated the system through explicit regulations in employment rules or collective agreements is generally less than 10% of all responding enterprises.
 - Response rates for “introduction is explicitly stated in employment rules, collective agreements, etc.” by type of flexible work system:
(Flextime) 12.6%, (Part-time select) 9.7%, (Remote work) 4.6%, etc.
- There is a need to address shortcomings by promoting policies aimed at clearly specifying flexible work-related procedures, methods, and details through employment and labor management regulations, collective agreements, etc.
 - It is necessary to meticulously carry out infrastructure support projects, such as strengthening support for the establishment of systems to alleviate difficulties in attendance and job performance evaluations due to flexible working arrangements.

e. Regarding workplace daycare centers

- As enterprises have a higher rate of non-compliance with the obligation to establish workplace daycare centers compared to other types of workplaces, and there are numerous difficulties related to securing installation locations and management/operation burdens, it is necessary to review burden relief measures applicable on a realistic level by listening to corporate needs.
- Enterprises have a higher rate of non-compliance with workplace daycare center obligations compared to other workplace types.
 - As of December 2022, there were 136 workplaces non-compliant with the obligation to establish workplace daycare centers, of

which 119 were non-compliances by “enterprises.”

- Major difficulties faced by enterprises in the installation and operation of workplace daycare centers (Dec. 2022)
 - Installation process issues: Cost burden (36.5%), difficulty in securing location (33.8%), etc.
 - Operational process issues: Shortage of users (23.6%), lack of government support (17.4%), etc.
- It is necessary to continuously listen to the challenges enterprises face regarding workplace daycare centers and improve related systems to enhance the uptake of workplace daycare centers by enterprises.
 - Considering the difficulty in securing installation sites for workplace daycare centers and the possibility of not meeting installation criteria according to related regulations, these issues should be reviewed together.
- Taking into account the declining trend in the enrollment rate of workplace daycare centers, it is necessary to identify reasons for this, such as unmet worker needs, accessibility, and operating models, and use this information as feedback to improve and invigorate workplace daycare centers.
- Workplace daycare center enrollment rate (%): (2020) 73.7 → (2024) 63.1
- The low enrollment rate in workplace daycare centers is fundamentally linked to low birth rates, and also influenced by factors such as supply-demand mismatches, operation models, etc.
 - (Regarding supply-demand mismatches in workplace daycare centers) Cases where the age brackets of employees’ children, childcare needs, and working patterns (e.g., shift work) are not well-aligned with workplace daycare centers
 - (Regarding operation models) Cases where workplace daycare

centers are managed on a small scale or lack programs to accommodate infants and children of various age groups

3. Need to Review Measures to Enhance System Utilization

a. Comparison of Korea's work-family balance system with those of OECD countries

- From an institutional perspective, it is challenging to consider Korea as being at a significantly lower level compared to other OECD countries; however, considering that low birth rates persist, it is necessary to continuously aim for improvements focusing on the practical convenience and accessibility of systems.
- Korea's average allowable duration for women's paid parental leave (2024): 52.0 weeks (8th place)
 - Average allowable duration for women's paid parental leave in OECD countries: 33.7 weeks
- Average payment rate of parental leave benefits: 52.4% of the average income of regular employees, falling in the mid-range (16th place)
- While there are positive aspects at the institutional level, such as increasing the maximum amount of maternity protection benefits and expanding divided use, there appear to be practical limitations in terms of institutional applicability given that they do not lead to resolving low birth rates.

b. It is necessary to review improvement plans such as labor market reform to expand social consensus on work-family balance.

- Considering the high gender wage gap, employment gap, and working hours, it is necessary to pursue labor market reforms to

ensure job continuity, provide return-to-work adjustment, job search, and vocational training programs, and assist with the hiring of replacement staff in the short term, while also establishing equal labor, equal performance, and equal pay between men and women in the mid- to long term.

- Although the gender wage gap in South Korea has shown a decreasing trend from 2019 to 2023, it remains the highest among OECD countries.
 - It is 5.7-9.8 percentage points higher than the country with the second highest gender wage gap among OECD nations, and 2.6-2.8 times higher compared to the OECD average.
 - Analysis also suggests that the significant gender wage gap in South Korea arises due to the high likelihood that women returning to work after career interruptions caused by childbirth and parenting will be employed in non-regular positions with low occupational status, leading to lower job security and income.
- In terms of the gender employment rate gap among OECD countries from 2020 to 2024, South Korea persistently ranks highly in the top 6-8 range.
- Among major OECD countries, the annual working hours per wage earner in South Korea decreased from 1,957 hours in 2019 to 1,874 hours in 2023, showing a declining trend, yet it remains in the higher ranks (approximately 4-5th place).
- To achieve a work-family balance, it is necessary to explore ways to raise societal awareness for creating a gender-equal birth and parenting environment, such as expanding male participation in parental leave, and increasing the time men engage in childcare and household labor.

