

Accounts Sparkling with the Vigor of Lively Kids



*We love you all!
You are so wonderful!*



Report on Operations
for Fiscal 2006

Earth Kids Space

New Plan for "The Program for Children's Activities in Local Community"
Community Classrooms for Children Project: project under consignment by
The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) of Japan



**The Goi Peace Foundation
"Earth Kids Space" Management Committee**



Introduction

In connection with the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) of Japan's initiative set out as the "Community Classrooms for Children Project", the Goi Peace Foundation was given a government commission and has been active in its mission, offering Earth Kids Space sites nationwide at 21 locations in fiscal 2005 and at 29 locations in fiscal 2006.

The Earth Kids Space site is an innovative kind of spot where local children and adults can freely visit for fun and play, learning side by side through a variety of activities.


The Foundation has been working to ensure each Kids Space site offers the children the opportunities to develop a spirit of love, harmony, and gratitude as they learn the culture of their community, understand cultures that differ from their own, and otherwise take part in various activities so that they may become aware of what "the spirit and life" may mean to them through direct interaction. The site serves to help children grow, equipping themselves with an attitude of tolerance and altruism, while enjoying each other's company.

The members of the Earth Kids Space project have also been supporting the vision of the "United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005–2014)", addressing the needs arising from its execution.

The Foundation continues to renew its mission's purpose, ceaselessly striving for the realization of the "regeneration of education," which will be the Japanese government's grand policy for decades to come.

As we report on our operations for fiscal 2006, we wish to express our heartfelt thanks to the Lifelong Learning Policy Bureau of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology as well as the Boards of Education, which have kindly provided us with guidance and support. We feel equally indebted to the various administrative bodies, schools, NGOs/NPOs, and corporations as well as the numerous individuals having stood by us in their respective communities.

The Goi Peace Foundation
March 25, 2007





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Growth,
Vitality and
Excitement

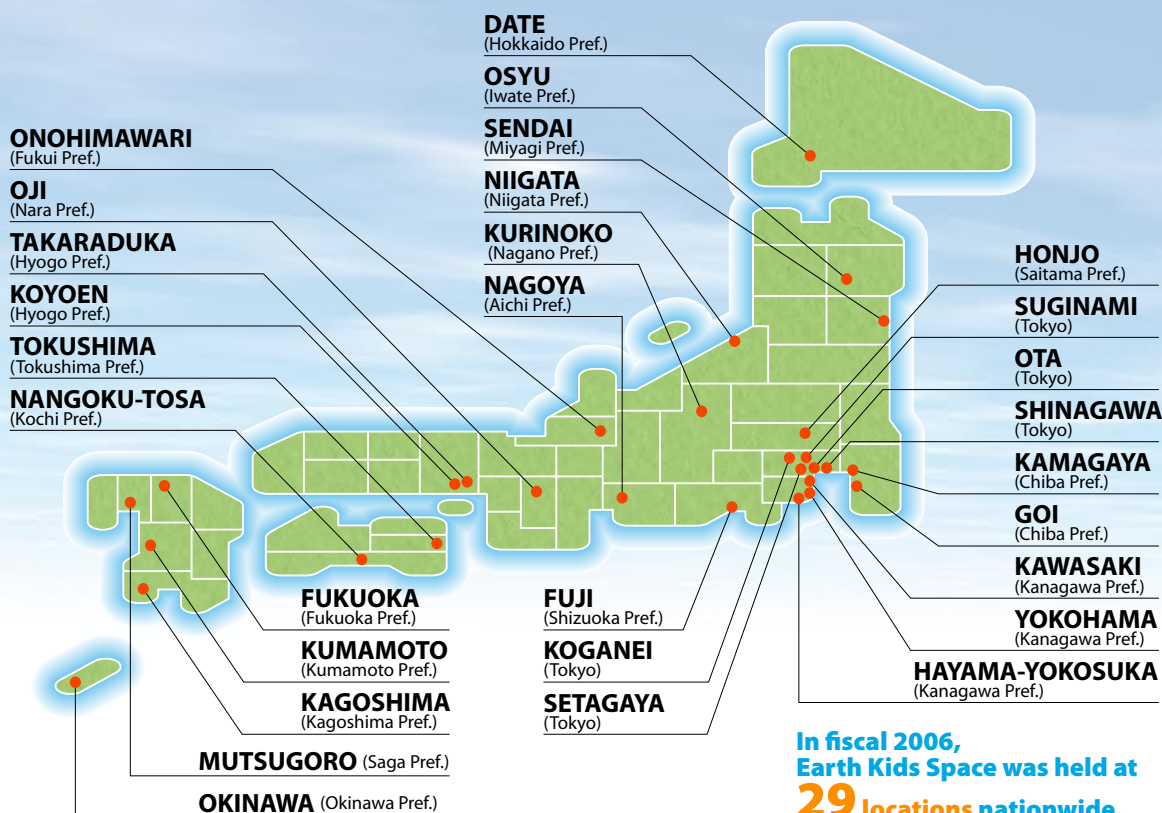
The Expanding Reach of

Earth Kids Space

The Earth Kids Space project, which started in May 2005, produced successful results in its inaugural year at 21 locations nationwide. Moreover, in its second year, fiscal 2006, it expanded to cover 29 locations. The project is a manifestation of "The Program for Children's Activities in Local Community"; implemented while executing a commission assigned to the Goi Peace Foundation by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) of Japan. With the support of many, Earth Kids Space was offered more than 3000 times in total throughout Japan over the past two years, exceeding the 100 mark in terms of per-site average.

As of March 2007,
Earth Kids Space have held

3164 events.



In fiscal 2006,
Earth Kids Space was held at
29 locations nationwide.





Earth Kids Space





is
Fantastic!



Earth Kids Space and Its Four Objectives

Autonomy

The motivation and willingness to take responsibility for one's duties and obligations

Harmony

The ability to initiate communication and cooperation

Global Understanding

A perspective that encompasses the entire world and a spirit of appreciation toward the earth

Love and Peace

A spirit that desires to be helpful to people and society, and to contribute to peace

Education as Viewed by the Goi Peace Foundation

The Goi Peace Foundation believes the fundamentals of education can be summarized in "Declaration for All Life on Earth" and need to be shared by all mankind.

Education as Pursued by the Goi Peace Foundation

Educational Philosophy

Human beings are members of a global community of life; we must cultivate an awareness of our responsibility and mission toward this community and carry the mission into action.

Goals of Education

The Foundation strives to foster talent and character that will contribute to the realization of the aforementioned ideals.

Areas of Coverage

With the philosophy of lifelong education as the guiding principle, the foundation's educational activities shall cover a wide range of areas, including social education, family education and school education.

View of Children

Children, as stewards of the future of the global community of life, are precious beings. Along with their physical bodies, they have an awakened consciousness of their membership in the global community of life.

Views on Education

The Foundation regards education as a means of raising awareness to the levels of life/conscious mind, guiding children and adults alike to find out what it means to be alive.

The Foundation's Educational Values

1. Reverence for life
2. Respect for all differences
3. Gratitude for and coexistence with all of nature
4. Harmony between the spiritual and material

Education in Practice

The Foundation aims to realize the principles of

"Declaration for All Life on Earth", manifesting values that are significantly needed in modern society by offering Earth Kids Space in communities. It believes education in practice consists of the creation of a sense of trust and security while children and adults play and interact in a friendly atmosphere. In this atmosphere, all are encouraged to rise above race, ethnic groups, religion, politics, and other differences and learning along the way through various experiences.

Rules of Behavior

Three Promises

1. I will not make a nuisance of myself
2. I will do what I can for myself
3. I will help others when I can

Issues Currently Being Addressed

It is regrettable that the conditions have prevented the conventional school system to take up such spiritual values as those associated with life, love, harmony, and gratitude, and lacks in training that pertains to "the spirit and life." Home and community, two institutions traditionally assigned with the roles of teaching the fundamental meaning of "the spirit and life", appear to be unable to fulfill their functions, creating much concern. In an attempt to address the situation, the Goi Peace Foundation is currently formulating a methodology via which it may promote a new educational setting firmly rooted in communities and upholding the educational ideals and values which are in line with "Declaration for All Life on Earth".

The Foundation also supports the "United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD)," which began in 2005, expressing its agreement to its tenor and engaging itself with related tasks.

Earth Kids Space: Program Activities

Characteristics

The activities of Earth Kids Space are carried out with considerable emphasis on education that is based on "the spirit and life" and that is conducive to the fostering of character.

At any of its sites, the characteristics and traits of the individual children and instructors are thoroughly considered when planning and hosting programs to take full advantage of the characteristics of the community in question.

The particulars of these programs are based on the practical ideals and principles of "Declaration for All Life on Earth" being upheld by the Goi Peace Foundation and encompassing four disciplines. Of particular importance is "Global Understanding," for which the Foundation is well known owing to its many accomplishments as the operating body of Earth Kids Space, offering experience-oriented activities with the cooperations of various foreign participants residing in their respective communities, including those representing UNESCO and other international organizations as well as embassies in Japan.

