

Cover Photo: Craft "Koinobori Soaring in the Clear May Sky"

Under the brilliant sunshine of May, the Koinobori made by the Kinder Kids children are soaring across the blue sky.

The small carp have all gathered together to become one big, strong carp, swimming freely in the sky, just like everyone chasing their own dreams.

They are steadily moving forward with their big eyes firmly set on the future. Let's happily, energetically, and harmoniously pursue our dreams together with our friends, just like these Koinobori!

**We look forward to
your ideas!**

"Hiraku" provides useful information
and the latest news related to
English and childhood education.

- Your recent interests
- Topics you want us to cover
- New content etc etc...

If you have ideas to contribute,
please share these with us!

"Hiraku" Editorial Department
TEL : 06-6135-0150
Mail : hiraku@kinderkids.ed.jp

Hirakû

Published in
March 2024 Vol.33
Next issue is
planned to come
at the end of July

Kinder Kids Inc.
TEL : 06-6135-0150
Pulala Tenma 2F, 3-1 Ikeda-cho,
Kita-ku, Osaka-shi, Osaka. 530-0033
www.kinderkids.com

Expanding future possibilities

Hirakû

33



- ★ Liverpool FC Soccer School at Tennoji Yuhigaoka School has Started!
- ★ An Interview with Ms. Erika Hasegawa, Advisor of Adventure/Infinity School
- ★ Lecture for Parents and Graduates at Toyonaka School
- ★ A Shoin Junior High School Student who Graduated from Nishinomiya School Participated in a lesson at Takarazuka School



日本の心と、英語の力。Kinder Kids inc.

Liverpool FC Soccer School

Has Finally Started
at Kinder Kids
Tennoji Yuhigaoka School!



Achieving Partnership through Shared Goals and Values

Kinder Kids and Liverpool FC Soccer Academy collaborated to start the Liverpool FC Soccer School at Tennoji Yuhigaoka School. After a successful trial lesson in March, the school got off to a good start with many current and former students taking the course. We interviewed Mr. Masakazu Shimizu to learn more about this new school.



Mr. Masakazu Shimizu, CEO

Features and Strengths of the Program

“LEARN TO PLAY THE LIVERPOOL WAY”

The training program of Liverpool FC International Academy consists of five elements: Technical, Tactical, Physical, Social, and Mental development. In addition, we promote four values based on **Liverpool's unique club philosophy, "The Liverpool Way": Ambition, Commitment, Dignity, and Unity.** This program is offered in over 30 countries and regions worldwide and is based on the proven track record of the Liverpool FC Academy in producing world-class players. This program has several key strengths: ① The curriculum is the same as LFC in England. ② All coaches are certified by the LFC Coach Accreditation Program. ③ The steady system provides the same training menu worldwide. The system also allows students to receive the same training offered by the Liverpool Academy in England, no matter where we are.

Teaching Policy of Liverpool FC International Academy

“To be the world leader in the development of children through football”

The Liverpool FC International Academy aims to lead the world in the development of children through football. Under this philosophy, the academy focuses not only on improving the technical skills of football players but also on nurturing their social skills such as communication, teamwork, problem-solving, and decision-making.

Educational and Development Policy

“Long Term Player Development”

“Mistakes are a great opportunity for learning and improvement.”

At LFC, "Long Term Player Development" is the core of our educational and development policy. We emphasize not just winning in soccer but also to regard **failure and defeat as opportunities for learning and improvement.** We provide advice and guidance on not only the children's current objectives but also on their future objectives. We support the overall growth of children.



Next Steps

At Liverpool F.C., we don't think becoming a professional soccer player is the only path for our graduates. After graduation, students pursue various paths, such as continuing their efforts to become professional soccer players by joining J-League youth teams or entering a high school with a strong soccer team that competes in national tournaments. Some students develop an interest in the UK or overseas through their experiences at Liverpool F.C., leading them to pursue international opportunities such as studying abroad in the UK and Spain as junior high school students or enrolling in universities in Canada. Many of our graduates hope to play on the international stage.

Future Prospects and Objectives

Liverpool FC aims to be the world leader in fostering children's soccer skills. As the Japanese branch of LFC, we will continue to expand and grow, striving to be the best soccer school in Japan. Since this collaboration with Kinder Kids started, we are excited to see the synergies that will emerge from our shared values such as "English," "International Awareness," and "The International Stage." Following the unique philosophy of "The Liverpool Way", we aim to provide Kinder Kids children the opportunities to grow as players and individuals. We hope that from Kinder Kids graduates, prominent individuals will emerge.



Messages from the coaches



Coach Kenta

Welcome to the LFC family!
Let's learn to play soccer while having fun!



