

Raising pets has become unprecedentedly popular in recent years, with more and more youngsters choosing to keep pets instead of having children. The pictures above illustrate such trend. The left picture depicts a young couple, the husband is rolling a toddle in which a boy and a girl are happily playing with each other. Meanwhile, the wife is walking the dogs and chatting with neighbors, sharing information about how to take good care of their pets. The two pictures in the right demonstrate two similar yet contrasting scenarios. One shows a couple feeding and teaching their two children, the other, on the other hand, depicts a couple carefully feeding two dogs a variety of delicious-looking courses. In spite of the seemingly unrelated pictures, they all indicate that more and more newlyweds choose to raise pets rather than having more children, with some even deciding to completely replace kids with pets.

From my personal experience and observation, this trend results from a series of social changes taking place in recent years. To begin with, rising living

expenses and relatively low incomes, accompanied by soaring housing prices, have significantly hindered youngsters to have children. Their financial struggles make them unable to provide children with adequate resources and education. Furthermore, taking care of children can be exhausting and time-consuming. Many couples thus decide to give up having children in order to avoid these problems. Lastly, as social values change, the pressure of having children to extend the family is lower than that of previous generations. Fewer parents nowadays would force young couples to deliver a grandson in order to take over the family careers in the future. As the number of births per year keeps dropping due to these reasons mentioned above, problems related to aging society can be aroused, including the growing demand for nursery homes and long-term healthcare, as well as fewer laborers available in the market. The government must take immediate action to prevent the issues from worsening, creating a better society where parents with children and parents with pets can live harmoniously together.