Program Outline

Program for Spirit and Life

- Life, an Irreplaceable Gift
- Thinking About the Meaning of Life
- Learning from "Freddie the Leaf"
- Finding Positive Qualities
- Tour of the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum
- Wonders of Life Learned from Seeds
- Importance of Words and Spirit
- Making Thank-You Cards
- Learning the Spirit of Harmony from the Tea Ceremony
- Japanese Leaving a Name in the World
- Giving Thanks for the Food Before Us

Program for Global Understanding

- Getting in Touch with the Vastness of the Universe
- Becoming Acquainted with Embassy Members
- Preparing and Trying Out Ethnic Dishes with Others
- Getting to Know the Cultures of Others Through Fun and Play
- Knowing the World Through National Flags
- What If the World Was No More Than a Village of 100 People
- Learning Through Esperanto
- Getting to Know Foreign Students in Japan

Program for Tradition and Culture of Local Community

- Giving Farm Work a Try
- Learning What It's Like to Be a Volunteer
- Getting to Know the History and Culture of Our Community
- Introducing People with Remarkable Skill
- Exploring Our Town
- Building a Portable Shrine
- Local Performing Arts
- Getting to Know the Local People (firefighters, policemen)
- Bon Dancing
- Local Dishes

Play and Communication

- Series of Traditional Japanese Games
- Magic Show
- Building Musical Instruments by Hand
- Making Balloon art
- Trying Woodwork
- Making Finger-Knitted Mufflers
- Building Big Houses Using Cardboard
- Camping Out with Others
- Puppet Show
- Visiting a Planetarium
- Making Our Own Picture Postcards
- Making Tablecloths

3 Earth Kids Space **Three Promises**

- 1 I will not make a nuisance of myself**
- 2 I will do what I can for myself**
- 3 I will help others when I can**



These promises are recited in unison by children sometime during the day at an Earth Kids Space site. They sum up the ideals of Earth Kids Space, namely, Autonomy, Harmony, and Global Understanding as well as Love and Peace. As the children recite these promises out loud together, they take them to heart, soon showing an attitude indicative of the promises. We continuously hear of reports attesting to the effectiveness of this practice. Of special note here is that adults themselves are also benefiting from the practice.

Messages from 29 Locations Nationwide

Earth Kids Space Press

The Earth Kids Space project has been implemented at 29 locations nationwide, hosting its programs more than 3000 times to date. Let us share some experiences from people having taken part in its operation over the past two years. Their experiences are rich and are introduced here as messages from Earth Kids Space, where "the spirit and life" are being fostered.



coordinator: Yuko Omura

location: Hokkaido Pref.

venue: Michael College of "Hibiki no Mura"



"Children Simply Model Themselves on Adults"

What is vital is that we must fully realize that "children simply model themselves on adults." Of particular importance is the nature of the family and the relationship between the mother and father. If we embraced our children with love and with a sense of harmony and gratitude, our society would not be so egotistical.

"World Video Games That Wipes Out Imagination"

We urgently need to eliminate violent games from our society, which seem to represent the "evil" side of what adults offer to our children. In the virtual world, a person dies and readily comes back to life. The children are losing their imaginative faculties rapidly, and instead of developing a mindset it is likely to render them incapability to appreciate the importance of life. Adults must recognize this fact and put a stop to it immediately.

"Set Aside Time to Embrace the Souls of the Children"

More often than not in a single-child household, video games are used to baby-sit children or TV is used to raise the child. If so, I would like to call on his or her mother and father to listen to what the child has to say about his or her day instead. Spending even as little as five or ten minutes for physical contact embracing the children's soul.

Today, children keep to a minute-by-minute schedule filled with daily events like after-school tutoring. At an Earth Kids Space site, there are no hectic schedule to follow but only gentle passage of time. Instead of handing out instructions, we instead guide the children so that they will not compare themselves against others but come to know it is OK for individuals to be different from others, and respecting the Three Promises. We are promoting Earth Kids Space for the very reason that we hope all of us can care for "the spirit and life."



coordinator: **Kimiko Hosokawa**

location: Iwate Pref.

venue: Community Center, Nature Park, and Others



"Network of People Growing Through Kids Space"

Local communities are joining hands, helping promote Earth Kids Space with a fast-growing network of people. In addition to the initial staff members, who have been with us since the start of the project, it now includes people from educational and various other fields as well as foreign residents. While grateful for the ongoing expansion, we are always considering ways to convey things that we cherish in our lives, such as what "Declaration for All Life on Earth" sets out to impart.

"Let Us Be Thankful for Each Other"

"Thank you for playing with me, for coming to pick me up, for meeting me here, and so on and so forth." Being capable of thankfulness means being capable of recognizing positive qualities in others. It is relatively difficult for traditional education systems to cover spiritual areas, and that is where we come in. We are delving into

this area, sending out messages asking people to join us and offer what they can. We sincerely hope that our children will equip themselves with the ability to be thankful for all those things around them.

"The First Thing We Do in Life"

When a baby is born, he or she starts to draw in a breath on his or her own without help, starting off various cells so that he or she can function as a human being. We cannot begin to describe the importance of breathing, yet we will soon forget. We think a person has an obligation to find out the things that are important yet often taken for granted and buried in oblivion, pointing them out to those born after him or her.



coordinator: **Hideko Izumi**

location: Miyagi Pref.

venue: Community Center



"We All Love Children"

When we adults tell children that we simply love them, they are more likely to approach us with a sense of ease, knowing that "this place is not for studies, and we can join others and play." They will soon develop a good understanding of the meaning of the "Three Promises" if we teach them while they are at play. In a community hall, a child may put the shoes of others in order because the sight of neatly arranged shoes is pleasant and makes him or her happy. Doing so may also lead to praise because he or she has helped others with extra labor. It has never been the case that children cannot do so, but rather that they have never been taught to do so. We want Earth Kids Space to serve as a place where the key elements are communicated to the children.

"Recognizing Our Own Merits"

Once there was a child who never recognized any of the many merits with which he was endowed. He disliked

everything about himself. Several months passed however, and he came to like himself and, moreover, developed the ability to find positive qualities in others. We often hear of adults unable to appreciate themselves, but we want them to discover how wonderful they actually may be. Once a person learns to like him- or herself, he or she will be able to persevere under any hardships.

"The Mere Fact of Having Been Given Life and Its Priceless Significance"

Every single child has potential and is an amazing being. We are here to point out the very qualities that make children such wonderful beings. We are learning to do so through practice. The children here make suggestions. Some are saying, "Let's send out a message of love so that the world will join us in spirit, wanting to make everyone happy." The mere odds of us having been born are utterly incredible, which makes me want to appreciate the happiness of being simply alive and to take this fact to heart.



coordinator: **Kaori Horikawa**

location: Saitama Pref.

venue: Elementary School



"Fostering the Bud of Imagination"

Children never stop to amaze me with their rich imagination. How wonderful it would be if we could provide them with an education "without nipping the bud of imagination." I feel it is important that we seriously consider how we may develop the character and creative abilities in children in all educational settings, not just Earth Kids Space.

"Transcending the Vertical Relationships and Simply as Friends"

Although the ages of children visiting an Earth Kids Space site span the entire range of grades, they still get along remarkably well and all goes well. Here, the vertical relationship is impressively positive in that older children take good care of the younger ones, each showing a natural respect for the other. I am always reminded that the place is an epitome of a society operating in harmony.

"Unassuming Stance Helping to Communicate Things of Importance"

When the Earth Kids Space project was first put into practice, I needlessly drove myself to teach. In the course of carrying out various activities, however, I have come to terms with matters and decided a natural approach is best. I feel it all boils down to the Three Promises. I am indebted to the various school teachers and the parents of the children, who have kindly and patiently watched over us. They have been a great support, and I am ever so grateful.



coordinator: **Kazuko Terui**

location: Chiba Pref.

venue: Citizen's Hall



"Everyone is a Family Member"

We are offering Earth Kids Space in an extremely family-like atmosphere. All of us comprise a single family, of which each one of us is an indispensable member. I am going to continue to strive so that all children will share the same aim of discovering the joy of doing and experiencing things together; ultimately finding out "how happy we all are being born members of Planet Earth."

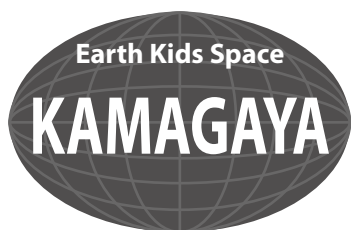
"Earth Kids Space, a Place Where One Respects Himself and Others Alike"

Adults are all busy. Parents, those in the field of education or child-rearing, and school teachers are all pressed for time. They work within a framework in which each task must be completed within a specific time slot, and this fact seems to make it difficult to raise children in a genuinely caring atmosphere. That is exactly why it is so important to offer a place where the children are free to express themselves while time passes ever so peacefully,

caring for themselves and others alike. The ability to offer just such a place is no doubt the value of Earth Kids Space.

"Real Wisdom Is Found in Love. Come Those Endowed with Deep Love"

When I first came across these words, I thought to myself that if real wisdom may be found in love, there must be some good wisdom to be found within myself. Rather than as a so-called educationist, I want to practice the ideals of Earth Kids Space as an ordinary mom, working to prove that "real wisdom is found in love."



coordinator: **Minako Sumoge**

location: Chiba Pref.

venue: Community Center



"Sense of Being Loved"

Having a genuine sense of being loved by people around them is exceptionally important to children. If we want them to feel loved, we must discover good qualities in each of them and recognize them as often as we can, avoiding giving instructions or trying to control them. I always feel that the key here is to support and encourage the children so that their positive qualities will continue to grow.

"Only One in the World, the Importance of Life"

We must constantly remind ourselves that each child is unique and there is no other exactly like him or her in the world. Knowing that, parents and schoolteachers must respect the character of each child. Only when we realize that life is priceless, will we be able to respect individual differences and help develop individual characteristics. It is perfectly OK to be different from others. Each is wonderful based on his or her own merits. Moreover, children possess

infinite possibilities. I want to teach the children through my work at Earth Kids Space that they can accomplish many things if they just try.

"What's on the Minds of the Children?"

What is important, I believe, is for us to find out what the children are thinking and what they want to tell us as often as we can. Subsequently, we must respond by ensuring that they feel that they are all dear to us. Regardless of whether they are good at studies or acting rather roughly, it is important that we accept their very existence itself. I joined Earth Kids Space out of the sheer desire to let the children know that "I am happy with them around and have been wanting to meet them."



coordinator: **Keiko Nakano**

location: Tokyo

venue: Cultural Facility of an Administrative District



"Children Must Have a Place of Their Own"

How many places are there in Japan where children may freely engage in activities of their own choosing without instructions imposed by adults? Be it by schools or by after-school institutions, instructions are being forced on them from above. These days, I cannot help but feel that Earth Kids Space might be the only place where children are received with an understanding spirit and allowed to be who they are. I think we must keep it going and, moreover, spread its ideals more widely.

