

# South Korea Birthrate Hits Lowest on Record

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Children play in a fountain in Seoul. Play dates may be harder to arrange in the future.  
Reuters

South Korea's birthrate last year fell to the lowest level on record, the government said Tuesday, just days after the release of a study warning that South Koreans could face natural extinction by 2750.

Just 8.6 babies per 1,000 South Koreans were born last year, the lowest level since the country began keeping records in 1970, the national statistics agency said. In 1970, there were 31.2 babies born per thousand people.

The total number of births last year was the second-lowest on record, falling to 436,500 from 484,600 a year earlier. The lowest number on record was in 2005, when South Korean women gave birth to just

435,000 babies.

The agency data said that as of last year the average South Korean woman was expected to give birth to 1.187 babies in her lifetime, ranking the country nearly last in fertility worldwide. According to the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, only Hong Kong, Taiwan, Macau and Singapore have lower fertility rates than South Korea.

The latest statistics follow the release over the weekend of a National Assembly-commissioned simulation that said South Koreans **face natural extinction by 2750** if the birthrate were maintained at 1.19 children per woman—assuming no reunification with North Korea or significant inflow of migrants.

South Korea's population is still growing **but is expected to peak in 2030** at 52.2 million before shrinking, according to the government. The country's population this year is around 50 million.