

Cover: Craft "Moon Viewing Rabbits and Red Dragonflies"

The rabbits prepare for the moon-viewing festival as the full moon rises in the night sky.

The colorful rabbits are gathered happily around the rice dumplings.

In the sky, many red dragonflies are flying around, as if they are also having a moon-viewing party.

The full moon, red dragonflies, and the rabbits beautifully decorate the night sky.

Expanding future possibilities

Hiraku

35

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!

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Hiraku

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★Native Teachers Acquiring Childcare Qualifications

★Lectures by Parents of Graduates

★Grad Club Summer Event 2024 ★Grad Club Cambodia Volunteer Program

★Infinity Global Elementary School Students' Interview



日本の心と、英語の力。Kinder Kids inc.



Passed the Childcare Licence Exam!



Interview with a Native English Teacher

< Part 2: Jennifer Eelbeck >

Obtaining a Japanese childcare license is difficult for those whose native language is not Japanese. The following is a continuation of the previous issue. We interviewed our international teachers who have passed this difficult exam, asking them about their motivations for obtaining this license and their educational philosophies.



Jennifer Eelbeck
(Toyonaka School)

Jennifer Eelbeck is from England. She majored in education for children aged 7 to 11 at university and earned her license as a primary school teacher. After graduation, she worked as a primary school teacher in England.

Then she moved to Japan and traveled around the country to deepen her understanding of Japanese culture. She later became an English teacher for elementary school students. After the birth of her own child, she became more interested in educating younger children and started working at Kinder Kids.

communicating with parents, I sometimes feel a language barrier, but on such occasions, I use simple words, pictures, and gestures to understand each other.

I learned Japanese by myself while in the UK, and by the time I arrived in Japan, I was already fluent in Japanese. However, the biggest problem in learning Japanese was the lack of partners to practice speaking with. I had no one to correct my grammar or pronunciation, and since I didn't have a smartphone back then, I couldn't take online lessons either.

[Motivation and Experience of Obtaining the Childcare License]

While researching which qualifications would be helpful to fulfill my role as a Kinder Kids teacher, I came across the Japanese Childcare License. After seeing the exam content, I realized how beneficial this license would be for my career, and I was determined to obtain it. The exam involved a lot of memorization, and the "Nutrition" part of the test was particularly challenging—I had to take it three times before passing. What I remember the most during the process of obtaining the license was the practical exam. I was incredibly nervous about speaking in Japanese without a script, but I practiced in the hallway until my turn came. I also felt anxious because I didn't know the proper timing for greetings and bowing when entering the room, but by observing and mimicking the other examinees, I managed to get through it.

[How Do You Deal with the Language and Culture in Japan?]
I read a lot about child-rearing in Japan and always keep in mind how Japanese parents raise their children. This helps me consider the priorities when creating a childcare environment and adjust the classroom setting accordingly. Sometimes, these priorities differ from my own values, but I have discussions with my coworkers and do research to better understand these other perspectives. In



When I arrived in Japan and realized I could communicate smoothly with others, I felt relieved that my studies had been successful.

[About My Teaching Method]

I value lessons where the children can take the lead, rather than classes where the teacher mainly teaches children knowledge. However, since I need to follow the curriculum, I make sure the children can choose activities that interest them. I also provide time for the children to freely explore lesson theme topics they want to learn more about. In the UK, children start school at the age of four, and they learn a lot through playing. The activities are fun and tailored to the children's developmental stages. In Japan, children's schedules are fixed, and there are many group activities. By doing activities together, they learn how to help and support one another. Both the UK and Japan have positive aspects in their approaches, and there is much to learn from each country's education.

[Building Trust with the Children]

When building relationships with the children, I always keep in mind that I am one of their first teachers and I also play a role in setting the standard for what a teacher is. I strive to be someone they can feel comfortable approaching while understanding the differences in language and culture. For many of the children, their interaction with me is their first experience with a foreign culture, so I want to leave them with a positive impression of my home country. By creating a safe and positive classroom environment, I help the children feel confident and not be afraid of different cultures, encouraging them to communicate with people from diverse backgrounds. As I spend time with the children each day, I can see them grow and develop self-esteem.