"Creating a Society Where Various Places and People Readily Involve Themselves with the Affairs of Each Child"

There are only so many children which each of us is capable of tending, and I am afraid the current situation does not permit us to talk to individual children while looking into their eyes. A child may have any of a variety of problems or simply be seeking attention. When such

a child holds on to us, never letting go from the moment he or she visits us, we will not be able to look after other children. We must start to provide, society as a whole, a type of education that will not lump all children together in one bag. We could foresee a significant change in child rearing if we were able to create an environment in which each child were given access to a variety of places and people who look after them.

"Making Sure the Air Is Right"

When a child visits, he or she comes in a mood different from that of others. One may come in high spirits with friends, while some come to vent stress. All in all, the happy air of the staff members is indispensable, brightening up even the poorest of moods. One of the great joys of taking part in Earth Kids Space comes when I see the faces of children flushed with happiness as they leave the site.



coordinator: Hisae Harada

location: Tokyo

venue: Children's House



"'Harmony' as a Theme"

At the Earth Kids Space site in Shinagawa, the theme has been "harmony." We chose the "calm" of the tea ceremony and the "dynamic" of theater as the binding core of our activities, and have come to learn three important things; namely, to respect others, to thank others, and see the good in others.

"Learn from the Tea Ceremony and Theater"

Through the tea ceremony representing "calm," we put into practice gratitude and respect toward others by acting in line with its canons, often based on humane consideration and values. As for theater representing "dynamic," we have been working to discover positive qualities in others by studying the performances and actions of people, and repeatedly referring to the resulting observations when determining our own actions. All these efforts have led to respect toward others.

"One Mind for One Common Goal"

By repeating the Three Promises during each site visit, the children developed a good sense of the situation at hand, gradually becoming capable of showing consideration and expressing gratitude in appropriate words. We then staged a show and, in doing so, have learned the significance of working toward a common goal, with children and staff members being of one mind. An opportunity to be able to practice repeatedly and build experiences is indeed valuable. I am hoping that children will have such an opportunity so that they will learn the meaning of "harmony", which we have chosen as the theme of Earth Kids Space in Shinagawa and will equip themselves with what it entails.



coordinator: Kyoko Arakawa

location: Tokyo

venue: Private Institution and Community Center



"Concentration as a Means to a Sense of Accomplishment"

We are entrusted with children, who are the genuine treasures of us all, making it truly vital for us to ensure that they spend time safely without injury. Next comes the fun — we must see to it that the place is an enjoyable one. Third on the list is that we should never stop to remind ourselves that the children should be taught to learn to concentrate on what they choose and achieve a sense of accomplishment. The experiences they have with us, I am sure, will someday prove to be a great help when they try to accomplish something.

"Building Up on Each Step for a Big Dream"

Upon setting a record, Ichiro, the baseball player, said something to the effect that "a dream will not come true overnight." There must be truth in the saying that a dream is realized through small steps taken day to day. I want the children to have big dreams and hopes, and I want to

communicate to them that we are always there rooting for them, equally when they are at or away from an Earth Kids Space site.

"Showing That You Love"

We know that parents care deeply for their children and therefore come to appreciate the ideals of Earth Kids Space, encouraging the children to take part in its programs. Surprisingly, though, it seems that the children lack a solid feeling of being loved. I feel adults owe it to the children to express how much they love them more often, even at the expense of seeming rather overwhelming. The time allowed by most school teachers is insufficient to pay the attention required to individual children while they may be passionate about their wellbeing. This fact adds extra significance to a place like an Earth Kids Space site in that it can afford to readily recognize the very existence of children and approach them with love. Although the sites may be small in size, collectively they can prove to be a driving force big enough to change the nature of education.



coordinator: Kimie Seki

location: Tokyo

venue: Children's House



"Sharing Solutions to Child-Rearing Matters"

Today's adults appear to be rather afraid of "facing" the children. Parents and children, or teachers and pupils, must seek a chance to open up, looking into one another's eyes. When this is done, there is bound to be a trusting relationship, providing a good understanding of what fills the children's minds and consequently leading to solutions to various concerns and problems. What is important is to teach the meaning of life so that children will solidly understand. Once the life of a child starts to shine, there will necessarily be blooming of his or her talent, ability, and life's missions. The Child-Rearing Counseling Forum will be continued in response to requests from mothers in Setagaya. We hope that this program will help ease the cares of the mothers, laboring under loads of worry in the absence of a listening ear in today's competitive society. The program has also led to a new development, in which parents are taking an active part in Earth Kids Space activities.

"Through Fun and Play with Foreign Students"

Our efforts to involve foreign students have enabled the children to find out that there are varieties of people on earth and, regardless of their differences in language and custom, they are all like the people around them. What is more, they learn this through fun and play. We are doubly happy to note that the students themselves say the site offers a place where they are not mere "foreigners" but rather "individual human beings."

"Each One of Them as the Only Being in the World"

When we approach children showing that each one of them is precious and important to us, the children will respond by showing happiness, turning all of us present into one happy bunch. Praising positive qualities will lead to an attitude that readily challenges difficulties. When they grow up and leave Earth Kids Space, I hope they will hold on to the spirit of the place, taking good care of themselves and friends and growing even bigger with their eyes to the world.



coordinator: Taduko Ikeda

location: Tokyo

venue: Assembly Hall



"Bringing Out the Character of Individual Children"

"I found this quality in that child," says a staff member. "Well I came across this quality in that child myself," says another. We all perceive things differently, and this is why we share those positive qualities we find in children with others. By doing so, it seems that such discovery is unstoppable, bringing to light those precious qualities that seem to have remained hidden. I am once again reminded of the importance of recognizing how wonderful children are in education.

"A Sense of Certainty Founded on 'Declaration for All Life on Earth'"

A situation can be reduced to the four principles* of "Declaration for All Life on Earth". For instance, a birthday party may be used as a means of communicating the significance of the life and existence of each individual. In future, we are planning to introduce programs based

on "food-oriented education" and hoping that we will be able to learn the pricelessness of life and the value of food jointly with parents.

*See the end of this booklet.

"Children Assuming Different Demeanor"

One of the staff members has started an education-related job and left Earth Kids Space. Some time later, she told us she did not come to genuinely appreciate the value of Earth Kids Space until she left it, saying that the children assumed a different demeanor at the site, and that the place was free and full of fun. At times, we have the chance to learn that our efforts are getting across to the children. We are always trying to create a comfortable, heartwarming, and harmonious atmosphere, and it makes all staff members happy whenever we hear that our efforts are being appreciated. I think Earth Kids Space is a place where children and adults share in life's joys and learn through play.



coordinator: Fusako Fukumoto

location: Kanagawa Pref.

venue: Assembly Hall



"Children Know What Is Important"

Once I asked the children what they think is important for everyone to go on living, telling them to choose from the things they come across from the time they wake until they go to bed. When I thought we had exhausted the list including "food" and "water," I decided to close the session by asking them to write the same down on cards. Subsequently, a second-grade child said, "Spirit," joined by others all expressing agreement. The last one to speak out was the naughtiest of all children, who said "Life." When I asked the children to write down 5 important things from among all those that had been cited, many children indicated these two things.

"Singing the Song 'Believe' Together"

At Earth Kids Space sites, we sing or recite the words of the song 'Believe' at some point in each program. It has been three years since the song started to appear in school textbooks, and the lyrics read something like "Open up

the doors to the future. The earth is turning with the hopes of all the people of the world on it..." Through the song, we have been feeling together how precious the world and mankind are and how beautiful the future can be.

"Riding the Tide of a New Era"

Views on education and the world are changing quickly. We can no longer afford to leave the topics of spirit and life under taboo. Moreover, the children have already started to ride the new waves of the 21st century. Here, I ask those in the field of education to take up these topics with a sense of confidence.



coordinator: Hiromi Aizawa

location: Kanagawa Pref.

venue: Children's House



"Child-Rearing is a Divine Vocation"

A teacher is often said to have a divine vocation. For that very reason, I want the teachers engaged in the work of educating children to reflect upon themselves with a view to equipping themselves with the qualities expected of respectable educators. The same applies to child-rearing. It is also a divine vocation, and parents, family members, and individuals like us, whose work relates to child-rearing, must all look in the mirror, freeing ourselves of self-centered ideas and instead interacting with children with unlimited love. It would be simply wonderful if we all could do so.

"Pay Full Attention to the Facial Expressions of the Children"

Children come to an Earth Kids Space site with happy faces. At times, however, they show us unexpected acts, which are usually accompanied by small changes in their facial expressions or attitudes. It may well be the result of

something that has taken place at school or home. What is important is for us to have a ready attitude that will detect the smallest of such signs as well as the ability to respond appropriately.

"Tell Us More"

I always want the children to tell us adults what they want to do and what makes them feel more lively. Children are life itself. Interacting directly with them through Earth Kids Space, I have had a chance to learn a great deal from them. I am full of gratitude and feel I need to thank them for all the things they have taught me.



coordinator: **Katsumi Kagehisa**

location: Kanagawa Pref.

venue: Community Center



"Using Hands Stimulates the Brain"

I have been making handicrafts and grew up producing hand-made items, which helped me overcome a school phobia. To help me draw upon my experience, my involvement with Earth Kids Space is mainly based on handicrafts. Making something using our own hands helps develop our imagination, filling our minds with new ideas. We use our hands first, then our brains are stimulated. At an Earth Kids Space site, boys and girls who have taken a liking to making things come together, develop the ability to enjoy themselves through imagination alone, without the help of computer games or TV. When the children go home with what they have made, the mothers are so delighted that they tell others, which helps make Earth Kids Space more and more widely known through word of mouth.

"Be Free and Be Your Natural Self as Our Motto"

We are making the site a place where children can freely choose what they want to do, constantly reminding

them that they are free while they are here. The children vary in age, and there is no way they all want to do the same thing. This is why our first aim is to create a place where they can be who they are and think of the site as a comfortable place to be.