Coach Nour Eddine

Welcome to LFC family!
Let's enjoy playing football and learn to play the Liverpool way.

<Contact Information> Liverpool FC Soccer School Kansai Office

TEL: 070-8972-1892 (Monday - Friday, 10:00-17:00) *Closed on weekends and holidays

Email: kansai@lfcsofferschools.jp



Kinder Kids Adventure School Tokyo

Looking Back on the First Year Since the School Opened.

~Interview with Erika Hasegawa, School Advisor~

The spacious school grounds are lush with many trees, and the waterfall and pond allow students to play in the water to their heart's content. Outdoor activities that make the most of such a blessed environment have been added to the "Adventure School" curriculum. A year has passed since this new Kinder Kids school opened at Tokyo School. Ms. Erika Hasegawa, an advisor for the Adventure School, looks back on the past year.

Erika Hasegawa, Education Advisor of Adventure School/Infinity Global Elementary School.



Since 2016, Erika Hasegawa has been involved in childcare and education at "Mori no Yōchien (The Forest Kindergarten)" in Gifu Prefecture, where she primarily conducts childcare and education activities for children aged 3 to 6 that are done in nature and mountainous areas. She has been responsible for managing strategies, public relations, and served as a staff member at a "free school (alternative school)." Currently, she is the director of "Mori no Yōchien (The Forest Kindergarten)". She self-published a book titled "Okā-chan Kakumei" (The Mother's Revolution), a compilation of the 10-year history of the school, edited by Poplar Publishing Co., Ltd. In 2020, she moved to Karuizawa Town, Nagano Prefecture, for her child's education. She engages in extensive activities including consulting on inclusive education, training, program development, design, and writing.

The Sense of Children Fostered by an Interest in Nature

One particularly memorable moment was during our autumn outdoor activities when the children touched leaves and smelled the flowers freely without hesitation. It was touching to see children who had previously shown little interest in nature during the spring **suddenly become interested in nature, and try to experience nature with all their senses.** This may be something that is often overlooked in daily life. The children used to look at nature as "scenery" and did not try to actively experience nature. However, through the many plants in the school garden and activities in the garden, the children have deepened their interest in nature and developed the ability to freely experience it. The school playground is surrounded by diverse plants such as plum, persimmon, and chestnut trees, attracting various birds and insects. When I conduct activities, I share my discoveries and impressions with the children to encourage them to feel and enjoy nature. I encourage children to touch and smell the plants and insects as long as they are not dangerous. Through these experiences, children learn to "feel" and experience nature with their entire body. The school's playground becomes a treasure chest filled with wonderful experiences for the children.



The Nature-Based Education and How Children Can Change

I have worked at "The Forest Kindergarten," which operates all day and all year round in the forest without a school building, so I have seen how much children can play, learn, and use their senses surrounded by nature. At the Tokyo School, children learn how to play outdoors throughout the year and develop the ability to discover things on their own. Initially, a K1 teacher asked me if it was better not to use toys, and I suggested that the children should play only with natural objects. Six months later, children began telling us about their discoveries in nature. One day, when one child started playing with a camellia fruit by cracking it open and extracting the seeds, another child liked the exhilarating sound and began to imitate it. This experience helped this child develop an interest in flowers and leaves and **became curious about other things!** The children also enjoyed their imaginative play using natural materials. When asked, "What does the bark of the Zelkova tree look like?", they often respond with interesting answers. I am amazed by the adaptability and creativity of Kinder Kids children.



Nature experiences that develop the ability to face challenges

While extremely adventurous activities are not yet part of our program, we are planning to increase more adventurous activities. When faced with unpredictable difficulties, we let the children think for themselves and ask them what they want to do, rather than having an adult immediately solve the problem. We promote **communication skills by encouraging children** to share their opinions and talk with their friends and teachers. Before the nature activities, it is important to consider any risks in advance, and during the activities, give time and space for children to think and improvise. We want children to become more familiar with nature but also realize that there are forces beyond their control no matter how hard they try. For example, being caught in a sudden downpour can help develop self-control skills and foster respect for nature. As Darwin's theory of evolution states, adaptation to the environment is the key to survival. We aim to continue fostering the ability to harmonize with the environment and the courage to face challenges through nature.



