

Cover Craft: "A Cozy Winter Fireplace Made of Autumn Leaves"

Inside the leaf-crafted fireplace, bright red flames sway happily, warming the heart even on the coldest winter nights.

A Christmas tree, colorful presents, and red stockings decorate the scene, bringing a sense of festive excitement.

You can truly feel the gentle warmth created by natural materials and the children's vivid imagination.

Expanding future possibilities

Hiraku

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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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日本の心と、英語の力。Kinder Kids Inc.

A Graduate Returns to Kinder Kids Discoveries Found While Supporting “Learning”



N.I.

Osaka Metropolitan University,
Faculty of Law
Graduate of Ibaraki-Saito School

Having learned at Kinder Kids in her early childhood and now studying law at university, N.I. returned to Kinder Kids for an internship. A former student taking her first steps towards understanding society. And naturally, she chose to take that step in the very place where it all began: Kinder Kids.

Returning to Kinder Kids—Rediscovering Learning at the Place Where It All Began

The days I spent at Kinder Kids as a child taught me the joy of learning. That experience stayed with me and ever since then, I have always wanted to reconnect with Kinder Kids again someday. Wanting to work in an English-speaking environment, I wrote a letter expressing my feelings. To my delight, they welcomed me warmly, and I was able to join the team as an intern this summer. My internship placement was the Curriculum Development Department at Tennenji Yuhigaoka School. Seeing Lloyd again for the first time in years and talking with him in English brought back many memories of my childhood. Being back in the place where I once learned, now helping behind the scenes, felt both meaningful and a little special. From the very first day, the team welcomed me with warmth. As I worked on research and materials related to AI and copyright, I began to feel the shift from being a student to taking on real work responsibilities. It was a valuable experience that allowed me to see Kinder Kids from a new perspective.

AI and Copyright—Discovering the Connection Between Law and Education Through Research

During my internship, I conducted research on the theme of “Generative AI and Copyright.” When using AI tools to create original characters, what should educators be careful about? As I compared laws in Japan and overseas, exploring how AI can be used safely in educational settings, I

realized that the topic was far more complex than I had expected—yet the deeper I researched, the more fascinating it became. One of the most memorable experiences was the English presentation I gave on my final day.

Explaining legal terminology and specialized concepts in English was extremely challenging, and it reminded me of how important it is to choose the right words when communicating. Lloyd and the Curriculum Development team listened attentively, and although I was nervous when they asked questions in English afterward, the exchange helped me realize something: law is also a system that protects people’s learning and creativity. Through both the research and the presentation, I was able to see how the legal knowledge I had studied in class connects to real-world education and society. That realization was a major learning outcome for me. And being able to share my findings in English felt like a challenge that embodies who I am—someone who grew up at Kinder Kids.

Becoming Someone Who Supports Learning—A Goal Shaped Through My Internship

This internship taught me the importance of connecting what I have learned to someone else’s learning. I realized that the field of law is not just a collection of difficult theories—it is a system designed to protect people’s efforts, creativity, and education. My experience with the Curriculum Development team gave me valuable insight into my future path. Moving forward, I hope to use my strengths in a field that supports education and children’s learning. What made me happiest of all was being able to work in an English environment at Kinder Kids, the place where I first developed my love for learning. It felt as though I was taking a small step toward the dream I had as a child—using English to connect with the world.



With Lloyd
at her graduation ceremony



Curriculum Development
Department
Lloyd Waggett

An Internship That Truly Reflected “Once a Kinder Kid, always a Kinder Kid.”

When I heard that N.I. would be joining our team as an intern, I was genuinely delighted. I still vividly remember the time we spent together when she was a young child. Meeting her again through this internship reminded me of just how important early childhood is, and how those formative years shape who we become. She has grown into a well-balanced young adult who expresses herself with confidence in both English and Japanese. I could clearly see that the foundation for this confidence was firmly built during her time at Kinder Kids. Having known her since she was little and now being able to watch her grow as a university student is one of the greatest joys an educator can experience. Seeing her again after so many years, I found that she was just as warm and positive as I remembered—yet now she carries a sense of calmness and self-assurance. During her final presentation, she shone brightly, and I felt as though I was the one learning from her. We often say, “Once a Kinder Kid, always a Kinder Kid.” This experience made me feel that truth once again.



Delivering an English presentation on the final day of her internship



With the team who supported her throughout the internship

Overseas Temporary Transfer Experience



J.K. (Ogimachi School / K2)
Transfer Period: April 28 – May 13, 2025

In the spring of 2025, J.K., a K2 student from Kinder Kids Ogimachi School, spent about two weeks attending Kinder Kids Oakville in Canada. Through new encounters with local teachers and friends, she grew more confident in living her daily life in English. We asked her mother to reflect on this valuable experience.

