

Expanding future possibilities

# Hirakû

39

Cover Craft: "Colorful Carp Streamers Swimming in the Spring Sky"

The two large koi flying high in the sky seem to carry the joyful energy of the children.

If you look closely, you'll spot some small koi swimming along as well.

With flowers, samurai helmets, and iris blooms, the scene beautifully captures the spirit of the season.

**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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**Hirakû**

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日本の心と、英語の力。Kinder Kids inc.

# My Stepping Stone (File9)

Kinder Kids was the start.  
Introduction of graduates  
who through their efforts opened new doors.

Drawn to “A Miracle That Evokes the Same Joy as 300 Years Ago”  
For me, music is the ultimate form of expressing life.

Haru Nakamura, a graduate of Kinder Kids Ibaraki Saito School in 2015, is now in his second year of high school and actively performing violin both in Japan and abroad. Having received numerous awards in competitions, he aspires to pursue a future in music. We spoke with Haru about the roots of his passion and what music truly means to him.



## Drawn to the timeless power of sound, I discovered the true essence of music.

I first picked up the violin because my older sister had started learning it. At first, I continued without any particular reason, but before I knew it, the thought of quitting never even crossed my mind.

There were tough times during practice, and some people even said, “You could just stop if it’s too hard.” But strangely enough, I never felt like quitting. It was only when I realized that I could see life itself in music that I finally found the words to explain why.

I’ve come to believe that music can express a person’s life more deeply than words.

There’s something else I realized through performing: music written hundreds of years ago still moves people’s hearts across time and borders.

An experience so miraculous, it feels as if you're wrapped in the same joy people felt 300 years ago; that is why I am endlessly drawn to music.

## English Is a Powerful Force That Opens the Path to Music

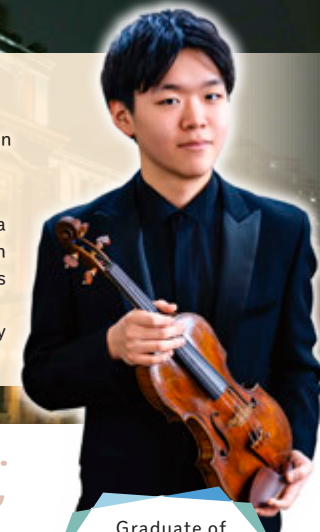
My first encounter with English was at Kinder Kids. And the music my sister discovered there also became a major inspiration for me. Because I had been naturally exposed to English from early childhood, speaking English no longer felt like something special by the time I entered elementary school. Now, I take lessons from teachers overseas without an interpreter, and I even contact professors at potential music universities abroad directly. English has become a powerful force in opening the path to music. Being free from language barriers has given me the confidence to express my feelings and subtle nuances in my own words. I truly feel that being able to speak English is what has allowed me to fully focus on the violin.



## [Main Musical Activities and Awards]

- 1st Prize, 46th All Japan Junior Classical Music Competition
- Gold Prize and Grand Prize, 2024 All Japan String Competition
- 1st Prize, 15th Cecilia International Music Competition
- (Recipient of numerous other awards)

As a soloist, he performed with the orchestra of the State Opera House of Stara Zagora in Bulgaria. He also took part in an audition with world-renowned violinist Ray Chen, which was featured in the digital edition of the Los Angeles Times. Since the age of 13, he has held regular recitals and actively participated in volunteer performances.



Graduate of  
Ibaraki Saito School

**Haru Nakamura**

Grade 11,  
International Division  
Doshisha International  
Academy

## Passion Never Fades — With a Determination to Live Through Music

In high school, I chose not to pursue the IB Diploma Programme and instead decided to focus entirely on music. My sister’s advice gave me an extra push, but the desire to live a life in music had already taken shape naturally within me. There were times I felt frustrated when competitions didn’t go the way I hoped, but each time, I gathered myself and stood up to take on the challenge again. To me, if I can pour myself into the piece before me, perform it in front of people, receive their applause, and earn a living from that — that alone is a

fulfilling life. Even if I end up with little in terms of material wealth, the fact that I can spend my life with music is my greatest joy. Even if my technical skills decline as I age, I believe my passion will only continue to grow. That’s why I want to keep moving forward, trusting in the sound I create.



## When I Let Go of Being a “Tiger Mom,” Haru Began to Carve His Own Path

When raising our eldest daughter, I felt I needed to think seriously about education—but in hindsight, I may have focused too much on the results.

With Haru, I wanted to take a different approach. When he entered Kinder Kids, I became determined to respect what he wanted to do.

Especially when it came to music, I tried to simply support him at his own pace.

But after I learned how deeply he wanted to “move people’s hearts with his own sound,” I found myself listening to his performances with a different mindset.