Adventure School's Approach to Foster Independence and Social Skills

At Adventure School, we design our programs to foster children's **"self-determination"** and **"cooperation"**. We allocate ample time in our curriculum and provide multiple options for children to discuss. For example, during the autumn Otsukimi event, approximately 40 children made dumplings

from scratch, including sauce. We asked teachers to supervise the children without intervening as much as possible. Initially, there was some confusion, but the children started dividing roles, with one K3 child suggesting, “Let’s let K2 do it first. The children showed lively expressions on their faces and seemed to have a sense of accomplishment by creating everything themselves. It may be more efficient and easier for adults to make all the decisions, but children would miss out on the chances to have these experiences. Education is not a service industry, but a place where children acquire the skills they will need for the future. Children need to think and act for themselves rather than to wait for someone else to decide for them. At Adventure School, we provide **an environment where children understand their roles, cooperate with others, and develop the ability to solve problems.** This approach will nurture the children’s social skills and independence.

Innovative Educational Activities that Overcome Challenges

The joint activities for the two grades were challenging since there were too many students. Ideally, we wanted to spend more than half a day on the activities, but we didn’t have that much time. We held numerous meetings to thoroughly plan each activity to ensure that the activities would provide meaningful experiences for the children. In addition to detailed discussions with the teachers, we conducted assessments based on the children’s current conditions. Through simulations during the preparation phase, we clarified what kind of experience we wanted to provide the children, and adjusted the content as needed on the day of the program. Thanks to the teachers who worked with us, who showed an understanding of the program and generously offered their cooperation. Their support gave us the strength to overcome the difficulties.

A Special Project to Promote the Growth of Children

The “Out-of-school Expedition” is a simple program where children can decide where they want to go. It’s often considered that reaching the destination is the goal, but what truly matters are the events that occur along the way and the moments that stimulate the children’s feelings and curiosity. The curriculum of the Adventure Program is well-established, so we avoid giving too many instructions to the children, emphasizing the importance of children wanting to do things on their own and then taking action. We may adjust the objectives slightly depending on the grade or the group conducting the activity. We found that when any conflicts arise, the children think more to convey their thoughts, helping in the development of the children’s abilities.



Nurturing the Foundation of the Mind of Preschoolers

At Adventure School, we offer many nature experiences and team-based programs. The most important thing for preschoolers (infants and toddlers) is not the act of learning itself, but nurturing the foundation of the mind. People instinctively want to know, learn, and grow, and early childhood is a time when children rapidly absorb what is given to them, but



adults tend to focus on what children can or cannot do. The important thing during this period for the children is to realize “Existence itself has value”. This is just like the roots of a tree supporting the trunk, branches, and leaves; the bigger the tree, the deeper and more widely spread out the roots need to be. At Adventure School, we prioritize children to learn to love themselves, feel loved, care for others, and genuinely enjoy many experiences. We create an environment where **children can try without the fear of failure.** Children often go too wild or cry, but every emotion is essential. Knowing these emotions and nurturing the foundation through experiences where children feel safe will sow the seeds for future learning.

Strengthening the Bonds with Parents and the Community

We have received a lot of positive feedback from parents in surveys, including comments that their children always look forward to the program. Parents have also commented that making pickled plums and decorating the entrance with seasonal berries have become topics of conversation between parents and children. The number of crafts using objects picked up in the schoolyard has increased, providing more opportunities to experience the change of the seasons. We also organized **a community café** for the parents, which deepened their understanding of the school, and we received requests to open the café again. During out-of-school-yard activities, the children say hello to local people and interact with workers at construction sites and people in the shopping district. Some local people are surprised to see children speaking in English. On Halloween, we interacted with our neighbors by trick-or-treating with the cooperation of a rice ball shop and a car shop near the school.



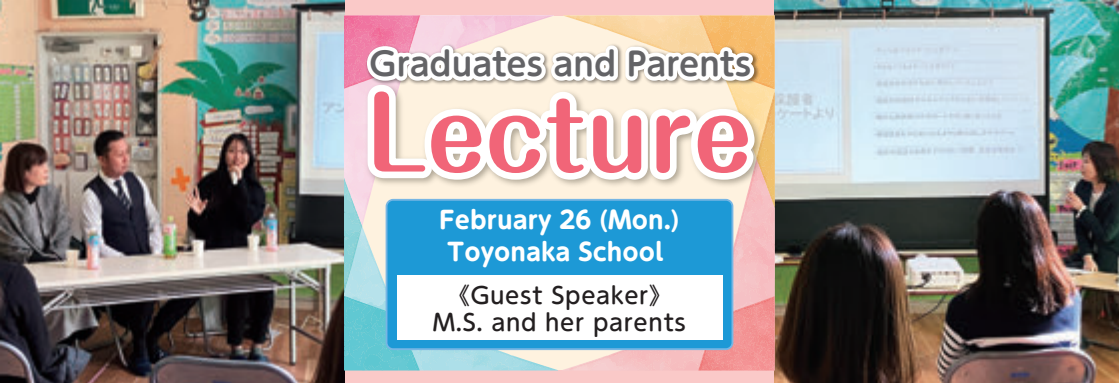
Adventure School: Promoting Child-Led Projects

In the future, we would like to promote more **projects planned by children.** Children already have the ability to think, discuss, and make decisions on their own. Making decisions is not always a pleasant experience, as it involves the responsibility of accepting the consequences. However, children grow a lot through this process. On the other hand, it can also be more challenging for teachers as it may involve more risk to conduct outdoor activities compared to indoor activities. Nevertheless, we believe that these projects offer a great opportunity for growth, not only for the children but also for the teachers.

