Toyota To Exempt Workers With Young Kids From Nightshifts

The Associated Press

NAGOYA, June 6 (Kyodo) — Toyota Motor Corp. is planning to exempt factory workers with preschool-age children from working nightshifts to support childcare, starting in September, sources familiar with the matter have said.

The measure has already been introduced for some Toyota plant workers on a trial bases, kicking off October last year. With Nissan Motor Co. also testing a similar system, it could evolve into an industry-wide trend that throws support behind Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's economic growth policy featuring support for families raising children.

Toyota will also consider bearing part of the cost of hiring babysitters for those employees working at its factories not equipped with nurseries, the sources said Wednesday. The automaker is planning for babysitters to cover early morning hours for its workers until kindergartens open.

Auto factories typically operate on two shifts, with the dayshift lasting from early morning through late afternoon and the nightshift from late afternoon through late in the night.

The envisaged nightshift-less system will make it easier for eligible workers to pick up children from nurseries and take care of them at night.

Employees have reacted positively to the trial, the sources said.

A Toyota executive said that since the system will increase the burden on other non-eligible workers in sharing shift work, "it will be more important than ever for (the eligible) person to have a commitment (to his or her work) and gain understanding from their bosses and colleagues in the workplace."

The new work shift targets employees who live without family members who can take care of children until the children reach school age. If both husband and wife work at Toyota, they will not be able to use the system simultaneously, according to the sources.

The system will principally benefit female workers. More women are said to quit jobs in Japan than in western countries before they reach their early 30s. Toyota has around 1,400 women working at its manufacturing facilities.

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