

NEWSLETTER



Family First Japan 2025



GREETINGS



FFJ Office Staff Kazuyoshi Matsumoto

I am excited to share that I joined the Family First Japan office in February 2025. I have a beautiful Scottish wife and two sons, aged 5 and 3. As I embark on this journey of parenting, I am learning a great deal. Since my wife and I speak English, we have access to resources from all over the world. However, I was surprised by how little information about parenting is available in Japanese. During my search for resources, I discovered Family First Japan and genuinely resonated with their vision of "strengthening the Japanese family." In recent years, there has been a growing recognition of the importance of family in Japan, as men are encouraged to take childcare leave. However, there is still a lack of role models showing how to cherish their families in everyday situations. Just as there are no perfect parents, there is no perfect parenting. Nevertheless, we can strive to do our best through learning. I look forward to embarking on this journey with all of you to strengthen Japanese families. I am excited to learn and enjoy parenting, marriage, and family together. Thank you.



Activity/Event Report

[FATHER'S NETWORK SCHEDULE]

Koganei Group

• 4/12 16:00~

Mitaka Group

• 4/19 10:00~

Tsuchiura/Tsukuba Group

• 4/3 20:00~

• 4/5 20:00~

ZOOM

TBD

*We will send the zoom link if you are joining online. Inquire via email for more details.

info@familyfirstjapan.org

[Prepare/Enrich]

We will announce the details of the next Facilitator Training Course as soon as it is ready.

[Global Leaders Summit]

• 4/26-29 (@Manila)

Couple's Relationship Assessment: Introduction of Registered Facilitators



Sayuri Sugii (Toyama resident)

Certified Facilitator / Registered Facilitator

Profile

Born in Yokosuka City, Kanagawa Prefecture, she graduated from the Kanagawa Prefectural College of Nursing Education and holds a national nursing license. She later studied Human Services at Chubu Gakuin University's College of Human Services, where she qualified as a social worker. Certified Facilitator of Prepare/Enrich. In 1986, her husband was transferred to Nagano, and in 1994, they were both baptized at the Church of Jesus Christ in Nagano. In 2004, her husband changed jobs, and they relocated to Yamagata Prefecture. She worked as an assistant elementary school nurse and child welfare worker there. Beginning in April 2025, she will serve as a Women's Counseling Center counselor in Toyama.

Introduction

Hello, my name is Sayuri Sugii, and I am a Couple's Relationship Assessment Facilitator. About three years ago, I officially became certified in this role. During that time, I encountered many situations in my work with children and their parents where couples struggled to maintain stable relationships due to miscommunication. It was disheartening to witness. While working in this field, I discovered Family First Japan. I became certified as a Couple's Relationship Assessment Facilitator, specializing in couple's communication. Most couples I work with are in their 30s and 40s and are preparing for marriage. I aim to create a relaxed atmosphere by sharing stories, personal experiences, and failures from my marriage. We hope these initiatives will continue to bring value to families in the future.

Facilitator Training Course

The ZOOM workshop held on March 14th was significant. The lecturer, Ps. Kiyoshi Mizutani has been teaching and writing about marriage, love, sex, and family. His talk focused on "human relations rooted in love," and "equal cooperation," particularly for married couples. His insights prompted me to reflect on my life and recognize how wives can develop a strong desire to dominate their husbands. As my marriage progressed, tension grew, and I became more self-centered. When we take each other for granted, we must remember his advice: "The essence of marriage is to commune, communicate, and make decisions together." I intend to continue learning from this experience and apply these lessons to my marriage and the couples I facilitate. I am looking forward to future workshops.

Facilitator Training Course

Family First Japan occasionally offers Couples Relationship Assessment Facilitator Training Courses for individuals looking to gain valuable tools for pre-marital and post-marital counseling. This training is also beneficial for couples who want to deepen their connection with each other. In the course, you will learn the fundamentals of Couples Relationship Assessment and become a certified facilitator!