- South Korea's international gender equality index ranking generally remains low among OECD countries.
 - As of 2024, South Korea's ranking in major international gender equality indexes is at the lower end among OECD countries, namely 34th in the Gender Gap Index (GGI) and 37th in the Gender Development Index (GGI) out of 38 countries.
 - Since 2009, South Korea has been publishing the National Gender Equality Index, which declined from 66.2 points to 65.4 points in 2022, mainly influenced by a significant drop in the gender equality awareness score (△6.8 points).
 - The ratio of men's to women's average daily household labor hours (unpaid working time) in South Korea is 22.8%, ranking 28th among 30 countries for which the OECD provides data, placing South Korea at the lowest level.
 - However, there is a positive aspect in that both the time and ratio of men's participation in housework and childcare (2024) have shown slight increases compared to 2021, indicating some effects of policy measures. Continuous efforts for policy support should be made to expand these improvement trends.
 - It is necessary to continuously review and seek improvement in societal awareness measures toward fostering work-family balance, such as expanding male participation in childcare and household labor.
- c. A need to explore supplementary policies to address disadvantages associated with utilizing work-family balance systems**

- Given that over the past three years, acknowledgment rates of legal violations, such as fines and prosecutions, were only around 3.0%, relevant authorities should more thoroughly investigate on-site conditions while examining the accessibility effectiveness of the system and as well as gaps in the remedial system, and consider preparing supplementary measures if necessary.

- Between 2022 and 2024, a total of 1,307 complaints related to work-family balance were filed with local labor offices nationwide, increasing from 332 in 2022 to 491 in 2024.
- Among all received complaints, 87.2% were cases of no violation (33.3%), withdrawal (27.1%), or administrative closure and others (26.9%), comprising the majority.
- The number of cases leading to fines and prosecution totaled 39 (3.0%), which is a minimal level; however, the low proportion of legal violation acknowledgments might indicate dualistic interpretations.
 - (Positive aspect) It is possible that the legal violations were not excessively severe and involved the reporting of minor issues that were generally rectifiable before prosecution.
 - (Negative aspect) It is possible that workers experience adverse action for utilizing the work-family balance system, but it is challenging to seek legal accountability due to difficulties in making a clear allegation of a legal violation or giving proof.
- Relevant authorities including the Ministry of Employment and Labor should closely examine on-site conditions and system accessibility and effectiveness, along with blind spots in the relief system.
 - It is necessary to explore institutional improvement plans if needed in light of actual conditions and system inspection findings.

4. Need to Explore Ways to Alleviate Disparities in System Utilization Across Sectors

a. Public-Private: A need to review measures to improve the Family-Friendly certification and disclosure system in the private sector

- Given that cases exist where parental leave-related information is undisclosed or unclearly recorded, and even among family-friendly certified companies, parental leave usage is non-existent, it is necessary to establish disclosure standards and review improvement measures related to certification systems.
 - Key analytical findings on parental leave based on a full survey of business reports for 848 KOSPI-listed companies disclosed on the Data Analysis, Retrieval and Transfer (DART) system as of 2024:
 - Percentage of companies disclosing parental leave usage (where parental leave usage rate exceeds 0.0%): 60.0% (509 companies)
 - Percentage of companies disclosing no use of parental leave for both men and women (parental leave usage rate is 0.0% for both genders): 4.1% (35 companies)
 - Percentage of companies where it is impossible to identify parental leave-related information due to non-recording or unclear disclosure (e.g., noted as “-”): 35.1% (298 companies)
 - Results limited to analysis of family-friendly certified companies (233 companies) within KOSPI-listed companies with disclosed parental leave usage information as of 2024:
 - Number of family-friendly certified companies where both male and female parental leave usage rates are disclosed as 0.0%: 4 companies
- *Number of family-friendly certified companies where male

parental leave usage rate is disclosed as 0.0%: 25 companies

*Number of family-friendly certified companies where female parental leave usage rate is disclosed as 0.0%: 6 companies

– Number of family-friendly certified companies that did not record parental leave usage rate information: 20 companies

○ It is necessary to provide target companies with clearer disclosure standards related to work-family balance indicators, including parental leave.