Trying an Overseas Transfer

My child has attended Kinder Kids since she was one year old, and from the time she first joined, I knew about the Overseas Transfer Program. I always hoped that someday she would experience it. Now that she is old enough to express her own thoughts, we felt it was the perfect time and decided to take on the challenge. We are also considering living overseas in the future, so this became a good opportunity for her to experience what that might be like. As parents, we were very curious to see how she would adapt to an environment where no Japanese is used. At the Oakville School, the teachers welcomed her warmly, allowing her to start her school life with peace of mind from the very first day. After school, we were invited to a picnic with classmates and their families, where everyone brought food to share and enjoyed chatting together. Even though we come from different countries, we found that talking about parenting naturally brings people together, and we felt an immediate sense of familiarity.

Connections That Grew Through Our Stay

During our stay, we were blessed with many warm connections — being invited to a birthday party, joining a family for a meal at their restaurant, and more. One of the most memorable moments was when we ran into a family by chance at McDonald's, and later reunited with them at a picnic. We discovered that they were relatives of a classmate's parents, and the moment we laughed together saying "It's a small world!" is something I still cherish. These encounters began because my daughter took the initiative to speak to others herself. With her friendly personality, she quickly bonded with those around her, and several parents even told us, "She's the first child who's ever talked to us so much!" My daughter's bright personality and proactive attitude created many new connections, filling our shared time with warmth and joy.



Discovering A New Side of Our Daughter

“It was truly worth going.

Through this stay, we discovered strengths in our daughter that are hard to notice in everyday life in Japan.

Calmness in the Face of Unexpected Change

On the day of our departure, a mechanical issue caused our originally scheduled direct flight from Vancouver to be rerouted through Yellowknife in the middle of winter. While we, as parents, were bewildered to find ourselves in extreme cold with our daughter dressed only in short sleeves and shorts, she showed no sign of confusion. Instead, she embraced the unexpected change and seemed to enjoy it. We had always thought of her as free-spirited, but what emerged in this extraordinary situation was a level of composure and adaptability far beyond what we had imagined. Her ability to adjust to new environments—and her consistent positivity—made us feel proud and reassured.

Building The Confidence To Step Forward & Communicate Openly

What impressed us most during her stay was our daughter's willingness to engage with others. Although she had been exposed to English at her school in Japan, it was true that there was a difference in vocabulary and expressive ability compared with her native English-speaking classmates. However, she never showed any sign of being bothered by that gap. She did not stop to worry about speaking perfect English; instead, she used the words and gestures she knew and dove into interactions without hesitation. We believe this came from her everyday belief that "Everyone is a friend." Her natural desire to communicate beyond language barriers shone even more brightly in this new environment—a side of her that we couldn't easily see in the comfort of daily life in Japan.

What the Transfer Experience Taught Us

This transfer experience became a valuable opportunity for us as parents to discover our daughter's new abilities and potential. We would like to share our transfer experience with other Kinder Kids families. By placing children in an environment outside their everyday lives, they sometimes reveal unexpected flexibility and initiative qualities that go beyond the images we, as parents, usually hold of them. Seeing our child demonstrate a level of adaptability that is hard to notice in the routines of daily life in Japan was one of the greatest values of this experience. Throughout our stay, we found ourselves learning from our daughter and feeling truly proud to witness her take another step forward in her growth. This experience renewed our family's desire to explore the world together and embrace new opportunities. It became a truly meaningful and memorable stay for all of us.



For more information about short-term overseas transfers, please check

Kinder+> [Content] > [Global Transfer]

You'll find basic information about our overseas schools as well as past transfer stories!

25th Anniversary Events

Special Report

To celebrate Kinder Kids' 25th anniversary, a variety of exciting events were held across Japan.

Here is a special report showcasing three events that took place in September.



Autumn Fun Day@Baji Koen Equestrian Park

Autumn Fun Day for the Kanto region was held at the spacious Baji Koen Equestrian Park. Families enjoyed a stamp rally while taking part in a quiz organized by teachers, and the children were thrilled when the ponies made their appearance! At the buffet hosted by Rinato Kitchen, which also provides school lunches for the Setagaya School, everyone enjoyed delicious food while happily reconnecting with friends and teachers. There were also ring-toss games, a handprint activity where children created a rainbow-themed anniversary banner, and a photo session with Excited Fox, making it a day full of smiles and excitement.



Happy with Excited Fox!



Awaza Festival



Our Popular Kinder Kids Original Photo Booth Returns This Year!



Golf Competition@Taishi Country Club

Held under clear autumn skies, the 25th Anniversary Golf Competition welcomed about 100 participants. The event created opportunities for interaction between corporate partners and Kinder Kids parents, and the tournament was enjoyed in a warm and friendly atmosphere. All participants received a special "Kinder Kids x Titleist" 25th Anniversary golf ball, adding an extra touch of celebration to this memorable day.



