

A Study
on
Multi-cultural Child-rearing Support

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Introduction

With the increase in the number of foreign residents and intercultural marriages in the 1990s, the number of children raised by multicultural families has increased in both day care centers and kindergartens in Japan regardless of their nationality.

Under such social circumstances of Japan, we conducted a survey on multicultural childrearing in 2000 in cooperation with many people in various institutions and organizations.

In those days we believe that this survey was conducted for the first time in Japan with the following features.

1. Mainly targeting (focusing on) parents who are rearing their child under multicultural background (environment)
2. Using the questionnaire translated into eleven different languages and distributing this to those parents.

Over the past twenty years, the support available for multicultural families has undergone a considerable transformation. The importance of providing translation services and mother tongue education were recognized in preschool and primary school sectors as well as public health institutions. This led day care centers, kindergartens, municipalities, organizations and volunteer bodies to respond to the needs and to create various provisions and programs. However, different regions present different pictures. Furthermore, in recent years an increasing number of multicultural families have been affected, both economically and psychologically, from the economic recession. Therefore, centering on municipalities in the Kanto and Kansai areas which did us a favor in conducting the First Questionnaire Survey on Multicultural Childrearing, we conducted the Second Questionnaire Survey on Multicultural Childrearing in 2011 to clarify the present status of childrearing support services as well as children's living status at day care center with their caregivers and at home with their parents.

In addition, while we conducted the similar survey with our cooperative researchers in each country of South Korea, Taiwan, China and Japan in 2012, we made a comparative study on the findings collected through five surveys by adding the Second Questionnaire Survey on Multicultural Childrearing in Japan to those four surveys.

In Europe, America, and Oceania, where historically there have been many families from diverse cultures, there has recently been a rapid increase in the number of families with Asian backgrounds. We believe that an understanding each other's childrearing practices and related cultures, knowledge and beliefs among the Asian region (including Japan) will give us a chance to link our understanding to worldwide childrearing practices.

We hope our time-series survey becomes one of the building blocks to further develop childcare provision and childrearing support systems for children with diverse cultural backgrounds, both in Japan and abroad.

Many nurseries, kindergartens and daycare centers, as well as many local governments, organizations and volunteer groups, generously cooperated with the survey. Finally, we wish to thank the parents and guardians who responded to the survey, and many others who supported us in various ways.

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