The Future of Adventure School: Constant Evolution

Adventure School is still in the midst of development, and rather than having clear objectives or goals, we are constantly adjusting to the situation and trying to improve. The projects at Adventure School are not conducted by only me but by the team. While I make use of my experience from “The Forest Kindergarten”, I believe that what is more important is for all the school teachers to think together about **what is unique to Kinder Kids Adventure School** in terms of childcare and education.





At Kinder Kids, we invite graduates and their parents to lecture to help ease the parents' concerns about **the educational approach at home and the children's future career paths**, thus supporting them to gain a clearer and more concrete vision. We gather surveys from participants in advance on themes such as **the student's career decisions after graduation**. This provides a valuable opportunity to hear honest opinions from both the children and their parents.

[Profile of M.S.]



Graduated from
Toyonaka School
in 2009
Grad Club
Student until G6

Graduated from public elementary, middle, and high schools. Currently, Kansai Gaidai University, 4th year.
She studied in Canada with her mother and twin siblings for a year while in grade 6.

Q.What was the best thing about attending Kinder Kids?

A.[M-san] In terms of English, of course, I found myself good at conversations with foreigners, as well as school speeches and tests. Even while others were struggling, I found I didn't need to study much for the listening tests. In addition, understanding English books and song lyrics in English allows me to better grasp the author's intent and emotions, leading to a better understanding of other cultures and their different values. When watching a movie, comparing the English lines with the Japanese subtitles helps me find more about English expressions and translations and also broadens my horizons.

Q.What was the reason for choosing Kinder Kids and the path after graduation?

A.[Mother] My husband and I had decided even before our children were born that we wanted to enroll them in an international preschool to develop their English skills. After visiting several schools, we chose Kinder Kids because it had the most welcoming atmosphere. While we also considered international schools for elementary education, we respected our children's wish to make neighborhood friends and chose the local public school. They continued to attend public junior high and high school, enjoying a **fulfilling school life with their neighborhood friends**.

A.[Father] When our children were born, we discussed what they should learn, and we agreed that as long as they were good at English, everything else would work out. We believed that **learning English would broaden their horizons** and we brought them abroad to study for a year while they were in elementary school. While we considered private elementary school, we wanted our children to interact with people from various backgrounds, so we chose the local public school. They enrolled in the local public school, and initially, it was a bit of a shock for them to be surrounded by "students speaking



双子のHくんと一緒に豊中校に通ったMさん

Osaka dialect," a different environment from Kinder Kids. However, they had valuable experiences by interacting with different types of people, which we believe was beneficial for our children.

A.[M-san] Enrolling in public school allowed me to meet people from diverse backgrounds and also have the opportunity to meet unique and talented people. I became mentally stronger and was able to broaden my interests in many areas besides English.

Q.How did you decide on the destination and period for studying abroad?

A.[Father] Seeing some children who attended international schools but couldn't speak English made me realize the importance of continuous learning. I had always thought about having my children study abroad while they were still in elementary school before the emergence of self-awareness in junior high and high school. We decided to let them study abroad in the sixth grade because we believed they would learn more at an older age rather than at a very young age.

A.[Mother] Initially, I thought about going to Hawaii for our parent-child study abroad program, but I chose Toronto, where there are relatively few Japanese people. Toronto is a very safe city, so we didn't have to worry about safety during our stay. During our stay in Toronto, our children had a hard time understanding long English sentences and often had to guess the meaning by using multiple translation tools. Their study abroad program lasted for one year during the sixth grade of elementary school. After returning to Japan, catching up on their schoolwork was quite challenging. However, through interactions with many foreign people, my daughter, who was not confident in expressing herself, became able to assert herself and confidently express her opinions. Her way of thinking has become much more positive.

A.[M-san] I grew up with the family policy of "studying abroad in elementary school," so when the decision to study abroad was made, I took it as a matter of course. It was in the middle of my first year of junior high school when I returned to Japan, but being able to reunite with friends from elementary school made my transition smoother. With the support of my friends, I was able to catch up on club activities and schoolwork quickly, and it made me happy that I attended a local public school.

