

## **As we revise the web site**

Eighteen years have passed since we started the research survey on multi-cultural child-rearing in year 2000. We published 'The second multi-cultural child-rearing research report' in 2013. During these years, our reports have been open to public by site both in Japanese and in English. Later we have translated the report in Chinese and in Korean and published them as books. We had been exchanging information and releasing our reports within Japan and overseas about the current condition of the 'multi-cultural child-rearing' in Japan whenever we had chances.

Also we had been guiding and introducing this 'multi-cultural child-rearing', whenever parents with multi-cultural backgrounds and related organizations have contacted us.

The word "multi-cultural child rearing" and its definition that we proposed for the first time in the survey reports, has been well defined and now widely used for the web site which helps child rearing and for lectures and various events.

For the last Eighteen years, the situation of those non-native Japanese speaking and non-Japanese parents have changed gradually. People involved begin to recognize the importance of sending interpreters to the kindergartens, nursery schools, hospitals, and other medical institutions.

Also they realized the necessity of native language education to these children. Then local and central governments and the voluntary groups started to undertake variety of measures and actions. So we also joined these governmental activities with the related groups and the parents of the children with multi-cultural backgrounds in order to succeed in making 'multi-cultural child-rearing Q&A' for teachers and 'help-communication cards' for both teachers and parents at the day care center. Moreover, we are working on the current situation survey in local areas facing multi-cultural child-rearing in Japan, and continuing to work on case studies of multicultural nations. The results are open to web site called 'World Multi-cultural Child-rearing and Education' of Aiiku Net and published 'Multi-cultural Child-rearing' : Gakken. We also had been exchanging information and reports inside and outside Japan whenever we had chances.

However, these activities to support parents and children with multi-cultural backgrounds are far from sufficient. We would like to continue releasing our reports with precious opinions by this homepage. We wish those who visit our site will promote a greater understanding of multi-cultural child-rearing from daily life.

Our devotion to this research is still the same since 2001 that we are aiming to pursuit better child-rearing through multi-cultural child rearing, education, and child-rearing supports by understanding the cultural backgrounds.

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## Introduction

Since the late 1980's the number of foreign residents in Japan has increased rapidly. When you take a look at the numbers of foreign residents, this percentage to the total population in Japan has increased from 0.7% in 1984 to 1.23% in 1999. Marriage between Japan and foreigners has also increased. The percentage of cross cultural marriages to the total marriages in Japan was 4.2% in 1999 which corresponded to one out of every 24 marriages.

The number of children along with their parents, both foreigners or one of them is, has also increased. The number of children born in Japan whose parents are both foreigners, or one of them is, was 33,569 in 1999 and this number corresponds to 2.8% of the total births in Japan and one out of every 36 births.

In the urban areas of Tokyo, one out of every 15, and one out of every 14 in Osaka City are foreigners and this has tended to increase in urban areas. The number of children whose parents have foreign nationality or do not use Japanese as a native language even though they have Japanese nationality entering day-care centers and kindergartens (both referred to as preschool) has increased. Both parents and teachers have problems when parents are unable to communicate with teachers or unable to understand both cultural backgrounds.

Under this situation, surveys for teachers have been carried out, educational conferences have been often held, and some preschools have tried to solve this problem. However, due to various reasons such as language barriers, a Japan-wide parent survey has not been carried out concerning problems of living and attending preschools in Japan. Therefore, we have taken this opportunity to prepare the questionnaires in 11 languages in the Kanto and Kansai areas in order to make clear the present situation of child rearing and problems surrounding parents and children.

We are confident that these results and the free comments written by parents in their native languages in this survey will be valuable for the preschool, administration and local community in Japan to promote understanding of multi-cultural child rearing, education and child rearing support, as well as understanding child rearing in Japan.

For these reasons we would like to ask preschool teachers or people involved in the administration at the local self-government, as well as foreign parents residing in Japan, and many people who are involved in child rearing to read this study. Moreover, we sincerely hope that this study will be helpful in order to understand the cultural background of each country and consider multi-cultural child rearing, education, and child rearing support in the future and to aim at successful child rearing in Japan.

The authors would like to acknowledge the many people who kindly supported our survey, especially teachers in the day care centers and kindergartens, people in the local self-governments and related institutions, and many volunteer groups. Without their help this survey could not have been carried out. We also thank the people who translated our questionnaires into foreign languages. Finally, of course, the authors

extend our sincerely thanks to parents who responded to our survey and spent valuable time in completing each questionnaire during her/his busy daily life of child rearing.

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