

Dynamics of Educational Inequality among Children in Japan: Findings from the First Four Years of the Japan Child Panel Survey¹

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Abstract

There is a growing worldwide interest in inequality of opportunities among children in developed countries (Duncan and Murnane 2011). This paper reports findings about the dynamics of inequality of educational outcomes and investment among Japanese children by socioeconomic background using the first four years of the “Japan Child Panel Survey (JCPS)” that started in 2010. JCPS is the Japan’s first effort to collect longitudinal data of national representative sample of children covering measures of both cognitive and non-cognitive outcomes, matched with rich family background information from Keio Household Panel Survey (KHPS) and Japan Household Panel Survey (JHPS). The children sample of the JCPS consists of two cohorts, both are school-age offspring of KHPS and JHPS adult respondents, and each cohort is currently surveyed every two years. This paper uses the first two panels (two-years apart) of both cohorts of children from 2010 to 2013 and draws the first systematic picture of dynamics of inequality among children in terms of cognitive and non-cognitive ability measures, parental investment, time allocation, and other social outcomes across subgroups defined by socioeconomic status of the family. Among many findings, it is observed that inequality in cognitive outcomes by income quartiles tends to enlarge during primary school but tends to be stable during lower secondary school, while inequality in behavioral problems tends to enlarge throughout compulsory education.

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