– Additionally, review is needed for improvement plans related to (re)certification of family-friendly companies so they can achieve their original purpose of fostering a family-friendly corporate culture.

□ It is necessary to clarify disclosure items and methods, such as unifying formulas in disclosed materials to prevent distortion of calculated results, and consider measures such as including such indicators as important matters in business reports or establishing a regular survey system.

○ There are instances where the formula for parental leave usage rates disclosed on DART business reports varies for different companies.

– “Workers who used parental leave within one year of childbirth in the current year relative to workers with children under one year of age based on their date of birth in the current year” was the most common at approximately half (58.8%, 499 companies).

– Others include “number of workers who used parental leave in the current year relative to all persons eligible for parental leave with children aged 8 years or younger” (2.6%, 22 companies) and “number of workers who used parental leave in the current year relative to the total number of employees” (2.2%, 19 companies).

- There are instances where parental leave usage rates are disclosed as exceeding 100%.
 - Companies with parental leave usage rates disclosed as exceeding 100% for both men and women: 2 companies
 - Companies with parental leave usage rates disclosed as exceeding 100% for women: 4 companies
- It is necessary to prevent situations where companies face indirect or direct disadvantages due to systemic issues, such as unstandardized formulas and errors in disclosed statistics.
 - In addition to the formula for calculating parental leave usage rates, it is necessary for relevant authorities, such as the Presidential Committee on Ageing Society and Population Policy, Ministry of Employment and Labor, and Financial Supervisory Service, to unify standards for defining base data for parental leave usage rate calculations and provide them to companies.
- It is also necessary to clearly present judgment criteria regarding whether to include work-family balance indicators, including parental leave, in the business report as “important matters.”
 - If work-family balance-related indicators are not included in important matters or unclarity persists in disclosure items and methods, as in the current situation, it is difficult to exclude the possibility that companies might consider such documentation as mere recommendations.
- Regarding the expansion of men’s parental leave, it is also worth referring to Japan, where a labor market structure and parental leave system (based on Employment Insurance) similar to South Korea’s are being established.
- For South Korea’s family-friendly certification system, it is also necessary to consider incentive programs that provide

multi-layered preferential benefits depending on the fulfillment level of family-friendly certification criteria, encouraging companies to voluntarily strengthen family-friendly practices.

- In 2007, Japan introduced the “Kurumin (くるみん) Certification” (Kurumin Mark) as a system to certify companies that support work-family balance. In 2015, it introduced the “Platinum Kurumin Certification System,” targeting companies meeting additional criteria, for further advantages.
- In 2022, with the revision of the “Act on Childcare and Family Care Leave,” amendments were made to expand men’s parental leave usage rates by obligating employers to provide guidance and consultations aiming to enhance male parental leave usage.

b. By company size: A need to establish measures to improve the utilization of work-family balance systems by SMEs

- Considering that SMEs are less likely to offer parental leave and have lower ratios of parental leave benefit recipients compared to large corporations, it is necessary to explore ways to strengthen support for SME workers for returning to work and finding cover when utilizing work-family balance systems.
 - Percentage of parental leave benefit recipients for companies with fewer than 10 employees: 16.7-18.0% of all recipients
 - Percentage of respondents stating that they are unable to use the parental leave system even if needed: (Businesses with 5-9 employees) 22.6% ↔ (Businesses with 300+ employees) 2.3%
- In the case of large corporations, the retention rates of workers employed at six months and at one year after parental leave were higher compared to small enterprises. The smaller the business, the lower the retention rates.

- Enterprises with 300+ employees (2024): Retention rates for six months and one year after parental leave were 92.8% and 88.4%, respectively, the highest among companies.
- Both the 6-month and 1-year retention rates decrease as the company size decreases, and for companies with four or fewer employees, they are at 78.3% and 59.1%, respectively.
- SMEs are relatively more likely to use the parental working hour reduction system compared to parental leave and have the corresponding demand. Thus, it is necessary to examine ways to expand support for this system, focusing on SMEs.
- During 2020-2024, the utilization rate of parental working hour reduction benefits was the highest in companies with 300 or more employees, but it was the second-highest (24.0-31.9%) in companies with fewer than 10 employees.
 - The smaller the company, the more significant the difficulties compared to large enterprises in managing reduced-hour workers and securing replacement staff to perform the tasks of reduced-hour workers.
- Due to reasons like work gaps and workplace culture, small and medium-sized enterprises may in practice face restrictions on the use of parental leave; thus, it is necessary to consider measures to further facilitate parental working hour reduction.