"Listen to What the Children Have to Say"

Let us stop telling the children what we want. Instead, let us find out what messages they are sending us and decide what we can do about them. I want the children to have a kind heart and real inner strength. Experiencing what it means to be "self-reliant within oneself" through handicraft, word games, and various other activities is vital for the children.



coordinator: **Hiroko Yamaura**

location: Nagano Pref.

venue: Community Center



"What a Moment's Decision Indicates"

When we interact with children, we are often faced with situations that call for instant decisions, and such decisions tend to be indicative of our lifestyle and thinking from day to day. In other words, these decisions are determined by the very values we have. "What kinds of values we have" is important for us. Adults and children alike, all make decisions through our interaction with those around us by, choosing appropriate decisions and taking on the consequences.

"Observe but Do Not Analyze"

As staff members, we often remind ourselves of the importance of "observing well" rather than "managing." We have been consciously striving to carefully observe and have been riding out various issues by drawing upon our own resources. In so doing, we have always made sure that we never "analyze."

"Cultivating Sensibility and Using Wisdom"

Where today's education is concerned, I feel sense and sensibility is crucial. Putting sensibility into concrete form necessarily calls for the use of wisdom, and I think the type of wisdom borne out of experience rather than knowledge is needed here. While interacting with the children, we have made Earth Kids Space a venue of great fun, and I have learned a lot. Now, I am full of gratitude to the children.



coordinator: Masumi Inoue

location: Niigata Pref.

venue: Youth Center



"What Is a Kind Heart?"

A person who seems kind is quite different from a genuinely kind person. A process that involves deciding what genuine kindness is and actually feeling such kindness is what is needed. A kind heart is invisible and not readily noticed. I feel more efforts need to be made in the field of education to foster just such a heart in all of us.

"The Best Thing Is to Be Your Own Self"

Each one of us is unique in that no one in the world is exactly like us. Adults and children alike, we only need to work on ourselves with self-improvement in mind. As a result, we will soon come to respect ourselves and get along with others, being able to associate with others and express what we truly feel. Each one of us may be different. To live is great fun, and merely being alive is simply wonderful. I want the children to realize this fact.

"Respect for Initiative"

We have local mothers taking part as staff members, and they are joining others in making various suggestions that pertain to the planning and operation of programs in line with specific ideas. We started a program called "Let's Play in English" with the help of native speakers of the language in the local community, and the program has drawn pupils from the community who are returnees to Japan from overseas. This fact has indicated to me the need for such a program in various communities.



coordinator: Sachiko Matsuda

location: Fukui Pref.

venue: Public Center



"Get to Like Yourself"

As a member of an Earth Kids Space site, I am no exception in wanting the children to truly love themselves. I feel the need for adults to pay more attention to children and recognize the good in individual children, clearly indicating that each one of them is wonderful.

"Find Out What You Really Want to Do"

Now that we have been born, we must have something we want to do. It would be great if a person, for instance, could listen to what the children want to say and coordinate their wishes by way of guiding them and helping them develop their endowments. Doing so requires a type of education that recognizes individual children and that helps create a society where all live while serving duties of our own choosing. We want the children to find out what they really want and do it to their hearts' content. I see big possibilities in an Earth Kids Space site as a place that will trigger just that.

"The World Is Waiting For You with Such Wonderful Things in Store"

Creating a world and making it a wonderful one, in which children can fully pursue what they want when they grow up, is a task assigned to all of us. Won't you join us in telling the children that the world is waiting for them and has such wonderful things in store? Let's join hands and make such a world a reality.



coordinator: **Idumi Yamashita**

location: Shizuoka Pref.

venue: Community Center



"Come Visit Us at Our Earth Kids Space Site for Fun and Play"

Fathers, mothers, and all of you in the fields of education and child-rearing, please set aside some time and come visit us at our Earth Kids Space site. If only you could feel its joyful atmosphere on your own! Soon, you will see a trusting relationship developing between us and with your children.

"A Natural Stance Toward Children and Natural Self in Ourselves"

At an Earth Kids Space site, we first and foremost ensure the children are safe and free of hazards that could lead to injury. Subsequently, we build up a place where we may assume a natural stance, acting without unwarranted concern, fully giving vent to such feelings as joy, happiness, and sadness.

At the site, we have been offering diverse programs that give us all a sense of unity. We want to continue this

while communicating to the children that we want us all to grow side by side.

"Education in an Age in Which Human Resources Count a Great Deal"

What importance does our country place on individuals? Despite today's emphasis on the importance of human resources, we do not see any all-embracing, all-inclusive attitude in it. In specific terms, its budget must clearly indicate who does what if we are to expect "good results." What is needed here is for us to change the country's administrative system and the nature of its higher education. I see many issues for us to address for the sake of our children and our future.



coordinator: **Noriko Shibata**

location: Aichi Pref.

venue: Private House



"The First Thing to Do Is to Build a Trusting Relationship"

Of all things that take place at an Earth Kids Space site, we devote most time to communication. Ever since the site was first opened, we have considered it vital that we find out what the children want and need. Doing so necessarily involves building a trusting relationship with the children.

"Showing the Willingness to Play Together"

As adults, we must avoid the attitude of "teaching" something to children. Rather, we must recall that there were so many things that we did not know when we were small so that we may go back to the very basics of "playing together." For instance, if we want to communicate the importance of life, stating "life is important" in a brusque manner will likely fail to move the children's hearts, at times causing them to develop dislike for the very idea we want to convey. Deep down, the children may well be aware

of its truth, and what is important is how we approach and bring it out into the open.

"Observing the Children's Inner Self"

As they freely enjoy themselves, the children seem to grow while learning many things, enabling us adults to grow with them. They are very carefully watching us, and they are quite sensitive. They also tend to take on a somewhat rebellious attitude in response to acts on our part such as being over-serious, too insistent, or otherwise casually relating how it was like when we were small. In any situation, it is important that we have the inner self of children in mind and develop a good understanding of the same.



coordinator: **Keiko Asai**

location: Hyogo Pref.

venue: Elementary School



"Not Comparing with Others"

What makes us unhappy starts when we begin to compare ourselves with others. Later, we may come to realize that the cause of our unhappiness is a matter of extremely little significance. The mere act of comparing prevents us from such realization, as doing so usually causes us to lose sight of our values. Put another way, if we develop a firm set of values, we can free ourselves of unnecessary mental agitation. I want mothers to know this. Discover and praise the children's positive qualities. There is bound to be a dramatic change in them and I hope mothers can experience this on their own.

"Providing a Footing for Future Endeavors"

Occasionally, we call on professionals to visit the Earth Kids Space site so that the children can experience things that they cannot ordinarily experience in school. We would be more than happy if they could discover things that are to their liking and worthy of their enthusiasm. I am sure

our efforts will be amply rewarded if the children, several years down the line, come to feel that Earth Kids Space has become an indispensable part of their lives.

"With the Sanctity of Life at the Core"

At school, children spend time within various constraints, be they the number of hours or the content of subjects. Nevertheless, we must never forget that education needs to be approached with "the sanctity of life" at its core, regardless of the constraints imposed upon us. A child completely absorbed in doing something of his or her own choosing is such a wonderful sight, and I believe the very fact that we are watching them is in itself a form of encouragement.



coordinator: **Taeko Fukuoka**

location: Hyogo Pref.

venue: Public Facility



"What Is Real Education?"

Today's educational system evaluates children in term of scores, which says "If you try hard, and get this you will be successful." By doing this, the system molds children to adapt to the needs of society. Many people wrongly assume that this is the real "education". What is "real education"? I believe it is reminding ourselves "how wonderful each and every child can be."

"Let's Recall How Wonderful We All Are"

We all have forgotten how wonderful we all are. I want the children to find out that "they are truly amazing, great, and just wonderful." It is as simple as remembering. I want not only the children but also those in the field of education to recall it. All staff members of Earth Kids Space are always thinking of ways to communicate this fact to the children in our own words.

"Upholding the Four Canons of 'Declaration for All Life on Earth' "

The thing I have always kept in mind throughout my association with Earth Kids Space has been the four canons* of "Declaration for All Life on Earth". They encompass all that are important. Koyoen has been fortunate in that it has benefited a great deal from the support of the local community. We interact with local people transcending the limits of differences in age. There is also contact with nature, which is precisely the setting for our Earth Kids Space site. I cannot help but hope that the children will recall "the real self" within themselves at this very site, where the spirit of "Declaration for All Life on Earth" is fully alive.

*See the end of this booklet.



coordinator: **Takako Kato**

location: Nara Pref.
venue: Public Facility



"You Are Given Only One Chance at Life"

Today, we often hear of suicides committed by children. Is it because they are unable to find themselves important that they treat life so lightly? If only the adults around them had taught them the importance of life on occasion, things might well have been quite different. Tragic incidents are taking place. When I think of the tender years of those children, the sadness is just too much to bear.

"Children Are a Reflection of Adults"

If parents drive children in an effort to keep up with today's competitive society, the children will have no choice but to respond accordingly. I want them to embrace their children with limitless love. Likewise, although I cannot help but sympathize with teachers assigned to so-called disturbed classes, I also want them to keep showing love. I want them all to bear in mind that doing so will soon bring about results in the form of the children reflecting the love they have been given. Anything that involves children

is the responsibility of adults. People in the past often said "adults have to do everything they could for their children, even putting their lives on the line." The children will soon be taking on the responsibilities of the next generation, and it is even more important now than in the past that we assume such a responsible attitude.

"The Importance of Attaining the Real Feel of an Experience"

We used materials such as "Freddie the Leaf" and "Glass Rabbit" at our Earth Kids Spacesite. They represent the importance of life, and we used them with a view to conveying the spirit of "Declaration for All Life on Earth" through heart-to-heart communication rather than directly with words. I am sure these stories have given the children a chance to really perceive the sadness of death and the importance of life. I feel we have been fortunate in that we had access to a variety of ways to express our ideas in a place visited by many children, in order to appreciate the importance of life while spending time together.



coordinator: **Setsuko Kori**

location: Tokushima Pref.
venue: Community Center



"In a Warm, Home-like Atmosphere"

Through the city's Board of Education, we have been distributing a monthly bulletin to the six neighboring elementary and junior high schools to let them know how the children are doing at Earth Kids Space. This effort has not only provided information but also helped build a channel of communication with the teachers and individuals in charge of pupils. In the community, further, we have called upon elderly members to take part in Earth Kids Space, resulting in our renewed appreciation of a warm, home-like atmosphere through interaction spanning three generations.

