

NPO helps granddads learn child-rearing skills

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KYODO

A Tokyo-based nonprofit organization is promoting a program to help grandfathers learn the basics of nurturing babies.

The NPO, called Egalite Otemae, began the program in 2010 to address the growing need for grandparents to get involved in child-rearing as the number of working couples has increased while day care facilities fall short of demand.

Very few older men, including baby boomers, experienced nurturing babies because they were too busy with company work.

The NPO sends women experienced in child care to seminars to teach older men the basic skills, such as how to bathe babies, change their diapers and prepare milk and baby food. It usually holds two training sessions a month.

Some 250 men have gone through the program. Seminars

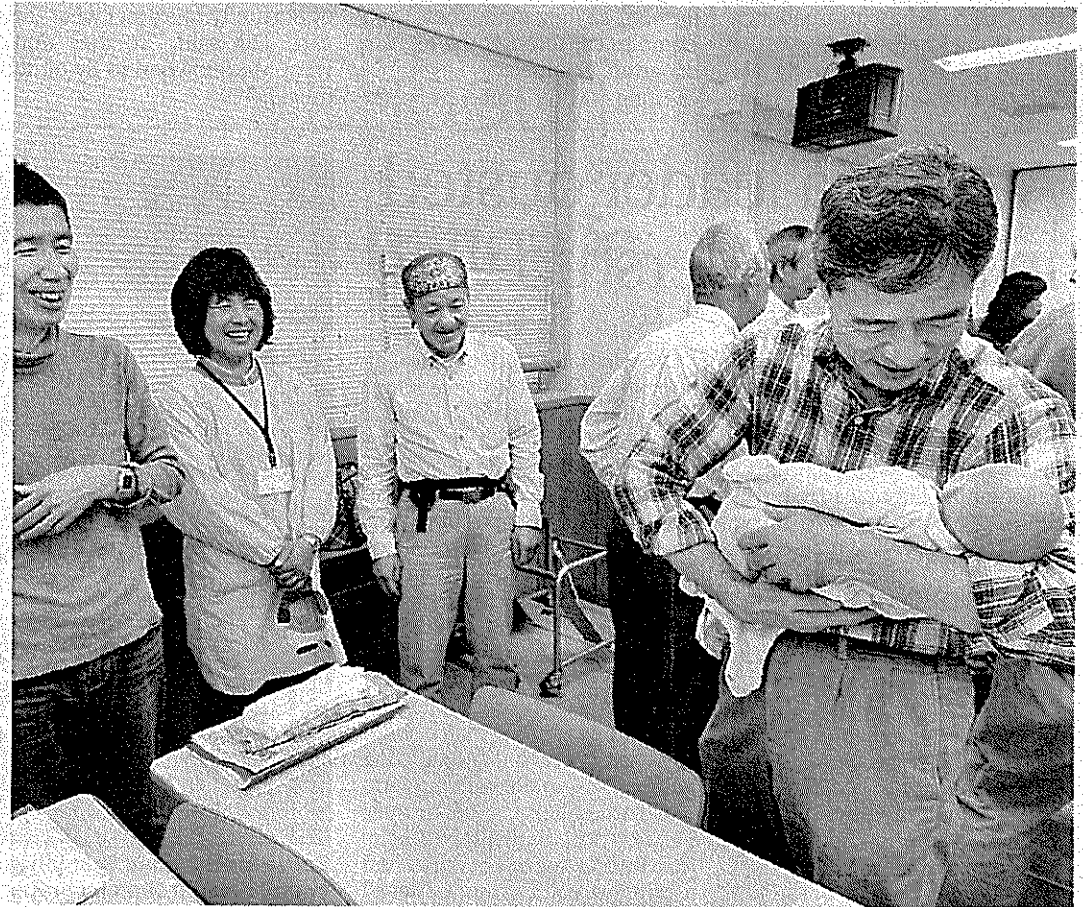
are often held free of charge by local governments or other organizations with the know-how provided by Egalite Otemae.

Those who complete the program are certified as "sofu-lier," an expression Egalite Otemae has coined by combining "sofu" for grandfather with "sommelier."

Egalite Otemae is a loosely knit NPO without an office or full-time staff. It was established in 2004 by former high school classmates to work toward a gender-equal society and now has members from various backgrounds, including doctors, lawyers, professors and housewives.

"We baby boomers worked so furiously, we couldn't really get involved in raising our kids, although we wanted to," said NPO head Shunji Furukubo, who used to work for a large trading house.

Participants in the program can "not only recover what they left behind a long time ago but also improve their lives as a grandpa by doing housework," he said.



You're never too old to learn: A baby boomer uses a doll to learn how to hold a baby in a program to help older men learn the basics of nurturing babies. KYODO

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