A day full of smiles on the beautiful autumn green!



The "Awaza Color Fes 2025," hosted by Awaza School in collaboration with the surrounding community, was a lively and colorful celebration. Inside the school, Kinder Kids students enjoyed crafts and games, special limited-edition goods, and exciting stage performances by the Moon Rockers and Excited Fox. Meanwhile, in the schoolyard, local families joined in English-based games, and food trucks attracted long lines throughout the day. Thanks to the warm support of everyone in the neighborhood, it became a joyful day filled with smiles and meaningful connections.

Kinder Kids Hyogo Area, Canada & Hawaii Schools

Participate in the “Hikari no Mi” Project!

Photos: Kobe Rokko Meets Art 2025 beyond

Kinder Kids schools in the Hyogo area, along with our schools in Canada and Hawaii, took part in the participatory art installation “Hikari no Mi” at the mountain-top art event Kobe Rokko Meets Art 2025 beyond. Children drew their own interpretations of “smiles,” and their artwork now gently illuminates the forest with soft LED lights. By joining a project that connects children’s smiles across countries and regions, we were able to put into practice one of Kinder Kids core values nurturing the ability to feel and think together within a diverse world.

“Lighting Up the World with Smiles” Five Hyogo Schools Join as One

The initiative in the Hyogo area began with a proposal from the Head Teacher at the Kobe Seaside School. Since the project was taking place on Mt. Rokko, the Seaside School reached out to the other Kinder Kids schools in the Hyogo area—and all five decided to join. Through the special experience of seeing their own drawings of “smiles” light up the forest at night, the teachers hoped children would feel the joy of “my expression can make someone else smile.”

This wish became the driving force behind their participation.



A Creative Time Filled with Smiles — Discovering the Joy of Drawing and Caring for Others

On the day of the activity, the children were all smiles, their laughter filling the room. As they worked, they chatted excitedly—“What kind of face should I draw?” “I’ll draw Mom smiling!”—moving their brushes with complete focus and joy. While engaging with the theme of “smiles,” the children expressed warm feelings from within: imagining someone they love, picturing the happy face of someone who might see their artwork. Some even wondered, “Will someone who sees this smile too?”—a moment that showed they were experiencing how their own expression



What Is “Hikari no Mi”?

Hikari no Mi is a participatory light-art installation created by contemporary artist Kyota Takahashi. As part of the exhibition Kobe Rokko Meets Art 2025 beyond, children’s drawings of “smiles” are transformed into glowing spheres that illuminate the trees of the forest. It is a warm, gentle light artwork that softly brightens the night on Mt. Rokko.



could touch another person’s heart. Through this project, the children not only discovered the fun of artistic expression but also nurtured a gentle sense of empathy toward others.

Smiles Connecting Across Borders — Creating “Light Fruits” Together with Children Around the World

This Hikari no Mi (“Light Fruits”) project also included Kinder Kids students in Canada and Hawaii. At the Clarkson Campus in Canada, children participated in a live online workshop led by the artist Kyota Takahashi. They created their artwork while directly connected to Japan in real time. Seeing and speaking with a Japanese artist through the screen sparked great curiosity, and many were surprised to learn that “Japan is on the other side of the world!” During the session, Japanese and English flowed back and forth, and the children listened attentively, raising their hands eagerly to participate.

Working on the same theme across great distances became a fresh and meaningful experience for them, giving the children a real sense of how wide the world truly is.

The “light of smiles” that connected children across countries and languages leaves a warm and lasting impression on everyone who sees it. Through expressing themselves and reaching out to the world, the children created moments of connection that gently touch the heart. May these small lights grow into seeds of learning and kindness that continue to shine into the future.

Scenes from the online workshop at Clarkson School



Be sure to check out our posts on Instagram, too!



Shito Naito
Kobe Rokko Meets Art 2025 beyond
Rokkosan Tourism Co., Ltd.
Sales Promotion Department

A Story That Connects the World Through Smiles

Through the Hikari no Mi project, I hope that participating children will come to feel that each person carries their unique “smile story,” different from their own. When the smile they drew lights up in the forest, I would be delighted if they sense that each glowing sphere is connected to someone’s feelings. In recent years, as the festival has broadened its perspective by inviting international artists, the idea emerged to share Hikari no Mi with children overseas as well. In fact, during the COVID-19 pandemic, artist Kyota Takahashi conducted online workshops with children abroad and carried out this project remotely. That experience became an inspiration for this year’s global expansion. When I look at the smile drawings created by children overseas, I notice colors and

expressions that differ from those of Japanese children, and I find these differences truly fascinating. Students from Rokko Mountain Elementary School helped install the “Light Fruits” drawn by children in Canada, and watching them observe each artwork with great interest left a lasting impression. Seeing smiles displayed together across countries and regions carries an energy far greater than we ever imagined, and it inspires us to continue exploring new possibilities and broader developments for this project.