"Adults Learning Side by Side with the Children"

Under the auspices of local policemen and firefighters, we had a chance to learn about patrol cars and fire engines. Through the cooperation of a local driving school, we attended road-safety classes that used real motorcycles,

passenger cars, and large-size vehicles, raising our awareness of traffic safety. An opportunity in which both children and parents can undergo a learning experience is truly valuable. These programs were made through assistance offered by the local community.

"Listening to the Children's Cry for Help"

Children are being manipulated amidst the ceaselessly diversifying values of today's society. We adults must not be misled by the superficial impressions of children but, rather, need to perceive the real messages they are sending us. That is our responsibility. I sincerely hope that Earth Kids Space will soon spread throughout communities, offering a place where children and adults alike can take part in the programs being undertaken in keeping with the spirit of "Declaration for All Life on Earth".



coordinator: Mitsui Tanaka

location: Kochi Pref.

venue: Aikido Training Hall, Private House



"Children — Sleeping Cubs with Potential Waiting for Us to Wake Up"

The basics of education are found in the love shown by adults to children and the trust held by children toward adults. I feel the importance lies in building such a relationship. Children who have often caused problems in the past have changed a great deal. Although once known for violent behavior, some of the children have started to show a serious attitude, studying of their own accord, achieving good grades, and acting with a sense of camaraderie. One tried exceptionally hard in athletic events. Another with a phobia of school began to communicate better and better with his father through aikido practice and suddenly started to go to school once again. The list of wonderful results does not stop there.

"Emphasis on Learning Through the Body"

We enjoyed walking on stilts, making straw horses for the Tanabata festival, spinning tops, and other traditional games. To further get in touch with nature, we also sowed radish seeds and peas and tried planting and later digging sweet potatoes. All these activities are carried out with the emphasis on "learning through the body." Aikido practice is one of our weekly activities. There are children capable of quickly learning how to do ukemi, for example, with some

proving to be better on the right side and others on the left. Of course, there are children who are not good at learning how to do Ukemi. We would tell them, "That's quite all right. Everyone is different," never comparing one against another. And whenever a child does well, we promptly praise him or her. They, in turn, reward us through their quickly improving skills, giving specific shape to their potential.

"Leaving Behind an Excessive Emphasis on Knowledge"

Down through the ages, people have upheld "knowledge, virtue, and physical body" as qualities to strive for. Evaluating children on the basis of test scores alone is nothing but an excessive emphasis on knowledge. We each differ in regard to our strengths. Naturally, one child may perform well in studies while another may prove to be good at athletic activities. The situation could well take a turn for the better if we introduced a more comprehensive system of evaluation, with this very fact in mind. Today's situation, in which children often need to attend after-school classes for a place in a good school and a comfortable life to follow, must be corrected immediately; such as a sixth-grader having to sit through after-school tutoring! What a waste, all the more so when we recall how important that particular year is in one's life.



coordinator: Chieko Uesugi

location: Fukuoka Pref.

venue: Citizen's Center



"In a Free Atmosphere, in Keeping with the Children's Way of Passing Time"

We decide what to do in advance with respect to each day's activities at the site. In practice, however, we adapt ourselves to go along with the changing atmosphere of the site. We want the children to experience what they cannot in school, and we join them and move with them in the direction they take us. It is all because we want them to know that we are thinking of them first, communicating how their very presence is important and how we love them.

"Learn to Love Yourself"

We want the children to learn to love themselves, treat themselves with respect, and express themselves the best they can. One other thing — we want each of them to find something he or she can commit him or herself to, turning it into something that he or she can use in contributing to society. This is our message from Earth Kids Space to all our children.

"Let Us Recover the Spirit of Wa and Build a Tolerant World"

As early as elementary school, children are constantly exposed to competition. Parents need to protect them from the stress caused by such competition. As for those in the field of education, I want them to provide a type of education that will bring back a sense of tolerance, i.e. the spirit of wa, which is deeply ingrained in, if you like, the DNA of, individual Japanese. Building a world in which we can all live together with a sense of fulfillment — that is what we can do for our children and is one of the pressing issues currently facing our country.



coordinator: Fumiko Fujii

location: Saga Pref.

venue: Community Center



"A World That Examines Processes Rather Than Results"

As we carry out a variety of activities for Earth Kids Space, we try to value the processes that children go through, striving to find out what goes on in their minds. We are not looking at results alone. We want to note considerate or kind feelings in the hearts of the children, while also instilling a sense of security so that they know they need not change. It seems none of us is fully aware of the severity of competition imposed by our society. I am speaking from my personal experience when I say it is crucial that we leave its value system behind.

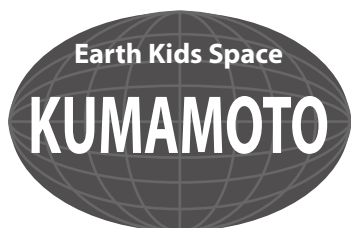
Equally important is that adults take responsibility for consequences. Children are most gravely hurt when they see an evasive attitude in adults. I cannot help but feel that children are always watching adults, their deeds not words.

"Concentrate on the Positive Qualities of Children"

Previously, I went through a phase during which the negative aspects of children seemed to be appreciably more noticeable when I came across particularly noisy or naughty individuals. At one point, I decided that I would not be going anywhere, no matter how much I thought about the situation, and the decision enabled me to concentrate my attention on the positive qualities of the children. When I tell the children about the things that impressed me, for instance by fax, the next time they visit the Earth Kids Place site, it is likely to be with a happy face.

"Everyone is Sparkling"

What I want to communicate to the children is the sparkle each one of them has. Also, I want them to know that I wish to spend this wonderful moment with them, fully enjoying each other's company, since I feel each moment is unique and will never repeat itself.



coordinator: Seiichi Inoue

location: Kumamoto Pref.

venue: Meeting Room in a Clinic



"Earth Kids Space Has Principles"

In December 2006, there was a meeting of 42 organizations associated with the government's Place for Children plan through the good offices of the Kumamoto Board of Education. What seemed to draw the attention of everyone present was the way Earth Kids Place is upholding its principles. The clarity of its principles and its equally clear direction, we were told, were remarkable characteristics of Earth Kids Space, reaffirming our conviction in regard to the way it is being operated.

"Need for a Place Where Children Can Spend 'Child Time'"

This place is where children may freely express themselves, in the way they have been born. Children may rightly think schools, families, and Earth Kids Space are quite different from one another. Here they know they can spend the type of time that is inherently theirs, i.e. unlike those hours created to suit the convenience of adults, when

they come to an Earth Kids Space site. I believe we have successfully established an environment where the children are as lively as can be and engage in activities of their own choosing and, importantly, where they are praised simply for who they are and what they do.

"Basing on the Three Promises"

When we ask the children at the end of the day if they have kept the Three Promises and if they did what they could for themselves, all raise their hands. One day, I asked if anyone had made a nuisance of him- or herself, and no one thought so. I then asked if anyone had helped anybody, using extra effort that remained after having done his or her work. One child raised his hand. (He happens to be the prankster of the group.) When asked how he did so, he answered, "In various ways," to which I responded, "Good for you!" He felt he did help in many ways, even if he hit somebody else. The "extra effort" may be interpreted in different ways, but I saw in him how the children are taking the Three Promises to heart.



coordinator: **Makiko Uchimura**

location: Kagoshima Pref.

venue: Old Private House and Others



"What Mood Will the Children Be in When They Come Visit Us Today?"

I remember a day when a few trivial words changed the atmosphere of the place. Up to then, we had all had a great time. Whenever I try to figure out the cause of a child taking out his or her frustration on things or starting a fight with other children, I cannot help but feel that we adults are missing something important. A negative change in the atmosphere can very well take place, spoiling the children's desire to have fun with friends. When such a change occurs, I think it is important to have a good understanding of what goes on in individual children's minds rather than leaving the matter to them to solve.

"Importance of Heart-to-Heart Communication"

So that the parents may have a chance to spend more time with their children while observing them and thinking alongside them, we are offering a special monthly forum.

We have enough space to accommodate all interested parents. A visit to the forum will provide the parents with an opportunity to find out how the children are trying to keep to the Three Promises as well as the processes through which the children come to develop a sense of unity. Watch the children with a loving heart and grow together with them. We want the forum to help parents do so and expect more and more parents as well as the local community to take an active part in it.

"Each One Is a Truly Wonderful Being"

An Earth Kids Space site is a place where all its participants regard the Three Promises as their own and adults try to communicate with the children through heart-to-heart contact. Put another way, it is a place where their mind and life begins to shine. As I spend time in such a place with others, I see to it that I communicate to every single child how wonderful he or she is to us.



coordinator: **Emiko Nakata**

location: Okinawa Pref.

venue: Public Facility and Others



"Adults May Take a More Natural Stance — We Can All Learn from Our Children"

Adults go through various experiences in society, taking on layers of heavy clothing. We want to be free by removing such layers but find doing so rather difficult. Children are different. They come to us with a bare heart. Interestingly, adults who, although puzzled initially, play with the children tend to show lively faces. It may well be that what it means to have a genuine heart or what is essentially important in life is learned from children.

"Running Together with the Children and Working Up a Sweat"

At our Earth Kids Space site, I have always tried to assume a natural stance and see things through the eyes of children. What is more, I intend to enjoy myself more than anyone around. Rather than letting the children play in a park and being a silent observer, I have been trying to see that all staff members, including myself, have fun with the

children. Thanks to the efforts, we often hear from parents that they enjoy Earth Kids Space and feel like coming back. Mothers are extremely delighted. One day, a self-employed local gentleman referred to his positive impression of Earth Kids Space, and we were more than happy to invite him to take part. We welcome participation.

