

# CRN Activity Report 2013

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## 1st ECEC Research Conference

# The Challenges and Prospects of ECEC in Japan

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## ECEC Research Conference Starts Strong on June 30, 2013

The first ECEC Research Conference, organized by Child Research Net (CRN), was held at Ochanomizu University on the theme "The Challenges and Prospects of ECEC in Japan."

ECEC is an acronym for "Early Childhood Education and Care." International interest in it has been rising as the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) has emphasized the importance of "Starting Strong" in child care and education.

The program started with the keynote address delivered by Kiyomi Akita, Professor, Graduate School of Education, the University of Tokyo, titled "The Challenges and Prospects of ECEC in Japan in the Context of Globalization," illustrating the global trends of ECEC. Next, the moderator, Yoichi Sakakihara, CRN Director, Professor of the Graduate School of Ochanomizu University, gave a presentation on the challenges facing ECEC. Noriko Goto, Research Manager, Child Sciences and Parenting Research Office, Benesse Educational Research and Development Institute (BERD), reported on the findings of the Second Basic Survey on Early Childhood Education and Child Care. Following these presentations and latest data, a panel discussion was held with four panel members: Mariko Ichimi, Senior Researcher, National Institute of Educational Policy Research and Hiroto Omameuda, Associate Professor, Tamagawa University, in addition to the two aforementioned speakers. Finally, the floor was opened for questions and discussion. Various issues were brought up by ECEC practitioners, which heightened expectations for the next conference. With such fruitful discussions, the first conference started strong indeed.

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## Data and Evidence Collection Increases Quality of ECEC

Professor Akita pointed out the following three issues in the current practice of ECEC in Japan.

1. Lack of education and child care that will ensure that the individual child will lead a happy life in early childhood and beyond in a globalized, knowledge-based society in the 21st century
2. Lack of education and child care that responds to diverse needs amid widening disparity (economic and regional disparities, etc.)
3. Lack of facts and evidence to ensure the process of improvement in ECEC quality

Compared to other countries that increasingly invest resources in ECEC, Professor Akita pointed out that Japan's public funding for it remains low and emphasized the importance of discourse and evidence to ensure that the significance of ECEC can be widely understood. As

the latest world trends, she introduced case studies from Taiwan and Korea as examples of the effective operation of the ECEC system through the integration of kindergarten and day-care center and also showed a short movie from Singapore where the integration was put into practice last May. Professor Akita further referred to the evaluation indicators for quality ECEC and ongoing international trends, providing examples from Australia and Canada. These examples helped to understand the necessity of promoting data collection and monitoring to effectively increase the quality of early childhood care and education at the national level.



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## Five Challenges of ECEC

Professor Sakakihara, the moderator of the meeting, introduced the five challenges that face ECEC and ECEC specialists gave their thoughts on them. The following are the five challenges that were addressed in the conference.

1. How can Japanese ECEC be positioned in the global context?
2. Do we have an overall picture of Japanese ECEC? What is the average ECEC in Japan?
3. What are the standards to measure the quality of ECEC? What is quality ECEC?
4. How can we improve the quality of ECEC? Specific facts rather than visions and philosophies are necessary.
5. What are essential differences in care and education between nursery schools and kindergartens?

The specialists then responded to the above questions. For example, it was mentioned that "ECEC in Japan has traditionally been based on the importance of proactive play by children themselves. This, however, is little known outside Japan. As a result, even though Japan was ahead in this field, it seems to have been too far ahead and ended up a step behind."



## What is needed to improve the quality of teachers

Following the aforementioned presentation, Ms. Goto introduced selected findings from the Second Basic Survey on Early Childhood Education and Child Care conducted by Child Sciences and Parenting Research Office, Benesse Educational Research and Development Institute (BERD), which was newly released on April 17, 2013. In response to the question "What is needed to improve the quality of teachers?" "Better salary for teachers" was the top answer in public kindergartens, private day-care centers, and Early Childhood Education and Care centers (*nintei kodomo en*). "Better placement standards for teachers" and "improving training program content" were ranked first in public day-care centers and public kindergartens, respectively.