Now, our whole family cheers for him like devoted fans.

Rather than fixating on the outcome of competitions, I hope he will continue to cherish the people who truly enjoy his music.

An interview with Haru’s sister, H., was featured in Hiraku vol.29. We look forward to seeing both siblings continue their journey in the world of music and wish them every success in the future.

# EIKEN Preparation Program



**Masafumi Komotori**  
President,  
SODATU Lab Inc.

After graduating from Keio University, he worked as an English instructor, specializing in entrance exam preparation and curriculum development. He also served on the planning committee of the Ministry of Labor's "Mobile Learning MUGF" initiative. Currently, he is the founder and CEO of SODATU Lab Inc., where he designs and implements English programs for over 100 preschools, kindergartens, and nursery schools across Japan.

## Recent Trends in the EIKEN Test

In recent years, the EIKEN test has increasingly emphasized output-based skills such as writing and speaking, in addition to reading and listening. The weighting of speaking and writing tasks in particular has grown, making it more important than ever to foster all four language skills in a balanced way.

At the same time, the content of the test itself has become more practical, requiring candidates to communicate their thoughts in a structured and coherent manner—especially in speaking and writing sections. Given this background, children raised in English-speaking environments need training that is well-matched to their age and individual characteristics in order to convert their abilities into concrete scores.

The importance of EIKEN preparation that builds real-world expressive skills—skills that will be increasingly expected going forward—is continuing to rise.

## Why SODATU Lab Recommends Taking the EIKEN Test

For children raised in English-speaking environments, the EIKEN test is a great opportunity to understand where they currently stand. Because the speaking section has a clear structure and level system, preparation allows them to identify their strengths and weaknesses and clarify the direction of their learning.

For example, many K3 students aim for the Pre-2nd Grade level, which includes everyday exchanges and expressing opinions on familiar topics—making it a valuable opportunity to apply the English they've been developing.

As their English skills grow, differences between strengths and weaknesses tend to become more noticeable.

Adjusting their learning path early on helps ensure they won't face difficulties later.

## Key Features of SODATU Lab's EIKEN Training

SODATU Lab's EIKEN preparation program differs from standard courses in that it is specifically designed to match the learning characteristics of students at Kinder Kids and Grad Club.



SODATU, as an educational partner providing custom-designed programs to preschools, kindergartens, and after-school facilities across Japan, delivers a more advanced and practical EIKEN curriculum tailored to the English-rich environment and unique curriculum of Kinder Kids. To ensure that children who excel at using English can also develop strong reading and writing skills—both essential for the EIKEN exam—the program offers carefully leveled classes and a step-by-step curriculum suited to each grade and proficiency level. Depending on the purpose and makeup of each class, instruction is delivered by either native-speaking teachers or Japanese instructors, providing a balanced system that fosters both natural communication skills in English and clear understanding in Japanese. One of the most effective components of the program is its pre-exam training, including practice with full mock tests and mark sheets, which help students become comfortable with the test format.



Even students with strong language skills may struggle to perform if they are unfamiliar with the exam structure.

At SODATU, we bridge that gap through thorough and supportive preparation—ensuring that each child can approach the exam with confidence and succeed.



## Voices of Successful Test Takers



**E.M. (G1)**

## E.M. (Grade 1), Pre-2nd Grade

**Q:What was the hardest part of studying for EIKEN?**

A:Some of the words on the Pre-2nd Grade test were difficult—even their meanings were hard to understand in Japanese. But I looked them up in a Japanese dictionary and asked my family to help me understand them. Little by little, I learned them. I think studying for English also helped me improve my Japanese vocabulary.

**Q:How did you study at home?**

A:I made sure to memorize the word lists given as homework so I could earn points confidently on the test. I also practiced by solving the past test questions many times, which helped me get used to the test format. I focused on studying a little every day and keeping up with my routine.

**Q:What did you like most about the SODATU program?**

A:I've taken a few different EIKEN prep courses before, but the SODATU Lab lessons were the most practical. What helped most was being able to practice in a way that felt like the real exam. We used past test questions and even practiced filling out mark sheets, so I wasn't nervous when the real test came. The teachers were also really passionate, which kept me motivated.

## From the Instructor

E.M.'s success is the result of consistent, dedicated effort over time. Not only was she highly focused during lessons, but I was also impressed by the way she naturally reached out to help her classmates when they were struggling. It was clear that her family had prepared well at home, and I got the sense that they truly enjoyed learning together. I sincerely hope that many more children will continue to grow through their experiences with EIKEN.



Celebrating  
**25 Years**  
of Kinder Kids  
- Thanks to Your Support!