"Let's Have a Chat Now and Then, Even After You Grow Up"

I am always amazed by children. A problem-prone child can unexpectedly grow up to be a dependable one, ready to show leadership. Every one of them is wonderful. How happy they seemed when I held them in my arms and told them I loved them and wanted to have a chat now and then, even after they grew up! I want to continue to let them know about the great power they hold inside.

Suggestions from Earth Kids Space

Watching children furnishes us with a good understanding of our society. If we see a problem in them, we can rightly suspect the presence of a problem in today's society. So that we may be able to see our children sparkle with life, we have decided to make observations of today's educational system and society itself and offer them for consideration.

1

No! to Games That Devalue Life

TV games and computer games have become rampantly popular among children.

Among such games are those that devalue of life. They are numerous and, even if rated "R," any child has easy access whenever they decide to play. What will become of children who are engrossed in such games?

A child may utter a stream of such words as "Kill" and "Drop dead." Human beings die easily and in large numbers yet come back to life equally easily. Are they not treating life ever so slightly? We know the immense impact of these games on juvenile delinquency. Is it not about time we started to ask all adults to assume a firm attitude in denying such games to children? Let us cut once and for all the vicious cycle of producing these games because they sell and selling them because they are produced. Let us appeal to CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) so that restrictions may be imposed on their production and sale. One can remain a child only for so long. Once lost, the time will never return.

2

All is Different, and All is Wonderful

Today's field of education is devoted to raising the scholastic level of all students equally, and children with a handicap are often put into remedial classrooms apart from others so that those in a regular classroom will have more or less the same scholastic level.

The fact may be indicative of the special response and support provided to meet the needs of children with handicaps but, on the other hand, could well lead to the labeling of children once they are found not to belong to certain standards.

With a view to practicing the second canon of "Declaration for All Life on Earth", i.e. "Respect All Differences," we at Earth Kids Space undertake activities adopting a stance in line with the ideas "each may be different from another" and "everyone may remain as he or she is." Partly for this reason, we are accommodating children with or without handicaps alike in a single group at some Earth Kids Space sites. There, the children support each other and enjoy themselves in a remarkably natural way. The planet Earth is not only for children free of handicaps.

All children are equally important beings, who have each been given precious life, and their mere presence is priceless.

3

Learn from Mother Nature — Work toward Real Pressure-free Education!

Is Today's Japan Not Too Busy?

Earth Kids Space often takes the children out for outdoors activities. The smell and feel of soil, changing seasons, and so forth, have become something of a rarity today. These activities offer us experiences that allow us to come into direct contact with nature, and we think highly of them.

As one of our outdoor-oriented programs, we offer farm work. This program has been prepared so that we spend ample time, ensuring we have thorough contact with nature. We sow and make direct observations until the plants are fully grown, learning that too long a period of rain will hamper growth while a spell of dry weather will cause them to wilt. These direct observations enable the children to develop a sense of gratitude toward nature. Then, when they have taken care of the plants and the plants, in turn, become ready for harvesting, the experience often becomes a priceless memory, deeply ingrained in the minds of the children.

Time passes ever so peacefully in nature. I believe so-called "pressure-free" life is present during such passages of time.

4

Leaving Behind a Competitive Society

Parents come to us for advice at an Earth Kids Space site as often as the children. As we talk with them, we cannot help but feel that they also are suffering from stress.

It seems one of the causes of the stress is their inability to genuinely like themselves or develop a sense of confidence. They could well have been exposed to erroneous values, and this fact might have planted a sense of inferiority in them.

Parents have lived through a competitive society, as their children are now experiencing. They grew up having people constantly comparing them with their peers, pushing them to attend better schools and gain better employment with great pressure. As if reacting to their hardship, they are now forcing their children to sit through after-school tutoring for better schools or otherwise choosing to satisfy their psychological needs with material wealth, for instance, by wearing top-brand items.

Today's society is approaching its limits because of its disproportionate emphasis on materialistic and competitive values. Let us leave such things behind as fast as we can and start building a society that values spiritual wealth. Doing so will guarantee children whose inner life is rich in spirit and filled with sparkles.

In response to the Suggestions from Earth Kids Space, a number of renowned professionals have offered us messages in connection with today's child-rearing practice, the possibilities of education, and other topics.

Here, we present messages from three individuals in the form of Views of the Professionals. Mr. Hiroo Osanai is known as an authority in the field of mixed education of autistic and non-autistic children and Mr. Muneaki Uchiyama is a specialist in educational methodology. Ms. Yuko Omura, meanwhile, is known for her active involvement in Steiner education.



Director of the Musashino Higashi Education Center
Former Principal of Musashino Higashi Junior High School

**Hiroo
Osanai**

Turning Japan into a Land of Children It Once Was

Morse, an American zoologist who visited Japan between the end of the Edo period and the beginning of the Meiji period, wrote, "Japan is a paradise for children." What made him feel that way may well have been the country's environment at the time, in which adults watched over children with warmth and the entire community took part in child-rearing.

Everyday, I come into contact with the cheerful faces of children suffering from some developmental problems, and watching each of them grow gives me the greatest joy. At times, parents share with me how they feel, saying "He has grown so well, it's almost incredible. As his parent, I am so proud! Words fail me!"

Children have so many things they want to tell us. They may not necessarily put them into words, but recognizing these will make the children feel appreciated and be immensely beneficial to their development. The priority, I believe, is for us as adults to catch the smallest signals they are sending and stay by their side for heart-to-heart contact.



Assistant Professor of Kogakuin University

**Muneaki
Uchiyama**

Earth Kids Place, a Project That Encapsulates Infinite Potential

Earth Kids Place is both directly and indirectly addressing various education-related issues of today's society, and its content attests to its potential as a vehicle for a brighter world and future. Although primarily intended for children, its activities encompass diverse fields, including multi-cultural education, environmental education, life-long education, and the types of education that pertain to the needs of local communities as well as interaction among generations, all rooted in "Declaration for All Life on Earth" aimed at the development of profound views on life and the world. In this regard, its seemingly multifarious themes may well be reduced to a single ideal. Expectations are high in that the ingenuity and creative imagination of individuals are serving to expand its organizational framework, turning it into a wonderful future network of people, one in which messages from children are shared by us all.



Director of Hibiki no Mura, Michael College

**Yuko
Omura**

As a Presence Consisting in Beauty, Virtue, and Truth

Every single child has been born with an assignment and mission. Our role as adults is to encourage individual children to find and carry out their assignment, and help them accomplish their mission. To that end, we need to guide them so that they may develop a mind (emotion = virtue) that can feel the world found within them, the ability to think out what they have felt (intellect = wisdom), and the strength to put what they have thought out into action, using their own physical endowments (will = strength). All these are made possible by coming into contact with things that have beauty and people who possess virtue as well as by learning the truth. In other words, it amounts to us being a presence equipped with beauty, virtue, and truth.

Glad News of Change and Voices of Commendation

The Children Are Changing

Here is a record of changes that took place, attesting to the spirit of the Three Promises and "Declaration for All Life on Earth", taking root in the hearts of all children coming to an Earth Kids Place site and the individuals associated with the project.

There was once a child completely indifferent to all that went on around him. One day, he saw a friend who was busy putting away things after an activity. Thereafter, he started to willingly lend a hand.

At first, the child showed embarrassment or tried to mock the Three Promises. As he joined others in reciting the Promises, however, he started to volunteer in leading the others in its recitation.

A child who was in the habit of expecting adults to do all things for him one day said, "I will take care of myself, doing things on my own!" Thereafter, he started to do cleanup work without help from anyone.

A change also occurred in one girl. As she took part in the activities of Earth Kids Place, she started to use more girl-like expressions, leaving behind her previous rather rough-sounding language. The tone of her voice also took a turn, now sounding quite pleasant.

The children began reminding one another, "We promised never to make a nuisance of ourselves" at the first sign of a problem.

We went on a trip to collect bamboo sprouts. A child later said, "I've always hated bamboo sprouts, but now I like them. They are tasty!" The trip helped correct her eating habits.

Our Earth Kids Space site accommodates children ranging from second to fifth graders. Initially, the children showed hesitation, but they soon learned to act on their own and based on their own rules, arguing and making up along the way. The children in upper grades take good care of those in the lower grades. Some of them have even started helping the staff members.

A child could not finish the homework given by school, no matter how much time he spent on it. He started participating in the Earth Kids Space activities, however, and now finishes his school work amazingly fast.

A child once played all by himself, with lots of noise and a stern expression. However, he changed. He now can join a circle of friends, singing the Thank you song, and even takes part in the "Thank You Water Program". A child who had refused any approach by others has developed the "spirit of gratitude," readily showing kind expressions.

A sense of initiative has started to develop in the minds of the children, turning them from passive to active participants.

Changes in the Autistic Child

The changes are just remarkable. He started participating in the activities of Earth Kids Space, and now takes out trash to the designated collection point of his apartment building all on his own. His mind has stabilized, and the eccentric behavior has stopped. We hear the neighbors are both surprised and impressed at the same time. Today, he prefers harmony and responds readily to the suffering of others, approaching them when he hears them cry and offering them words of comfort. On a strip of paper to be hung on a Tanabata tree, he wrote "With wishes for peace. Spread and make everyone happy," impressing those who read it, including his own mother.

Changes in the Child with a Handicap

She came to join us with her mother and sister. We were told by her mother that, although a third grader, her mental ability is about that of a four-year-old child. She was described to us as being extremely shy of people but, about three months later, she gradually became capable of communicating with people. She also came to us the following year, taking part in an activity in which we all sowed seeds called "Haruka's sunflower," remembering Haruka-chan (Haruka Kato, who lost her life in the Kansai earthquake). When the seeds started to bud, we went to the field to watch, looking forward to the flowers. Around that time, she became able to greet the staff members, gradually began to play with other children, and also started to come to the Earth Kids Space site unaccompanied. (Her mother would come only to pick her up.) She comes to the site saying, "I'm back!" Then, she plays with others chatting here and there. When she comes across her friends from Earth Kids Space at school, she shows a friendly face and waves her hand in greeting. She has indeed grown up considerably in these past two years.