Eligible individuals:

- Ministers and Pastors
- Marriage educators
- Relationship coaches
- Adoption and foster care workers
- Psychiatric specialist
- Family educators



We will share the details as soon as we schedule the next event.

JOIN THE COUPLE'S ASSESSMENT FACILITATOR COMMUNITY

This community is dedicated to sharing and supporting each other's experiences as facilitators. Let's learn together and support each other to help pre-marriage and married couples have a hopeful marriage and married life.

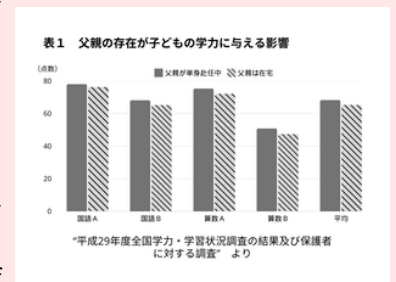
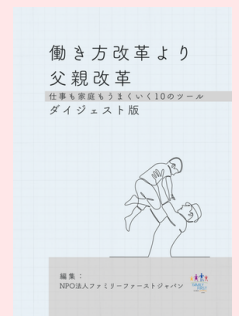
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A sneak peek from the Be a Better Dad Today! Short ver.

The following is a passage from the Be a Better Dad Today! Short ver.

“ Every child would prefer a good father to a bad one. Having a father is better than having none at all. Most people can grasp this concept. However, many do not fully understand how essential fatherhood is to their children's lives and to society as a whole. Statistics predict a grim future for our children. Those who grow up without their fathers are more likely to face financial hardship, struggle to continue their education and experience a higher risk of depression. Additionally, children raised in divorced families are more likely to end up divorced themselves. Children raised in divorced families are 2.5 times more likely to experience divorce themselves. Additionally, even when children have a father present, those with neglectful fathers tend to have higher crime rates. Conversely, research indicates that in families where fathers are actively involved in parenting, maternal stress decreases, which can lead to a higher birth rate. Some may have tried and failed, but your family needs not just a father but a "good" father. Let's examine another statistic regarding the impact of a father's presence in the home on their children's academic performance. The results indicate that children tend to perform better academically when their fathers are not present at home (see Table 1). Some mothers report that they struggle to help their children study when their husbands come home early. This may stem from a lack of positive father role models among modern parents. However, it is today's fathers who have the power to end the era of fatherlessness that has persisted in Japan since the era of the Japanese economic miracle. ”



Participating in the Fathers' Network

Every month, fathers actively involved in the lives of their children aged 0 to 18 gather to read "Be a Better Father Today!" along with a workbook. They come together to share insights and learn from each other over the course of a year and a half. Here are some of their impressions.



I had a fantastic opportunity to potentially become the best father I could be. It required effort to set aside time to address preliminary issues, gather my thoughts, and have meaningful discussions with my family. The rewards far outweighed the challenges, and the experience proved extremely valuable. I also learned an important lesson: while listening attentively to my customers, I hadn't been giving my family the same level of attention. As a result, my family members now communicate with me more openly, and my wife often tells me, "You have changed."

Mr. B (30s, 3 children)

I am grateful for the opportunity to create a vision for my family—something I couldn't have done alone. It was wonderful to share what I want to treasure with my spouse. My children are still young, and I haven't fully communicated our family's vision, but I hope to cherish this experience as my aspiration for the future.

Mr. C (40s, 2 children)



In the next issue, we would like to include comments from the participants' wives.

Director of FFJ Yuto Matsumoto

JOIN US AT FATHERS' NETWORK

Our goal is to help fathers become better fathers and better husbands by learning from and encouraging each other in a local community where they can meet and socialize with other fathers. We are active in the Fukuoka, Mitaka, Tsuchiura, and Tsukuba areas and hold online meetings via ZOOM. Each area meets once or twice a month.

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