5. Analysis of Measures to Minimize Blind Spots in the System

a. A need to investigate systemic blind spots in the work-family balance system and to build and operate a relevant database

- Considering estimates that the scale of systemic blind spots in the parental leave system ranges from the high seven hundred thousands to as many as one million individuals, it is necessary to consider improvement measures to resolve these issues.
 - Estimated cases of parental leave blind spots
 - Scale of narrow-sense blind spots*: 778,694 individuals with children aged 8 years or younger
 - *Temporary and daily workers, sole proprietors, employers, persons resigning after childbirth
 - Scale of broad-sense blind spots (narrowly defined blind spots + employees with less than 6 months of continuous service): 965,195 individuals
 - Meanwhile, it is challenging to find instances where relevant authorities such as the Ministry of Employment and Labor have directly and officially announced organized analytical results on blind spots.
- Considering survey results showing that non-regular workers have lower utilization rates of parental leave and flexible work arrangements compared to regular workers, it is necessary to devise improvement measures to enhance the use of work-family balance systems for these non-regular workers.
 - According to survey results by private institutions, utilization of parental leave and pre- and postnatal is restricted by approximately 15%p for non-regular workers compared to regular workers.

- Along with parental leave and pre- and postnatal leave systems, the utilization rate of flexible work systems by non-regular workers falls short of half of that of regular workers.
 - 2022 Flexible Work System Utilization Rate: (Regular) 20.2% ↔ (Non-Regular) 9.0%
 - *Flexible work utilization rate for non-regular workers: In the 9% range between 2022 and 2023 → decreased to 6.9% in 2024
- For those who have been overlooked by work-family balance systems, such as non-regular workers, it is necessary to increase their likelihood of being included in these systems.
 - During this process, it is necessary to review measures to establish and operate a database for identifying the current situation and utilizing basic data on system improvement to promote future work-family balance endeavors.
 - *For instance, there is a need to develop measures to expand the sample size of the work-family balance status surveys in the short term, and to expand this survey and set up a feedback mechanism for system establishment and improvement in the mid- to long term.

b. A need to prepare measures to increase the participation rate in work-family balance programs in the construction sector

- In the case of the construction industry, low participation in maternity protection and parenting support projects may result from industry characteristics that complicate Employment Insurance enrollment; hence, efforts to enhance participation by alleviating Employment Insurance blind spots are needed.
- Construction workers account for 7.8% of all industry workers, but only 5.2% of Employment Insurance enrollees (as of 2023).

- This is attributed to the high share of contract and day laborers within the construction workforce, making Employment Insurance enrollment difficult.
- A low number of Employment Insurance enrollees suggests challenges in accessing maternity protection and parenting support projects centered around Employment Insurance.
- Therefore, efforts to reduce coverage blind spots in Employment Insurance are considered necessary.

6. Analysis of Each Major Program

A. A need to review the linkage between performance indicators of work-family balance programs and fertility rates

- It is necessary to first review methods to verify the correlation between the performance indicators set for work-family balance support programs, currently focused on “female employment rate,” and fertility rate indicators. If required, options to improve the performance indicators also need consideration.
- In the Measures to Reverse the Low Birth Rate Trend, three core areas are identified, including “Work-Family Balance.”
- It is necessary to manage project performance by including fertility rate-linked items in the performance indicators.
 - In the case of performance indicators for major financial projects associated with work-family balance, employment rate indicators such as the employment rate of women in their 30s and 40s and the employment rate of those aged 15-64 have been set in most projects.

b. Maternity protection and parenting support: A need to avoid budget over-allocation and reallocation and to strengthen the management and supervision of fraudulent claims

- ❑ In the case of parental leave and parental working hour reduction benefits, the achievement rate fell below 80% (in 2024), which appears to be due to over-allocation of the budget in light of the enforcement of the Three Key Acts on Maternal Protection in 2024, necessitating meticulous project management.
 - For parental leave benefits (general parental leave), the support goal was overestimated on the premise of the passage of the Three Key Acts on Maternal Protection, resulting in a lower plan achievement rate compared to other years.
 - As of 2024, in the case of parental leave benefits (during general parental leave), the performance was 78.2% relative to the plan, which is lower than other years.
 - If the budget is allocated by anticipating the amendment and enforcement of relevant laws, issues of over- or under-staffing may arise.
 - Maternity protection and parental support have continuously seen an increase of KRW 77 to 168 billion during 2020~2024 due to changes in the number of beneficiaries; however, as the impact of COVID-19, a major uncertainty factor, has significantly decreased, excessive transfers or diversions should be refrained from.
- ❑ The number and amount of fraudulent claims for parental leave benefits have generally shown an upward trend. Considering that the main reasons for fraudulent claims include collusion between employees and employers and submission of false documents through fictitious employment, there is a need to enhance prevention of fraud and expand detection through regular

monitoring and reinforcement of management and supervision systems.