[Future Goals]

I am a class teacher and also an operations manager at Kinder Kids, and I love my job. I'd like to continue this role while expanding my skills and responsibilities. I am particularly interested in curriculum development and hope to contribute to the development of theme curriculum in the future. Additionally, I plan to take a specialized training course to deepen my understanding of children with developmental challenges, so I am currently researching about which is the best training course. I am also continuing my Japanese studies, with a particular interest in kanji. At the moment, I am studying to obtain the Level Pre-2 of the Kanji Proficiency Test.

[For Those Considering Working as a Preschool Teacher Abroad]

Working as a preschool teacher abroad comes with many difficulties, but it also offers many rich and rewarding experiences. The special bonds you build with children in the childcare environment and the process of mutual understanding and growth is very valuable. It is crucial to learn the language and culture of the country where you plan to work. This will help you adapt smoothly to the new environment and facilitate communication. Please don't be afraid to take on new challenges. The courage to take the first step opens the path to new discoveries and growth.





[R.M.'s Profile]



Graduated from Nagoya School in 2015
Currently a first-year student in the IB class at Nagoya International High School

Participated in the Grad Club Speech Contest and the study program in Australia
Currently is a volunteer at the Grad Club Nagoya School

At Kinder Kids, we hold parent-led lectures to support parents have a clearer picture of their **educational approach at home** and to feel confident about **choices for their child's future**.

The lectures are based on questions collected from the participants beforehand, such as how the students progressed after graduation and what was important to them in deciding their educational career path. This time, the event was held for two days at Nagoya Noritake School and Nagoya School.

*Please note that the parents' speeches have been edited for publication.

Q. Why did you choose Kinder Kids?

A. My son has loved music since he was young and was exposed to English by singing English songs at a music school. Gradually, he developed a desire to learn more English, so we decided to enroll him in a preschool where English is used daily. When choosing a preschool, he expressed a wish to attend a school that uses English, so we began looking for a preschool that focuses on English-based education. We visited various types of preschools, including general ones and those with a focus on physical activities, each with its own merits. However, the more we learned about Kinder Kids and the more we visited, the more we felt it was truly an outstanding system. We chose Kinder Kids because they have a well-structured curriculum with likable characters and also provide many opportunities to use what the children have learned, such as borrowing picture books that have the newly learned vocabulary.

We felt that Kinder Kids offers an environment where children can enjoy learning and steadily improving their English skills.



Q. What were the benefits of sending your child to Kinder Kids?

A. One of the most impressive aspects is the writing instruction. Compared to other preschools and kindergartens, Kinder Kids' writing education stands out. The curriculum is based on structured steps, allowing children to naturally acquire skills for passing tests such as the Eiken test. What makes Kinder Kids great is that learning according to the curriculum ensures that students can steadily develop their abilities. Additionally, having homework was also very helpful, as it helped my child realize that what he had learned was useful. This boosted his confidence and helped to maintain his motivation to study.

Q. About Choosing a School After Graduation

A. Since my son had dreamed of becoming a pilot since K2, we wanted to enroll him in a school that has the program of the International Baccalaureate (IB). He also preferred a school where he could learn both English and Japanese. Initially, we considered international schools in the Kansai region but decided on Aichi Kokusai Gakuen after considering how to balance the demands of attending this school and our family. Aichi Kokusai Gakuen was a newly established school with a small number of students and had several issues, so we decided to transfer to an international school in Kansai. However, after attending the school, we found the living and tuition costs were high, and we also felt uncomfortable with the environment. Additionally, my child's English didn't progress as much as we had hoped, so we transferred to a public elementary school in Ashiya.

The experience at the public school exposed us to diverse values and perspectives, which was invaluable. When it came time to choose a middle school, we initially considered Ritsumeikan Uji Junior High School, but the two-hour commuting time was a significant burden. We also considered returning to Nagoya. After visiting Nagoya International School, we were encouraged by a student in the IB class who wanted to become a pilot, which made us decide to enroll in this school.

In Japan, you cannot enter an aviation college immediately after high school. You must study elsewhere for two years first. Since overseas training would still be required even if he attended an aviation college in Japan, we thought it would be better to study abroad. Therefore, enrolling in a school that provides the IB program was our top priority in selecting a school.

