

Ward mayor enjoys paternity leave

Kyodo News

The mayor of Bunkyo Ward, Tokyo, who earlier this month took nearly two weeks of paternity leave — a rare move by a municipality head — says the time he spent with his family meant a great deal and taught him how special a mother is.

"I became keenly aware of the greatness of a mother who does (housework and child rearing) every day," Hironobu Narisawa, 44, said Tuesday when he met members of the press for the first time since returning to the ward office.

Narisawa took the paternity leave from April 3 to 15 to take care of his first child, a boy, who was born Feb. 5.

"There are certainly things that a father can do (in child rearing.) I hope that I can become a catalyst for more men to take leave," he said.

Narisawa told the ward assembly and officials in March that he wanted to take the time off, and no assembly members filed an objection.

The ward office said, however, it has received slightly more negative than positive opinions from the public, including criticism about how the office would cope with emergency situations in the mayor's absence.

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