- During 2020-2024, fraudulent claims for parental leave payments accounted for 85.5% and the fraudulent amounts accounted for 89.1% of the subtotal for maternity protection.
 - Number of fraudulent claims for parental leave benefits (no. of cases): (2020) 367 → (2022) 275 → (2024) 467
 - Amount of fraudulent claims for parental leave benefits (KRW hundred million): (2020) 13 → (2022) 10 → (2024) 27
- Multiple instances have been identified in which employees (relatives) and employers colluded to submit fabricated document or disguised employment to fraudulently claim parental leave benefits (2022-2023).
- It is necessary to contribute to the proper allocation of budgets and efficient execution by monitoring the findings of fraud detection, such as severity, recurrence, and presence of collusion, and consequently inform future projects.

c. Employment stability incentive: A need for review the support performance and replacement personnel recruitment support management system

- There is a significant fluctuation in year-by-year support performance, and some projects show declining trends or fail to meet their targets. Hence, it is necessary to improve the performance of each project item and consider early stabilization measures for new projects through strengthened promotion.
- “Work-Family Balance Job Incentive” support performance trend (no. of individuals): (2022) 12,581 → (2023) 7,206 → (2024) 10,405
 - Performance compared to plan (%): (2022) 94.8 → (2023) 44.3 → (2024) 51.8

- “Work and Family Environment Improvement Support” support performance trend (no. of individuals): (2022) 16,333 → (2023) 3,544 → (2024) 5,535
 - Performance compared to plan (%): (2022) 149.4 → (2023) 32.4 → (2024) 86.4
- Given that the COVID-19 situation has ended or been mitigated, excessive allocations should not be repeated, and for the “Work-Family Balance Job Incentive” (shorter actual working hours), introduced as a new system in 2024, stronger promotion and other early stabilization measures should be prepared.
- There have been instances where the Talent Matching Bank has failed to reach employment targets, and the Dedicated Talent Matching Platform is managed based on the number of jobseekers. In this light, it is necessary to examine measures to systematically manage the performance of the Dedicated Talent Matching Platform while also actively implementing the Talent Matching Bank project.
- Talent Matching Bank employment goals and performance
 - Goals: (2020) 3,500 individuals → (2024) 8,000 individuals
 - Performance (goal achievement rate): (2020) 3,755 individuals (107.3%) → (2024) 5,914 individuals (73.9%)
- Performance achieved through the Dedicated Talent Matching Platform is compiled based on the number of job seekers, such as resumes registered on relevant private recruitment portals. This necessitates the establishment of a clear management system for employment (referral) achievements, which is the intended purpose of the platform.¹⁰⁾

10) However, the Dedicated Talent Matching Platform, which has been operating since 2024, appears to have its strengths in that it was introduced for the purpose of diversifying channels for hiring replacement staff through independent operation from the Talent Matching Bank.

- The parental working hour reduction job-sharing subsidy demonstrated low performance. From 2025, stricter execution management is necessary as since parental leave will be included in the scope of edibility for support.
- Goal and performance related to the parental working hour reduction job-sharing subsidy (2024)
 - Goal and performance for the subsidy amount (Unit: KRW hundred million): (Goal) 24 ↔(Performance) 3
 - Goal and performance for the number of recipients (persons): (Goal) 5,940 ↔(Performance) 910
- d. Maternity allowance for individuals not covered by Employment Insurance: A need to examine improvement measures to promote payment by category**
- Support performance has decreased for persons eligible for the maternity allowance for individuals not covered by Employment Insurance who are not sole proprietors. This makes it necessary to prepare measures for improvement by establishing and analyzing basic data for promoting payment and otherwise identifying the factors causing the low support performance.
- Support performance for each target category of maternity allowance for individuals not covered by Employment Insurance
 - Sole proprietors (no. of people): (2021) 5,584 → (2023) 5,837
 - Non-sole proprietors* (no. of people): (2021) 5,981 → (2023) 4,655