Examinee

File011

D.K.くん

Grade During Exam	School
K3	Takatsuki (currently Tama Plaza School)
Exam date	Levels Passed
June 2025 (The first exam in 2025)	Grade 3, Grade 4

Study Method

After moving up to K3, I took both EIKEN Grade 3 and Grade 4 right away. At home, I worked on past exams with my dad and practiced vocabulary, writing, and speaking. Whenever I came across a word I didn't know, I immediately looked it up and said it out loud to memorize it. For speaking practice, I did many exercises answering questions in English just like in the real test.

What Was Difficult About the Test

The Writing section was the hardest for me. Many of the questions were about topics I didn't know much about, so I sometimes didn't know how to answer them. With advice from my dad and lots of practice, I gradually improved my writing skills. I think the weekly journal writing at Kinder Kids helped me a lot. Writing my thoughts in English was challenging, but each time I wrote, I felt that I could do a little more than before—and that made me happy.

Why We Chose to Study on Our Own
At first, we planned to enroll him in Sodatsu's EIKEN preparation class. However, around February of his K2 year, we tried looking at Grade 3 past exams together and realized that he was able to answer more questions than we had expected. Since Sodatsu did not offer a preparation course for the June Grade 3 test, we decided to try studying at home so that he could take the exam earlier. We had considered joining a year-round course or a last-minute preparation course if things didn't go well, but we first wanted to take on the challenge together as a parent-child team.

Grade During Exam

K3

School

Takatsuki
(currently Tama Plaza School)

Exam date

June 2025 (The first exam in 2025)



Our Family's Team Effort

Once we decided that he would take the EIKEN test, we began by going to the bookstore together to choose practice books and vocabulary materials. We selected ones with plenty of pictures and diagrams and with furigana, and we let him make the final choice himself. We created a study plan—vocabulary practice on weekdays and workbook drills on weekends—and checked his progress each week as we continued. His father worked on the workbook drills beside him, and during every answer check he would encourage him with comments like, "Great job on this expression," or "If you can write this part too, you'll get full marks." For speaking practice, his father took the role of the interviewer, and they repeated mock interviews just like the real test. Sometimes our son acted as the interviewer, and even his two-year-old sister joined in, making it a fun family activity.



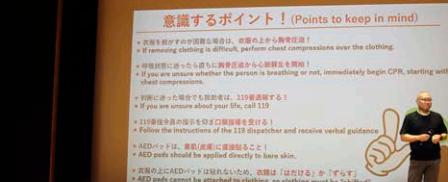
The Benefits and Challenges of Studying on Our Own

Because he didn't have friends studying for the test with him, there were moments when it was difficult to stay motivated. Even so, building on the listening skills he had developed at Kinder Kids allowed him to focus strongly on writing and speaking practice, which became a major advantage. Being able to study at his own pace and spend extra time on areas he found difficult were unique strengths of learning independently.



Family Teamwork That Saw Us Through

Because he attended short-day childcare, he returned home around 3 p.m. After that, his mother helped manage his study time—mainly vocabulary practice—while also making sure he had enough time to eat, relax, and play. Instead of setting a daily number of words to learn, we set a weekly target, and on days when he was tired, we allowed him to take a break. Since he took both Grade 4 and Grade 3, the total amount of studying required was a lot, but we believe that being able to work together as a family and enjoy the process is what helped him persevere all the way to the end.



Staff training

Safety and Childcare Training Across All Schools

At Kinder Kids, we conduct regular staff training across all schools to strengthen the knowledge and response skills essential for daily childcare. This September (with the Nagoya area conducting CPR training in October), each region held hands-on workshops covering CPR, EpiPen and glucagon administration, Stranger-Danger response, and water-related emergency procedures. Under the guidance of professional instructors, every staff member practiced each technique with seriousness and focus, simulating situations that could realistically occur. Through experiencing the importance of on-site judgment and teamwork, staff learned to remain calm and respond appropriately even in emergency situations.



In addition, under the guidance of our Childcare Development Manager (CDM), staff took part in training focused on preventing inappropriate childcare practices. Using familiar real-life examples, they engaged in discussions to reflect on how they speak to children and how they interact with them. Through sharing opinions with one another, each staff member deepened their awareness of children's rights and emotional well-being. By learning and thinking together from both safety and ethical perspectives, the team further strengthened its unity. In the Nagoya area, we invited Mr. Ogura from Yomitan Nature School to conduct outdoor learning training that made full use of the natural environment. Through games that rely on the five senses instead of toys or play equipment, staff learned how to nurture children's creativity and how to blend our curriculum with the natural environment.

Together with Kinder Kids staff across Japan, we will continue creating an environment where children can feel safe, secure, and truly enjoy their days at school.