

Guides to child education program

This chapter introduces specific child education materials and explains the purposes they are designed for. It then discusses how to use these materials within teaching programs at kindergarten.

Using as examples

The teaching materials introduced in each section should be used as examples. You do not have to do exactly the same thing or use the same materials as described in this book. Although these activities have been proven to be highly educational, and have been developed through many years of practice at Japanese kindergartens, they are only just a few of the numerous teaching materials and activities offered to Japanese children. What is important is to try to understand the reasons for using these materials. We hope you can understand how significant each material is to both children and child education programs, as well as applying them within your own situation.

Applying them to your own cultural and social contexts.

All of the teaching materials and activities in this book have been developed within Japanese cultural and social contexts. It is unlikely that they can be applied to other cultures and societies without any modification. A certain material may not be found in other countries, or due to a different climate, children in other countries may be seeing different plants from those in Japan. Also, because of a large disparity in cultural customs, a common custom in Japan may be unfamiliar in other countries. We hope that you utilize the information in this book as suggestions that help you discover useful materials from your own surroundings, create new activities, and modify some of your daily programs in order to offer better education to children around you.

Creating your own materials through testing in real situations.

The materials in this book may not work immediately because you are teaching different children in a different situation in a different culture. On the other hand, children's curiosity about the unknown and their willingness to learn something interesting are common across all cultures. Keep in mind, though, that the mere presentation of a material does not guarantee that you successfully attract and keep children's attention. In order to maintain and expand children's activities, a teacher needs to respond properly to children's needs and talk with them. By testing our suggested materials in the light of your situation, we hope that you can improve your materials and activities and further create something new. Discussing with teachers in your kindergarten and other kindergartens will bring about an ideal education program.