Voices of the Children

- "Mom, don't come and pick me up too early."
- "What's 'something great'?" "It means 'inner mother'."
(from a conversation between children)
- "This is my very special place."
- "This place lets me forget about unpleasant things. It even makes me feel less tired."
- "I want there always to be a place like this, where I can relax."
- "This place lets me stay until my mother comes back. I know I'm safe while I'm here."
- "I can go to the Earth Kids Place site tomorrow! I just can't wait. Good night!" (before going to bed)

Messages from Parents

- "To me, Earth Kids Space is a place that has allowed the wishes of many parents to be realized in concrete form."
- "We had moved recently but, thanks to the site, our child made friends and is enjoying the activities."
- "The child has learned the difference between being "self-serving" and "free" through the use of his body. By associating with others, he has learned the significance of knowing that people have different characteristics and the importance of having a 'considerate heart'."
- "It's easy to see why the Earth Kids Space site is 'Full House'!"
- "When our child returns home from the Earth Kids Space site, he starts talking to us with a proud face. He is lucky to gain experiences not possible within the confines of a small house like ours."
- "Digging up sweet potatoes, making candles, crafting chopstick sleeves for New Year's, and jumping such a huge rope were all new experiences for my daughter. She used to be such a shy girl, but now she is full of life. It is such a delight listening to her stories. It simply makes me happy."
- "I was given a finger-knitted muffler my son made at the Earth Kids site. He shows a caring, although blunt, concern with words like 'It's cold. Just put it on!'"
- "It's common for a parent to have excessive expectations. As I had increasing contact with Earth Kids Space, however, I came to prefer 'relaxed ways'."
- "I would be more than happy if there were such an opportunity on a regular basis. Even once a month would do."
- "Throughout the past two years, Earth Kids Space sowed wonderful seeds of hope in the hearts of the children and instilled an inquiring mind, paving the way for ceaseless love and a bright future."

Record of Interaction with Various Individuals

With Supporters of Child-Rearing, Parents, and Local Community Members

We received a great deal of help and support from parents and local members. We wish to introduce some of the interactions so that we may be able to share them with you.

NANGOKU-TOSA

Local Mother Teresa, Working in Close Touch with Members of an Elementary School

At the Earth Kids Space Site, Nangoku-Tosa, we frequently get in touch with the principal and teachers of a local elementary school (Tosa Municipal Takaoka No. 2 Elementary School) and, as necessary, attend their staff meetings. In these meetings, there is an active and mutual exchange of information, reporting on the activities of Earth Kids Space and on the lives of children at school. Going beyond the bounds of school and Earth Kids Space, we often discuss with teachers issues that relate to children and parents so that we may find the best way to respond. For a child, the Earth Kids Space site is a "place where his or her heart belongs." We feel the high confidence placed on us by parents as good advisors in the field of child-rearing.



Pouring Letters

KOYOEN

Support and Trust from the Conference on the Protection and Care for the Youth of the Community

The local Koyoen chapter of the Association for the Promotion of the Well-being of Youth have offered us support and showed trust in our work. With their reassuring and encouraging support, we have undertaken activities firmly rooted in the local community over the past two years. One of our joint undertakings is the Cross Cultural Exchange Between Koyoen and Algeria, planned by the Association, PTA, and Space Kids Space to commemorate the foundation of Koyoen Elementary School. We are happy to note here that the Chairperson of the Association kindly suggested the continuation of joint activities between the Association and Earth Kids Space.



Received a Good Idea Award!

We sent entries to the Children's Idea Contest, sponsored by the Honda Motor Co. Ltd., and two children from the Earth Kids Space Site in Suginami received a Good Idea Award.



Entry in the Kachashi Meet

The children from the Earth Kids Space Site in Okinawa took part in the local Kachashi meet and left with a good memory.

Ryukyu Shimpo newspaper, August 6, 2006

Implementation and Exchange Forum for "The Program for Children's Activities in Local Community"

In Kumamoto prefecture, the Committee for the Promotion and Vitalization of Local Education in Kumamoto hosted an exchange forum, inviting operators active in connection with the Place for Children plan. The forum was devised with the aim of providing individuals with the chance to come together for the mutual exchange of information so that the Place for Children plan may be promoted for implementation in local communities in the coming fiscal year and beyond. The individuals included coordinators serving as leaders of groups implementing local children's classrooms and those from the safety management committees. The forum also offered a photo panel exhibit by 42 organizations engaged in undertakings related to the Place for Children plan in Kumamoto. The exhibit served to offer the visitors and participants of the forum an introduction to their work. The Kumamoto branch of Earth Kids Space also took part in the exhibit, introducing its views and ideals and presenting the results of its activities. The exhibit received a good response, as indicated by the strong interest shown by members of the Kumamoto Board of Education, who made a comment to the effect that Earth Kids Space espouses a clear set of ideals.



TAKARADUKA

Help from a Group of College Students Organized for Education on Global Understanding

We have an Earth Kids Space site accommodating children from two elementary schools (Nagaodai Elementary School and Sakuradai Elementary School, both in the city of Takaraduka). The site is used by more than 100 participating children and is filled with their explosive energy. Here, we must mention a group of supporters whom we can always count on and who are always ready to join the children at play by way of responding to their overflowing energy. They are the members of Club Geordie, set up in Kansei Gakuin University. The members are actively participating in activities of the Earth Kids Space site in Takaraduka, offering a variety of programs that pertain to development education (international understanding) for the children.



SETAGAYA

Participation by Many Foreign Students

Numerous foreign students visit Setagaya. Around the time when the Earth Kids Space site was first opened, the children responded by crying out "Foreigner!" at the sight of a foreign student. After months of interacting with them, however, they have become less and less conscious of the difference in the color of skin and of different languages, taking on an international attitude without being taught. On the other hand, we are told by the participating foreign students that they feel no sense of alienation at all at the Earth Kids Space site, which would usually be felt by foreign residents. They also say that they are positively surprised that the children come to them in the most natural way.



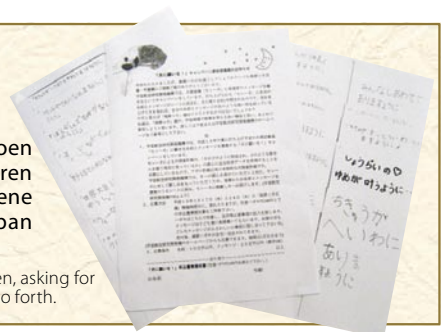
Taking Part in the Wish Upon the Moon! Campaign

Children from the Earth Kids Space Site in Koyoen took part in the campaign, which called on children to send in messages so that the lunar probe Selene could take them to space (sponsored by the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency).

A variety of messages were sent by the children, asking for "peace to everyone," "peace to the Earth," and so forth.



【地球っ子広場おきなわ】新しい「子どもの居場所」として4月に開設した同会。地域の子どもや大人が集い、共に学び合っている。大会参加で一つの目標に向かって力を合わせる楽しさと達成感を分かち合い、すてきな思い出をつくりたい。



Goi Peace Foundation: Plan for "The Program for Children's Activities in Local Community"

1 Project team for the Goi Peace Foundation's "Community Classrooms for Children Project"

(1) Parent organization

This project is the result of a direct assignment by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) of Japan, under its "Community Classrooms for Children Project." Under this consignment, the Goi Peace Foundation will carry out measures aimed at developing a nationwide network.

(2) Management committee

The foundation will establish a management council to oversee operations of this project.

1 The council shall be named:

The Goi Peace Foundation "Earth Kids Space" Management Committee.

2 Committee members:

Chairperson: Kenji Tomioka (President, Gunma Prefectural Women's University)
Vice-chairperson: Koji Tomita (Executive Director and Secretary General, Goi Peace Foundation)
Committee members: Fujio Aihara (Certified Public Accountant)
Atsushi Aritomo (Former General Manager, International Sales Support Division, Fujitsu Limited)
Muneaki Uchiyama (Assistant Professor, Kogakuin University)
Osamu Onodera (Executive Director, Outdoor Education Foundation for Youth)
Takayuki Deguchi (Director, Goi Peace Foundation)
Kaori Horikawa (Managing Director, Horikawa Medical Corporation)

(3) Coordinators

A single individual assigned to each place, 29 locations in total nationwide

(4) Meetings

Operating Committee: 3 times yearly (May, October, January)
Coordinator Meeting: twice yearly (October, January)
Workshop (intended for coordinators and safety management members)
General Workshop: once yearly (August)
Local Workshop: 5 regions nationwide, twice yearly in each region (May, December)

2 Specifics of Goi Peace Foundation's "Community Classrooms for Children Project"

(1) Name of program: Earth Kids Space

(2) Basic approach

Through activities that emphasize person-to-person and heart-to-heart contact, Earth Kids Space events will promote an understanding of other cultures through direct experiences of those cultures, and will assist in nurturing a spirit of love, harmony and appreciation by fostering an essential understanding of matters of "the spirit and life." By pursuing the goals of this project, the foundation will aim to create places of harmony and pleasant informality where children can interact with society, and also to contribute to the creation of healthier communities by developing these events into opportunities for parents and other members of the community to assemble and to learn from children as well as to teach them.

(3) Outline of activities

To date, the foundation has developed and carried out a number of new programs aimed at fostering international understanding, including its "School Lecture by Diplomats Project," "International Essay Contest for Young People" (sponsored by MEXT), and "UN's International Day of Peace Education

Program" (also sponsored by MEXT). Cooperation received from the embassies of the various countries, the United Nations, UNESCO and other international organizations made these events possible. In terms of the present proposal, the aim will be to take advantage of these experiences of the past and offer opportunities for direct contact with the world's cultures, arts and music through use of educational material provided by the different countries. The children will also be given opportunities to interact with active diplomats and to participate in community-based peace activities that have been proposed by the UN. By offering these kinds of distinctive and content rich activities, the project will aim to nurture in each child the potential for becoming an international person.