■Future Dreams and Family Ties

[M-san] Despite years of studying English, I've decided to pursue a career in architecture. At first, I thought I should have pursued a career that utilized my English skills. However, after seriously considering my future, I first decided to pursue equipment design, my father's field. I realized that English is not just for business but also a means to broaden my perspectives. I then decided to pursue a career in architecture. I will continue to enjoy English and cherish it as a lifelong asset.

[Father] When my daughter expressed her desire to pursue a career in design, I suggested leveraging her English skills by starting an NPO offering guided tours for foreign tourists in Kyoto. However, she followed her passion and chose the design industry, just like me. When my daughter made this decision, she burst into tears, because she felt guilty about choosing a different choice instead of the path that parents expected. There are many design firms in Japan and abroad, and there will be plenty of opportunities for her to use her English skills. I am truly happy that my daughter has found her path by herself. I will do my best to support her. Parents should understand that children often try to meet their parents' unspoken expectations more than parents think.



It was truly impressive to see they have such a wonderful relationship where they could discuss anything. Thank you very much for your valuable time.



Shoin Junior High School 3rd-year students conducted a special English lesson on SDGs for the K2 and K3 students at Kinder Kids Takarazuka School.

Among the teaching members, we found S.T., a graduate of Kinder Kids Nishinomiya School (Nishinomiya Kitaguchi School).

Here's a report on the "Shoin Junior High School × Kinder Kids" special lesson.

The on-site lecture was realized from an exchange proposal with Shoin Junior High School, the alma mater of the Kinder Kids Takarazuka School director.

Shoin Junior High and High School is the alma mater of the Takarazuka School director. The reason for holding this on-site lecture was that the Takarazuka school director learned that Shoin Junior and Senior High School students have been focusing on English and environmental issues in recent years and have been giving on-site lectures related to the SDGs at nearby elementary schools. I had the opportunity to talk with my former teacher from my student days who is now the principal, and we planned to "hold exchange activities" taking advantage of our shared interest in English education. The children at Kinder Kids learn about the environment as part of their theme-based



Shoin Junior High School,
3rd Year (as of February)
S.T.

Kinder Kids Nishinomiya School
(Nishinomiya Kitaguchi School)
Graduated in 2015

In the future, I want to use my language skills to travel and study abroad and make friends with people from many different countries. I would like to work in an English-speaking profession such as a ballet teacher or a cabin attendant.



studies. We organized this exchange activity because through these interactions children can have a meaningful time beyond just studying.

**"Let's have fun and learn about the SDGs!"
: a lesson that resonates in the hearts of children**

Shoin students prepared and conducted their lessons in a way that was easier for the younger students to understand. The lesson started with introductions, followed by various activities such as an SDGs quiz, an SDGs game (Simon says), and singing "It's a Small World" together. In the SDGs quiz, environmental issues and the global situation were asked, and the children tried their best to come up with answers. The most impressive moment was when asked the question "Are there children in the world who cannot go to school? Yes or No." Despite the correct answer being "Yes," most children answered "No." The children were surprised to learn that there are children in the world who cannot go to school. This question made the children realize how fortunate they are to be able to play and study with their friends and teachers at school every day. The children's excitement reached its peak during the SDGs game "Simon Says!" Then, during "Let's sing 'It's a Small World'," the children held hands in a circle



with the Shoin students and enjoyed a sense of unity while singing. The children actively participated in the lesson and enjoyed the activities. Afterwards, they expressed their gratitude with energetic dances, English songs, and a heartfelt "Thank you!" Thanks to the thoughtful preparation by the Shoin students, the children were able to have fun, learn a lot, and have a wonderful experience.

Towards further development of SDGs education

At Takarazuka School, we plan to conduct similar lessons regularly to interact with junior high school students. Takarazuka City has a project to collect videos and presentations about the SDGs, and preschools are eligible to submit them. Our goal is for the children to maintain their interest in SDGs. We are considering whether we will participate in this project by different grade levels or as the entire school. Also, within the school, we plan to provide opportunities for children to teach what they have learned to others.



Waka Okura,
Branch Manager of
Takarazuka school

Looking back at the on-site lesson.

Working at Kinder Kids, it's exciting to imagine how the children who have learned English and about the world will grow up after graduation. However, there are few opportunities to see it. During the "exchange lesson by students from my alma mater", I was moved to see the students from the school I attended were teaching children in my workplace. Also, I was impressed to see S.T., a Kinder Kids graduate, actively contributing to society. I am very happy that this meaningful lesson was held for the children at Kinder Kids Takarazuka School.