Q. How does he maintain and improve his English skills?

A. To maintain English skills after graduating from Kinder Kids, we tried many things such as hosting students from New Zealand, studying at the Saturday classes at Osaka International School of Kwansei Gakuin, and studying with online tutors from the Philippines. He also tried the Eiken exam, passing Grade Pre-2 in K3 and Grade 2 in the third grade of elementary school. We thought it might be too early to try the Grade Pre-1, as a result, he failed five times because the contents were too difficult for an elementary school student. He finally passed that level in the third year of middle school. The Eiken tests cover advanced topics, so it is important to have a wide range of knowledge. Participation in Grad Club's Australia study tour and speech contests also contributed to improving his English skills.



Together with a homestay student from New Zealand



Participated in the Grad Club's study program in Australia

Q. Reflecting on Parenting

A. Raising children has no right answers, which makes it a difficult task. Parenting and housework are ongoing 24 hours daily, so it's more demanding than working outside. Parenting will be over once children grow up and become teenagers. I think ten years after birth is the crucial period.

Many things happened, but I have no regrets. However, I do feel some regret that, due to the multiple moves, we could not let other children graduate from Kinder Kids. I sometimes wonder how things might have been if all of them had graduated from Kinder Kids—whether their possibilities might have been even broader.

R has been paying attention to preventing cavities to avoid any issues when working in low-pressure environments at high elevations. He started high school with the clear goal of obtaining the IB diploma. We look forward to seeing R soar across the skies in the world!



Summer

First Time Event

Kansai

Dolphin Camp



Kansai
Work Exploration



Kansai
DOUBLE DUTCH



関西

STEAM Event



Fukuoka
Interview at
Dazaifu Tenmangu Shrine.



Events

2024



Pool Activities

It was reassuring to see the children checking each other on pool safety rules such as "wearing floaties," "using the stairs to enter the water," and "not diving." Especially for those who were less confident in swimming, children encouraged them saying, "It's okay, let's do it together!" Their mutual support and teamwork during the activities were truly impressive.



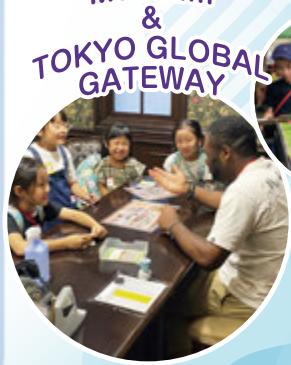
Kanto

Karuizawa
Summer Camp



Kanto

Small Worlds
Museum
&
TOKYO GLOBAL
GATEWAY



Night Safari

During the night safari, the sight of a lion silently walking with its sharp eyes gleaming in the darkness was striking and made us feel as though it could see right through us, creating a thrilling experience. The zebras galloping through the cool night breeze and the presence of the tall giraffes made us feel as if we were in the African savanna. Seeing the animals' vibrant and lively behavior up close was an exciting experience! To conclude the adventure, the children enjoyed a fireworks display. Their joy-filled amazement was further enhanced by the colorful fireworks lighting up the night sky.



Kansai
Nagoya
Hachi Kita Camp





Revived After 5 Years!

Grad Club Cambodia Volunteer Program

◆ The Cambodia volunteer program has been revived after a break of five years.

The Grad Club's Volunteer Program in Cambodia, which had been temporarily suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic, has resumed after five years. This program offers participating children the opportunity to know different cultures and lifestyles, prompting them to reflect on their own environment which they often take for granted, and to consider what happiness truly means. Kinder Kids is involved in support activities in Cambodia as part of its CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility). This program provided children with the opportunity to experience the local living conditions, healthcare, and education of Cambodia. Through these experiences, we believe they can understand the diverse realities of the world and develop a broader perspective for the future.



Visiting Angkor Hospital for Children Lecture on the history and healthcare of Cambodia



Dr. Masahiro Iwata and his Family

Dr. Masahiro Iwata

Born in Hyogo Prefecture in 1960, Dr. Iwata graduated from Okayama University School of Dentistry. After working as a dentist at a private clinic, he pursued oral surgery at Okayama University Hospital. In 1993, at the age of 33, he was appointed the Chief of Oral Surgery at Hiroshima City Hospital. In 1999, he visited Cambodia for the first time at the invitation of a friend and began providing medical volunteers there. In 2006, he became the Chief of Oral Surgery at Kishiwada Tokushukai Hospital, performing around 300 surgeries annually. In 2013, he became a freelance surgeon to help more patients. In addition to Cambodia, he has traveled to Laos, Myanmar, and Bhutan, making over 20 trips a year and providing free treatment to over 3,000 patients. He also contributes to training local medical specialists, providing health education for children, and donating essential supplies.