In addition, through contact with new and ancient expressions of wisdom, including biographies of great men and women who made enormous contributions to world peace, children will learn in a hands-on way about the wonderful achievements of humankind, about the value of life, and about the importance of love and compassion. Through such activities, Earth Kids Space events will encourage children to develop their own dreams and to cultivate an ability to make those dreams a reality.

Practical Guidelines (safety management and others) — excerpt

A safety manual has been prepared in line with the local and specific needs of individual "Places" with reference to the "Safety Management Manual: Community Classrooms for Children Project by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) of Japan; May 2004 (<http://www.ibasyo.com/office/group/pdf/manual.pdf>)."

- Make sure that you confirm the safety of entrances and exits to each facility and that evacuation routes are clearly understood.
- All children and instructors participating in this project will be required to enroll in "sports safety insurance."
- Be sure to have a first aid kit available at all times. As a rule, no orally administered medicines should be used.
- With assistance from parents, you should prepare in advance a health information card for each family (making doubly certain that the information is properly managed).
- The staff should have a definite idea of how long it takes each child to commute to the events. A map showing the location of the child's home would be helpful to have.
- The staff should determine beforehand the location of the nearest clinic where medical care would be available during an event. Each group should also prepare a manual which details responses that will be taken during emergencies. The manual should be stored along with the contact-information cards for each family.
- Children should be told that they are not to go outside the facility while activities are being held.
- The staff should be very careful about the people who visit an event. When someone arrives without prior notification to pick up children, his or her identity must always be checked.
- Commutes: Decisions on whether to allow children to commute by bicycle should be made after weighing the circumstances in each community.
- Going home: Children should be instructed to go straight home after an event.
- Going home: during the winter, when days are short, or on very windy or rainy days, instructors should accompany children to a point close to their homes.
- If necessary to assure safe commutes, the staff should consider asking parents for their help.
- When children use knives during an activity, the staff should explain correct methods of use and proper attitudes, and carefully monitor the event to prevent injury. The staff should make sure that all knives that were distributed are collected. When children use fire during an activity, the same kind of close attention should be paid.

In sum, safety will depend on a group's ability to take preventative measures against illness and injury, to protect privacy, to protect children against suspicious persons, and to know the correct evacuation routes and communication channels during emergencies. Each group should develop its own safety rules with these critical points in mind.

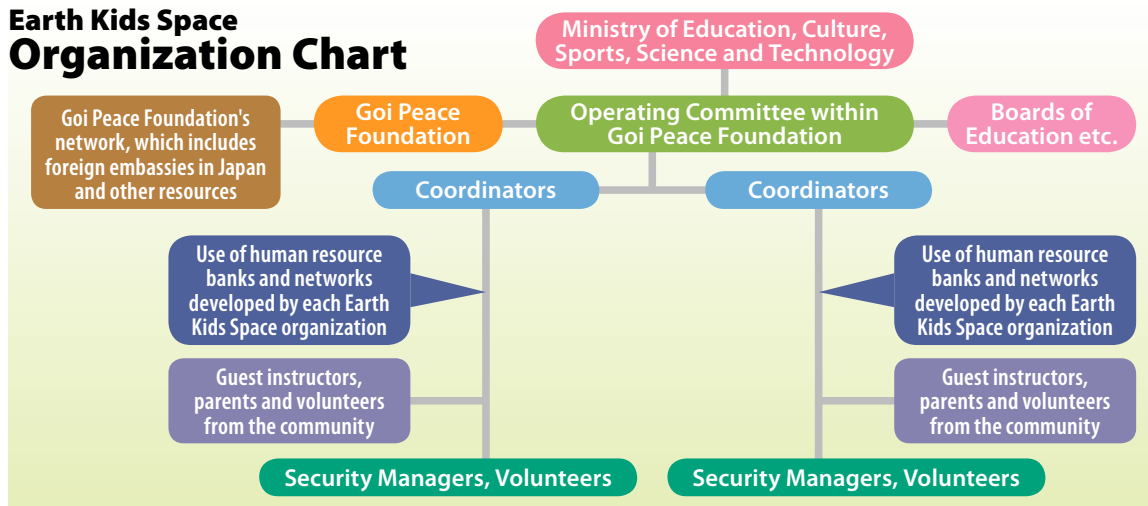
Coordinator Roles

1. Communicating and coordinating with the Goi Peace Foundation secretariat
2. Management of Earth Kids Space events in the community
3. Establishing networks in the community through Earth Kids Space events

Security Manager Roles

1. Planning and developing programs that meet community needs
2. Preparation and clean up for classroom-based events
3. Providing instruction to children
4. Assuring children's safety
5. When necessary, providing assistance to coordinator

Earth Kids Space Organization Chart





The Program for Children's Activities in Local Community
of The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science
and Technology (MEXT) of Japan

Commentary

The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) of Japan formulated a set of policies, implemented it in the form of an undertaking, and has since been promoting it as its Local Education Revitalization Plan. The plan aimed to provide opportunities for various practical experiences and exchange activities rooted in local communities. It is underway with the support of local adults, bringing about an environment in which society as a whole may foster the growth of children and consequently leading to the revitalization of local education. "Community Classrooms for Children Project", initiated in fiscal 2004, is a 3-year undertaking positioned as part of the same Local Education Revitalization Plan, hosting activities nationwide at 5,364 locations in fiscal 2004, 7,954 locations in fiscal 2005, and 8,318 locations in fiscal 2006.

The Place for Children Site is open to the public for use as a safe and dependable activity hub for children, and has offered a variety of activities with the help of local adults acting as safety management members and instructors.

Over the past three years, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) of Japan has provided assistance to such efforts underway for the promotion of information exchanges and human networks of individuals as well as for the development of human resources, who will assume the central role of implementing the "The Program for Children's Activities in Local Community", with the aim of introducing the plan to local communities while promoting its establishment and continuation as a series of locally initiated tasks. Based on its record of these efforts, the Ministry will be implementing a new project in fiscal 2007 to assist the government's efforts to reverse the decline in the country's birth rate, offering programs at 10,000 elementary schools nationwide under the more comprehensive set of policies for after-school hours (known as "After-school programs for Children") in the form of an integrated or associated part of the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare's Promotion of "Project of After-School Measures for Healthy Growth of Children".

"Earth Kids Space" Official Website

<http://www.earth-kids.net/>



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"Earth Kids Space" Management Committee

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Heiwa Daiichi Bldg.

1-4-5 Hirakawacho, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 102-0093, Japan

Tel: (03) 3265-2071 Fax: (03) 3239-0919

E-mail: kids@goipeace.or.jp

<http://www.goipeace.or.jp>

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Declaration for All Life on Earth

■ PREAMBLE

The earth is an evolving living entity. Every form of life on earth is an important part of this living entity. Accordingly, we, as individual human beings, must cultivate the awareness that we are all members of a global community of life and that we share a common mission and responsibility for the future of our planet.

Every one of us has a role to play in the evolution of our planet, and to achieve world peace each of us must live up to our responsibilities and obligations. Up to the present time, few people on earth have been fully satisfied with life. We have faced conflicts all over the world in competition for limited resources and land. This has had a devastating effect on the global environment.

As we enter the new millennium, more than anything else, the realization of world peace depends on an awakening of consciousness on the part of each individual member of the human race. Today, it is imperative that every human being bears the responsibility of building peace and harmony in his or her heart. We all have this common mission that we must fulfill. World peace will be achieved when every member of humanity becomes aware of this common mission— when we all join together for our common purpose.

Until now, in terms of power, wealth, fame, knowledge, technology and education, humanity has been divided between individuals, nations and organizations that have possession and those that do not. There have also been distinctions between the givers and the receivers, the helpers and the helped. We hereby declare our commitment to transcend all these dualities and distinctions with a totally new concept, which will serve as our foundation as we set out to build a peaceful world.

■ GENERAL PRINCIPLES

In the new era, humanity shall advance toward a world of harmony, that is, a world in which every individual and every nation can freely express their individual qualities, while living in harmony with one another and with all life on earth. To realize this vision, we set forth the following guiding principles:

1. Reverence for life

We shall create a world based on love and harmony in which all forms of life are respected.

2. Respect for all differences

We shall create a world in which all different races, ethnic groups, religions, cultures, traditions and customs are respected. The world must be a

place free from discrimination or confrontation, socially, physically and spiritually— a place where diversity is appreciated and enjoyed.

3. Gratitude for and coexistence with all of nature

We shall create a world in which each person is aware that we are enabled to live through the blessings of nature, and lives in harmony with nature, showing gratitude for all animal, plant and other forms of life.

4. Harmony between the spiritual and material

We shall create a world based on the harmonious balance of material and spiritual civilization. We must break away from our overemphasis on the material to allow a healthy spirituality to blossom among humanity. We must build a world where not only material abundance but also spiritual riches are valued.

■ PRACTICE

We shall put these principles into practice guided by the following:

As individuals

We must move beyond an era in which authority and responsibility rest in nation states, ethnic groups and religions to one in which the individual is paramount. We envision an “Age of the Individual”— not in the sense of egoism, but an age in which every individual is ready to accept responsibility and to carry out his or her mission as an independent member of the human race.

Each of us shall carry out our greatest mission to bring love, harmony and gratitude into our own heart, and in so doing, bring harmony to the world at large.

In our specialized fields

We shall build a system of cooperation in which wisdom is gathered together to derive the most from technical knowledge, skills and ability in various fields, such as education, science, culture and the arts, as well as religion, philosophy, politics and economics.

As the young generation

In the 20th century, parents, teachers and society were the educators of children, and the children were always in the position of being taught. In the 21st century, adults shall learn from the wonderful qualities of children, such as their purity, innocence, radiance, wisdom and intuition, to inspire and uplift one another. The young generation shall play a leading role in the creation of peace for a bright future.



The Program for Children's Activities in Local Community
of The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science
and Technology (MEXT) of Japan