# Anniversary Events Coming Soon!

Kinder Kids is celebrating its 25th anniversary this year! To mark this special milestone, we've planned a variety of exciting events across the country for everyone who has supported our children's growth. We hope you'll join us in creating wonderful memories together.



**Kansai**

## Dinner Event

Hotel New Otani

August 30, 2025



A special performance by Kinder Kids graduates is planned!



**Kanto**

## Family Lunch Gathering

Restaurant inside Baji Koen (Equestrian Park)

September 20, 2025



Enjoy a lunch buffet and fun activities like a stamp rally!



**Kansai**

## Golf Tournament

Taishi Country Club

September 25, 2025



Award ceremony and party to follow after the round!



**Kansai**

## Awaza Festival

Awaza School and nearby venues

September 15, 2025



A full day of fun for families with amusements, food, sports, and cultural experiences!



## Grad Club Events

**Kanto**

## Cruising Christmas Party

December 13, 2025



※Departure location to be announced.

**Kansai**

Expo '70 Park, Suma Rikyu Park, Nara Park, Kyoto Prefectural Botanical Garden

November 7, 2025



**Kanto**

## Inokashira Park

November 7, 2025



**Nagoya**

## Moricoro Park

November 7, 2025



**Fukuoka**

## Kinder & Grad Joint Festival Fukuoka Festival

Fukuoka School

November 7, 2025

**Kansai**

## Christmas Party

Universal Studios Japan

December 6-7, 2025



**Kanto**

**Fukuoka**

December 13, 2025  
**Christmas Party**

**Nagoya**

March 14, 2026  
**Spring Party**



# Infinity Exposition

~Learning Deepens Through Expression~

## Children's Learning Becomes Creations, Becomes Words, and Touches Someone's Heart

Every March, Infinity Global Elementary School hosts Infinity Expo, a special event where students present what they've learned over the year. The 2024 third term Expo was held on March 2. Once the children's learning steps outside the classroom, it deepens and expands through dialogue with peers and interactions with visitors. From presentations and displays to read-alouds and hands-on activities, each student explored their own way of "expressing." They worked to put into words what they discovered and felt. Their efforts radiated both the essence of learning and the power of expression.

## Connecting Student Expression to the IPC

At the heart of Infinity Expo is the idea of "connecting with others through the output of learning." Rather than simply displaying their work, students aim to communicate what they have learned and how they felt, making their learning truly their own. This year, each grade created original presentations and hands-on activities based on their IPC (International Primary Curriculum) units. The displays and performances reflected not only the knowledge gained from the units, but also the students' creativity and personal interests. Every booth conveyed the spirit of "active, student-driven learning."

## Creative Presentations and Experiences Inspired by Each Theme

Grade 1 focused on the theme of Health and Wellbeing, offering visitors yoga activities and quizzes to explore the importance of balancing body and mind. Grade 2 expanded on the IPC unit Magic ToyMaker, creating booths that introduced toys and games from around the world. One booth even showcased failed prototypes, highlighting the value of both challenge and choice. Grades 3 and 4 based their projects on Temples, Tombs and Treasures, an exploration of ancient civilizations. Their exhibits and presentations allowed visitors to experience aspects of ancient Egyptian culture and writing. Visitors were drawn into the world of learning through history quizzes and writing experiences.



"Illusion toys" themed around the mystery of perception were on display. Through creating these pieces, students nurtured both their imagination and expressive abilities.



Students gave presentations using slides to share what they had researched about ancient Egyptian temples and writing.

## Student-Driven Learning Projects

Infinity Expo is more than just a place for children to showcase their work and presentations. The journey of preparation leading up to it is where the most meaningful learning happens. This year, each grade planned exhibits and experience booths based on their IPC themes. Using online design apps to create posters, coming up with quiz rules, and even proposing and managing the activities themselves—students took charge in meaningful ways. Some groups even designed the flow and layout of their booths to naturally draw visitors in. In the lower grades, teachers adjusted the level of involvement, providing scaffolding where needed to help bring out the students' autonomy.

## Growth Observed Through Presentations and Operations

On the day of the event, visitors saw current students explaining their projects politely in English, posting handmade menus and signs in the Kids' Café to take orders, and managing activities in each booth. In the hands-on booths, students adapted the rules on the spot in response to participants' reactions, demonstrating both initiative and flexibility. One exhibit that drew particular attention was a dome-shaped planetarium in the gymnasium, where the animated short film "Bulldog Tantei to Kieta Hoshi" was screened. The film is scheduled to be exhibited at Expo 2025 Osaka-Kansai, and the English translation for the screening was done by upper-grade students.



A student-run café booth that explained the difference between fresh and store-bought juice using handmade posters and a taste comparison set.