What is needed to improve the quality of teachers  
(5 most frequently selected items among 28)

	1	2	3	4	5
Public Kindergartens	Improving training program content	Regular status for non-regular teachers	Creating an atmosphere of mutual support among teachers	Improved on-site training content	Improved guidance by management
	66.9	64.7	64.0	60.5	60.1
Private Kindergartens	Better salary for teachers	Improving training program content	Creating an atmosphere of mutual support among teachers	Improved guidance by management	Improved on-site training content
	77.2	68.6	60.6	56.0	55.3
Public Day-care centers	Better placement standards for teachers	Regular status for non-regular teachers	Improving training program content	Improved guidance by management	Creating an atmosphere of mutual support among teachers
	72.6	67.7	62.1	61.2	59.5
Private Day-care centers	Better salary for teachers	Improving training program content	Better placement standards for teachers	Creating an atmosphere of mutual support among teachers	Improved guidance by management
	83.4	67.2	65.3	63.3	60.1
ECEC centers	Better salary for teachers	Improving training program content	Creating an atmosphere of mutual support among teachers	Opportunities to participate in off-site training	Improved guidance by management
	77.7	69.1	65.5	59.7	59.0

Source: The Second Basic Survey on Early Childhood Education and Child Care conducted by Child Sciences and Parenting Research Office, Benesse Educational Research and Development Institute (BERD)

## Evidence strongly needed to solve problems in the field

This was followed by a panel discussion based on the ideas that had been proposed and collected data shown. Ms. Ichimi stressed the importance of a government framework to manage early-childhood data in an integrated fashion and the mapping of ECEC so that the positioning of Japanese ECEC could be highlighted in the global context. Professor Omameuda suggested that data collection and its utilization for ECEC are necessary in Japan, citing an example of a recent athletic performance survey utilized to initiate change in ECEC activities at the grassroots level. Professor Akita also highlighted the importance of mapping with a view to reflecting on the features of one's own kindergarten or center in illustrating all the aspects of children's development. In this manner, the significance of evidence was clarified and widely shared during the panel discussion.



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## In search of ECEC quality assessment standards

The difficulty of qualitative assessment of ECEC activities also sparked a lively exchange in the conference. Professor Akita maintained that each kindergarten or center should take pride in its diverse characteristics and make efforts to improve quality on its own. This remark shows a stance that ECEC quality should be discussed based on the unique diversity of respective kindergartens and centers, rather than setting unified quality standards for ECEC activities. It was also proposed that, besides numeric data, communicating the reality of children in the community or society could serve as evidence, building upon the idea of "children as citizens."

During the open discussion, a variety of important issues were raised from the floor, such as collecting first-hand experience of teachers, or suggestions on how to draw up standards from cohort studies, all of which were highly suggestive for setting standards to assess the quality of Japanese ECEC activities. ECEC Conference has truly taken the first step to "Starting Strong."



## 2nd ECEC Research Conference: 9th Child Science Exchange Program in East Asia

# Child Science of Play and Learning: Playful Pedagogy

## Hosting the 2nd ECEC Research Conference

Child Research Net (CRN) hosted the 9th Child Science Exchange Program in East Asia: the 2nd ECEC Research Conference that was held at Keio University's Mita Campus from October 26 (Saturday) to 27 (Sunday), 2013. During the span of two days, the event focused on Playful Pedagogy and Guided play, two concepts of early childhood education, to promote discussions on play and learning.

## The relationship between Play and Learning

Our first day was all about lectures that theoretically considered the relationship between play and learning.



The event started off with a special lecture from our honorary director, Noboru Kobayashi, Professor Emeritus of the University of Tokyo, which illustrated to us how the emotion, joy, is key to a child's healthy physical and mental development, based on case studies from neuroscience studies.