Participants' Feedback

◆ I had always thought about becoming a doctor, but through this valuable experience of visiting a medical facility, I realized that hospitals have many patients but are understaffed. I want to contribute and help just like Dr. Iwata. I hope to be someone who is relied upon by everyone! (R.M., G5, Male)

◆ I am truly grateful for the opportunity to learn about global healthcare, its issues, and about living for a purpose or cause as lectured by Dr. Iwata. Participating in this program made me want to participate more in the activities with children in developing countries. I want to provide food to the children and engage in volunteer activities in villages someday. (T.H., JHS3, Male)



The Landmine Museum (left) and Wat Thmei (right), show Cambodia's negative history.

◆ **The Landmine Museum and Wat Thmei**
We visited the Landmine Museum, which exhibits the landmines buried during Cambodia's civil war, as well as Wat Thmei, a pagoda dedicated to remembering the atrocities of the Khmer Rouge regime. At the Landmine Museum, we learned about the danger of landmines, and at Wat Thmei, we learned about Cambodia's tragic history. Some exhibits were difficult to look at, but the participants actively asked questions to a local

storyteller and then discussed what we could do to prevent similar tragedies in the future. We also discussed ongoing conflicts around the world and thought about peace.

◆ Participating in a Workshop at Pavanasar

We attended a workshop at Pavanasar, an organization dedicated to employing Cambodian women and supporting their social independence.

Founder Seiko Nakagawa shared the background of establishing the organization, and we learned about the importance of employment and the difficulties of maintaining a brand image. At Pavanasar, they make basket bags using wild water hyacinths, and we had the opportunity to make keychains. This interaction with local people was a valuable opportunity to learn about the world's issues that are not written in textbooks.



Making Keychains Using Water Hyacinth



A commemorative photo with Yukiko Nakagawa, Pavanasar founder (second from the left in the front row).

◆ Showing Movies As Part of the World Theater Project

As part of the World Theater Project, we participated in a project to screen movies at local elementary schools. We watched two films, including "Panda Kopanda", with the local children, experiencing the new worlds and creativity that movies can bring. After the screening, we shared our impressions, held a Q&A session about Japan, and talked about future dreams, reinforcing the importance of having dreams.

We also played with toys brought from Japan, fostering heartwarming exchanges with local children that transcended language barriers.



A movie screening with many smiles



Making paper airplanes using origami brought from Japan



Grad Club
Saho Shimada

Message from the Coordinator

As the saying goes, "Seeing is believing," through the learning, the encounters, and the interactions on this trip, we had a valuable experience that made us deeply reflect on what true richness is, and what is lacking in Japan and ourselves. At Kinder Kids, we will continue to offer opportunities for children to explore other countries and cultures, fostering their growth and development.



The Challenges and Growth of Infinity Global Elementary School Student

At Infinity Global Elementary School, each child works hard continuously towards their individual goals. In this article, we will introduce the lessons and the growth of these students through interviews with both current students and their parents.

Driven by a Love for Learning: Gold Medal Winner at the Math Olympiad!



I.M. (G2)

Ibaraki Saito School Graduate (2023)

Participating in the Math Olympiad

I first learned about the Math Olympiad from a book and wanted to try it. When I tried solving the past questions, I found they were all very interesting and I was immediately engrossed. The time spent working on difficult questions was enjoyable, and the process of solving them felt like an adventure. Sometimes, the explanations were difficult and I struggled, but by spending time thinking through the questions, I found clues to overcome them, which fueled my motivation to solve other difficult questions. I was surprised to win the gold medal, but I believe this success is the result of enjoying solving the questions.