A mobile planetarium set up for the screening of Bulldog Tantei to Kieta Hoshi. Many visitors came specifically to enjoy the show.



Grade 3 students created handmade pamphlets introducing the charms of Shikoku. They researched regional culture and practiced expressing it in English.



"Can you solve this number magic trick?" Students explained it in their own words while engaging with visitors—sharing the fun of learning.

The opportunity to share their story with the world in their own words was an honorable and deeply meaningful experience—one that became a great source of pride for the students. Throughout the preparation and execution of the event, they developed skills such as collaboration, perseverance, and a strong sense of self-efficacy—"I did it myself!" Their experience at the Expo was a unique learning journey, leaving a lasting impression that could never be gained solely within the classroom.

## Interdisciplinary Connections Foster Deeper Understanding

At the Expo, presentations were based on each grade's inquiry themes, but the forms of expression varied widely. Students made interdisciplinary connections, integrating their learning and transforming it into unique forms of output. For example, Grade 1 created a "Yoga Station" exhibit from their unit on "Health and

Wellbeing.” This integrated their learning about emotional self-regulation (Health and Wellbeing), physical expression using yoga (PE), and global wellness culture (International), creating a space where students could communicate in their own words with visitors. This kind of integrated learning embodies IPC’s vision of a “connected understanding.” By the end of the Expo, students carried a sense of pride and confidence that could not have been gained simply by conveying knowledge. As they carefully chose words, responded to questions, and engaged in trial and error, they developed a strong sense of “I did it” and “I got my message across.” Teachers who guided them through this process said they hope to further cultivate students’ abilities to “express their ideas in a way that reaches others” and to “collaborate and refine their work with peers.” The Expo is not a one-day event—it is a vital process that becomes the foundation for continued learning and future challenges. The students will continue to expand their horizons and strengthen their ability to communicate. And we, as educators, will continue to support them so they can grow into lifelong learners who keep exploring and discovering for the next 100 years.



A student observes the displays of other grades with great interest. Sharing learning often leads to new discoveries and insights.



Visitors freely participated in this collaborative art activity. The Expo is a space not only for sharing learning, but for creating together.



The International Primary Curriculum is a global curriculum that promotes interdisciplinary learning across up to 10 subjects. In addition to English reading, writing, and comprehension skills, it cultivates **an understanding that transcends traditional subject boundaries** through inquiry-based learning. Within a global network of schools, students start with their own questions and engage in **multifaceted learning** from a variety of perspectives.

**INFINITY GLOBAL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

## Information Session on Infinity Global Elementary School

“What kind of school is Infinity Global Elementary School?”  
“How does it connect with Kinder Kids?” This session will answer these common questions and introduce the experiences of parents whose children graduated from Kinder Kids and went on to attend Infinity. We warmly invite you to join us for this special opportunity.

Dates & Locations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• June 5 (Thu): Toyonaka School (6-26, Terauchi Honmachi, Toyonaka City, Osaka)</li> <li>• July 3 (Thu): Awaza School (5-13, Itachibori, Nishi-ku, Osaka City)</li> </ul>
Eligibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parents of Kinder Kids students in K1-K3 classes</li> <li>※ Up to two family members per group may attend</li> <li>※ Children may attend, but we ask for your understanding if seating is limited</li> </ul>
What to Bring	Indoor shoes and a shoe bag
Parking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parking is available at the schools.</li> <li>If possible, please use public transportation or nearby parking facilities.</li> </ul>

Check  
Kinder+ for  
more details

# Parenting Talk Series Hosted by Kimiko Nakayama

## “Kimi Channel” Has Begun!

A must-watch for parents—insightful discussions on learning and development for the next generation

We are excited to announce the launch of “Kimi Channel,” a new video series hosted by Kimiko Nakayama, the president of Kinder Kids, now streaming on Kinder+. In each episode, she leads meaningful conversations on topics related to parenting and education.

In addition to information about post-graduation pathways, the series shares a wide range of ideas and perspectives on how to enrich children’s futures. As we move into a new era marked by rapid technological advancements like AI, what kind of learning is truly essential for our children? Through interviews with leading experts, this series offers a space to explore these questions together with parents.

In the first three episodes, Ms. Nakayama welcomes Principal Ikeda of Kori Nevers Academy (Elementary, Middle & High School) to discuss how to choose the right elementary school, future academic pathways, and the opportunities and challenges of English education. She also asks the kinds of candid questions that many parents hesitate to ask during school information sessions.

We hope “Kimi Channel” will inspire you to think about how best to support your child’s future. Don’t miss it!



Interview with Principal Ikeda from Kori Nevers Academy (Elementary, Middle & High School)

Watch “Kimi Channel”  
now on **Kinder+** under CONTENTS!  
*Check it out!*