Next, CRN's Director, Yoichi Sakakihara, Professor of the Graduate School of Ochanomizu University, gave a presentation

on significance of "Playful Pedagogy." One of the important methods mentioned in implementing Playful Pedagogy is Guided play. Its features were explained as a method of teaching positioned between the categories of "direct instruction" and "free play" that form early childhood education. Knowing what materials to use is important as teachers try to create an environment that is in line with educational goals while respecting the child's freedom and independence that will spark his or her natural sense of wonder and curiosity. In addition, he introduced the views of American researchers on Guided play, regarded as most effective in developmental growth, as well as findings from studies in developmental psychology and neuroscience that provide us with evidence of the rich role of learning in play. In his speech, Director Sakakihara also proposed greater international recognition for traditional childcare practices in Japan and the benefits of implementing play into children's upbringing and urged parents and teachers who were present in the conference to be more confident in their efforts.

Next, Kiyomi Akita, Professor of the University of Tokyo, and Jiaxiong Zhu, Professor Emeritus of East China Normal University, followed up on Director Sakakihara's presentation and presented their perspectives on the aspirations and aims of early childhood education.

Professor Akita emphasized the importance of incorporating play into early childhood education. She started off by defining the role of the teacher in Guided play as "being aware of the educational elements that are present for the children while the children are in play." Based on that, she spoke of "teachers being required to understand how to deal with each child individually and to decide educational goals so that a variety of support and management are on hand." She also highlighted the significance of creating environments and activities that are engaging for children. She further appealed that "those who support children's play should also value playfulness in themselves."

Professor Zhu also talked about how creating a balance between play and learning is indispensable for a child's healthy development. The importance of Guided play was also emphasized. Using building blocks as an example, Professor Zhu stated that in many cases when we compare a child playing alone with one playing with a teacher, the latter builds better and this in turn helps their sense of accomplishment and awareness. In addition, he urged teachers to constantly think of how, when and what to use in order to strike a balance between giving children independence and guidance in play.



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## Putting Theory into Practice

During the two days, besides the theories to which we were introduced, we also learned ways to apply them.

On the first day, the last to take the rostrum was Shin-Tsung Chang, Professor of the National Taipei University of Education, and he introduced a new term that he created himself, "edutainment," by merging the two words, "education" and "entertainment." He explained the importance of play space and design in playthings or learning tools in creating learning-intended play and recommended interactive exhibitions in museums that engage touch or "parent-child centers" that encourage play between parents and children. Professor Chang also carried out a mini workshop that showed the participants how to fold a moving origami bird to emphasize that "in play, what is important is that we motivate children's creativity and guide them to be inventive and innovative."



On the second day, we had the honor of hearing from Nobuyuki Ueda, Professor of Doshisha Women's College of Liberal Arts, an advocate of Playful Learning, who defined it not

as "having fun learning" but as creating "a fun environment that is rich with learning opportunities." Using images of several workshops, Professor Ueda showed how to create such environments. He illustrated that children need more excitement in firsthand learning experience. He also explained Playful Learning by providing examples of coordinated activities that call for using our hands to make things, learning through human interaction, and in-depth learning that focuses passion on a specific objective.

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## Current Issues with the Early Childhood Education in East Asia

On the second day of the symposium "On the Scene From East Asia," three researchers from China, Taiwan and Japan gave us insights into the current early childhood education scene in the respective countries and the concomitant challenges.



According to Nianli Zhou, Assistant Professor of East China Normal University, there is much work to be done regarding the social development of Chinese children today. Professor Zhou further explained, based on data from neuroscience, that such issues will require widely propagating the practices of Guided play while revising the current trend of Direct Instruction in early childhood education.

Kindergartens and day-care centers in Taiwan were unified in January 2012 and are now known as "pre-schools." Leefong Wong, Professor of the National Taipei University of Education, further explained that these centers must meet certain government requirements that ensure the standards of their educational and reading materials, both in quantity and quality. These centers facilitate reading sessions between guardians and their children, friendly discussion groups for teachers and other guardian-oriented activities. On the other hand, Professor Wong added that because teachers also tend to direct children's play in many facilities, organizing activities that develop children's self-initiative and diverse capabilities is a challenging issue.