*Workers providing services, individuals not meeting the 180-day requirement, those excluded from Employment Insurance, and non-enrollees of Employment Insurance
- Because this project targets individuals not covered by Employment Insurance, there are limitations in situation assessment through the Employment Insurance database. Hence, it

is necessary to systematically identify factors causing low support performance by establishing and analyzing basic data to promote the payment of the different types of maternity benefits for individuals not covered by Employment Insurance.

e. Support for reemployment of career-interrupted women: A need to prepare a management system for Saeil Center employees and measures to strengthen promotion

- It is necessary to operate the management system more strictly to minimize work vacancies through early recruitment when a Saeil Center employee resigns, while also examining measures to strengthen the promotion of the group counseling program.
- Between 2020 and 2024, issues such as Saeil Center deaccreditation, institution business scale adjustment, employee resignation and support for hiring, and recruitment difficulties for group counseling program participants have repetitively occurred.

IV. Conclusions and implications

- Work-family balance support policies in general (implementation system and financial resources)
 - (Implementation system) It is necessary to assess progress and performance with a focus on the statutory Basic Plan for Low Birth Rate in an Aging Society and adapt to changes in the policy environment through amendments and supplements to this basic plan.
 - There is a need to thoroughly review strategies for ensuring differentiation and integrated operations (enhanced connections) among similar plans.

- (Financial resources) Consideration is required for increasing the ratio of general account transfers relative to maternity protection benefit expenditures.
 - There is a need to review compliance with statutory reserve ratios in the unemployment benefit account of the Employment Insurance Fund and strengthening financial soundness.

□ Aspects of major support systems for work-family balance.

- (Career-interrupted women) Efforts are needed to continuously transition to a pregnancy- and childbirth-friendly environment by enhancing support for return to quality jobs, tailored reemployment, job changes, and improving corporate acceptance.
- (Parental leave) It is necessary to monitor the impact of prolonged parental leave on workplace re-entry, and review measures to strengthen management, supervision, and corporate compliance awareness related to the inclusion of parental leave duration in the required period for promotions.
 - There is a need to consider ways to make parental leave systems more flexible, such as amending legislation for weekly short-term parental leave and expanding options for receiving parental leave payments.
 - It is necessary to strengthen promotion of employer support systems during parental leave and review the adequacy of support fund sizes.
- (Parental working hour reduction) Careful management is needed for support related projects for business management systems.
- (Flexible work systems) Policies need to advance toward clearly specifying the procedures, methods, and details regarding flexible working systems through employment and labor management regulations, collective agreements, etc.
- (Workplace daycare centers) It is necessary to review measures to ease the burden of establishing and operating workplace nurseries

to a realistic level by listening to corporate needs.

□ Aspects of improving system usage

- (Institutional perspective) It is necessary to promote continuous improvement centered on the actual convenience and accessibility of the system.
 - Short-term: Guaranteeing work continuity, providing return-to-work adjustment and job searching programs, and supporting replacement staff, etc.
 - Mid- to long term: It is necessary to promote labor market reforms to establish equal labor, equal performance, and equal pay between men and women.
 - It is necessary to explore ways to enhance societal awareness for increasing male participation in child-rearing (household labor).
 - Inspections need to be conducted on field conditions, system accessibility, effectiveness, and whether any blind spots exist in the relief system.

□ Aspects of measures to reduce variance in system utilization

- (Corporate disclosure) It is necessary to review improvement measures for the family-friendly certification and disclosure system in the private sector.
 - It is necessary to establish disclosure standards related to parental leave and review ways to make improvements in relation to the certification system.
 - There is a need to clarify disclosure items and methods, such as unifying the calculation formula of disclosed data to prevent distortion of calculation results. It is necessary to consider including the relevant indicators as important matters in business reports or establishing regular survey systems.
 - Measures to provide incentives depending on the level of

compliance with family-friendly certification standards also need to be reviewed.

- (Company size) Insufficient utilization of systems by SMEs compared to large companies
 - There is a need to explore ways to strengthen support measures for SME workers for returning to work, finding leave cover, etc., when utilizing work-family balance systems.
 - It is necessary to consider ways to expand support for parental working hour reduction in SMEs based on the availability of and demand for the parental working hour reduction system in SMEs.

□ Aspects of minimizing the blind spots of the system

- Considering that the utilization rate of parental leave and flexible working systems for non-regular workers is not high, it is necessary to prepare measures to realistically enhance the usage among non-regular workers in blind spots.
- It is necessary to seek measures to improve participation rates in maternity protection and parenting support projects by industry through measures such as easing blind spots in Employment Insurance enrollment and application.