Time at Infinity Elementary School, Where Learning and the Bonds with Friends Deepen

At Infinity Global Elementary School, my favorite class is the English "Daily 5." I love that I can choose the activities I want to work on, and I especially enjoy the writing and reading parts. One memorable experience was the overnight study trip to Kobe Seaside School. Although I went there in K3 as well, the time spent with new friends was enjoyable, and the memories with the teachers left a strong impression on me.

Things I do and keep in mind to maintain my English skills.

I try to read a lot of books and use difficult words in English conversations with my younger sister at home. I also frequently help my parents with interpreting and translating, which helps me strengthen my English skills naturally by switching between English and Japanese.

Future Dreams and Goals

I used to want to become an astronaut, but I've come to think that advancements in technology might make astronauts less necessary in the future. To adapt to changes in any era, I am now focusing on gaining a broader range of knowledge and experiences.

Comments from the Parents

Participation and Support for the Math Olympiad

Our son's interest in math began when he realized that numbers are related to many things around us. He often finds interesting questions while studying and shares them with us, saying, "This question is fun!" We've enjoyed many moments together solving these questions. We hope the process and the enjoyment he found in tackling difficult questions helps in building his confidence.

Learning and Growing at Infinity Global Elementary School

We chose Infinity Global Elementary School because we were attracted to its multilingual education, which includes not only English but also Japanese and Mandarin. Since enrollment, thanks to the easily accessible school library, our son has developed an interest in books. He became engrossed in works by authors such as Maurice Leblanc and Edogawa Rampo. I was particularly impressed when he made a presentation on the Fibonacci sequence; he created his own slides and confidently presented them in front of the other parents. The opportunity to deliver ideas to others is a significant feature of this school.



S.H. (G4)

Toyonaka School Graduate (2021)

with my teammates and cheering for each other.

Everyday Learning and Irreplaceable Time with Friends

My favorite subject is science. I look forward to learning new things in every class because each lesson covers different topics. A particularly memorable experience was performing a pro wrestling play with my friends.

I value the time spent with my kind friends as the most important aspect of my school life. In the future, I hope to create a society where humans and nature can both coexist.

Growth Through Competing in the National Badminton Tournament

Having our son compete in the National Badminton Tournament was a significant achievement that reflected his daily hard work. The support from his teachers at school has also been a great encouragement. Even though practices sometimes went late into the night, we ensured he got enough sleep at home. At the national tournament, facing strong competitors from other regions, he gained confidence, thus realizing the importance of effort, and broadened his world.

Influence of Learning at Infinity Global Elementary School

Through the diverse learning experiences at Infinity Global Elementary School, our son developed a strong interest in international affairs and significantly improved his English skills. During a trip to the U.S., he confidently used English and was able to effectively express his opinions. He has also taken on more leadership roles, and we can also see this growth reflected at home. Infinity School provides an environment where he can truly experience the joy of learning.

Comments from the Parents



A.S. (G1)

Sakai School Graduate (2024)

I Love English! Enjoying Learning with Curiosity

Improving English Through Enjoyment

I enjoy speaking English with my friends, so I have come to love the language. While attending Infinity Global Elementary School, I often watch my favorite foreign YouTubers to maintain my English skills. I use English daily and have fun with it.

Fun School Life and Future Dreams

I enrolled in Infinity Global Elementary School because I was attracted to its fun and lively atmosphere. Now, I enjoy the Mandarin classes and look forward to getting stickers. A memorable experience was when the train service was suspended on the way home, and I walked to Tennoji with the G2 students. In the future, I want to be someone who sings while painting, but I also want to be a teacher at Infinity School.

Comments from the Parents

Reasons for Choosing Infinity Global Elementary School and Her Growth

The deciding factor in choosing Infinity School was the fun she had during the English lesson in the trial class. Initially, my daughter could barely read hiragana. However, through daily practice, she has improved significantly and even had a perfect score on the test at the beginning of the second semester. She enjoys the unique approach to learning English and is full of enthusiasm.

Growth and Changes at Home

My daughter has developed an attitude of trying things on her own through the unique curriculum that other schools don't offer. Her approach to viewing failure as a learning opportunity has been reassuring. Additionally, we often learn from our daughter, which has broadened our perspectives. For those considering enrollment, I recommend giving it a try without hesitation. It's a school where children joyfully learn and grow beyond expectations..