From Japan, Reiko Irie, Professor of Kyoritsu Women's University, talked about the teachers' mission, which should be to create a childcare environment where children feel they are having fun and want to engage in the same activities again the following day. However, a recent survey of teachers shows that while many young teachers are involved in early childhood education, they feel a significant gap between caregiving values and the actual caregiving. In order to address this issue, Professor Irie pointed out that for current teachers, in-service and on-the-job training at kindergartens, day-care centers or similar facilities should be provided. In addition, students that are currently studying to be teachers should be exposed to more practical training.

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## Making the Best Out of Guided play

The second day closed with an overall discussion by Professor Chang, Professor Ueda, Professor Zhu, Professor Zhou and Professor Irie. Without delay, the moderator, Director Sakakihara posed the question, "To take full advantage of the benefits of Guided play, what are

some knowledge and skills required of our teachers?" to the panel, and the discussion provided an understanding of the differences between China's and Japan's values on play from different angles. Professor Zhu commented that as it is vital to build and manage an emotionally trusting relationship with each child, we must be equipped, not with formal knowledge, but with wisdom that is highly flexible, which he further emphasized is necessary if we closely respond to the needs and feelings of children. The panel agreed with Professor Zhu's comments and this helped us recognize a sense of universality in the discussed early childhood values.

The Q&A session also gave us the opportunity to discuss the implementation of Guided play with the panel and audience. We especially had an active dialogue regarding Professor Zhou's comments on how to apply "social pretend play"<sup>④</sup> as an educational method to promote social development.

This program ended with great results through the presentations, workshops and symposiums that gave us the opportunity to consider both the theories and practice behind play and learning. During these two days, the presenting researchers caught the attention of the floor with their elaborate analysis and light-hearted humor that sometimes caused laughter from the floor.

The two days passed quickly. Not only did our panel consist of educators from Japan, China and Taiwan but we had medical scholars, developmental psychologists, designers and many others who enriched the event with their comments and helped highlight important issues surrounding the current situation of play and learning in early childhood education.

<sup>④</sup> This refers to a make-believe game where teachers use readily available materials like boxes to recreate environments that are easily found or frequently used in public, like hospitals, banks, supermarkets and so forth.



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## 3rd ECEC Research Conference

# Child Care that Improves the Quality of Play

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## Hosting the 3rd ECEC Research Conference

The 3rd ECEC Research Conference sponsored by Child Research Net (CRN) was held in Shinjuku on Saturday, February 15, 2014. Researchers of early childhood education and child care professionals gathered to discuss "Child Care that Improves the Quality of Play" and related subjects.

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## Session 1 Keynote Address and Panel Discussion

Session 1 began with a keynote speech delivered by Professor Takako Kawabe of the University of the Sacred Heart. The panel discussion that followed included Professor Kawabe, Sakakihara Yoichi, CRN Director and Professor of the Graduate School of Ochanomizu University, Nobuko Kamigaichi, Professor of Jumonji University and Hiroto Omameuda, Associate Professor of Tamagawa University.

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## Teachers who understand and support each individual child

Professor Kawabe noted that children develop an interest in something when they become absorbed on their own while playing, and emphasized the necessity of such experience for development and the importance of play-centered early childhood education. She stressed that teacher support is also necessary to heighten interest and enjoyment in play, that is, to increase the quality of play. Concrete examples of teacher support underscored the importance of incorporating novelty in play to encourage playful participation.

Based on her own experience as a teacher, Professor Kawabe proposed ways to adapt teacher support to the needs of each child and particular situation, which include helping out children who have difficulty making friends and watching over children as they become absorbed in play with friends. She also raised the issue of "Guided play," pointing out that it has much in common with the support to enhance the quality of play, and offered suggestions.



## Keeping a childcare record builds skills that support play

The ensuing panel discussion responded to issues that Professor Kawabe had raised in her keynote address. A range of views were exchanged on such issues as what the teacher should keep in mind when proposing play materials and the importance of the teacher choosing the play in implementing the theory of Guided play.



What methods can help teachers acquire the knowhow to support children's play? This question, which was posed by CRN Director Sakakihara, became a major focus of lively discussion. All the panelists agreed that keeping a childcare record was a key practice for teachers. When keeping this record, Professor Kawabe urged teachers to adopt a viewpoint that considered the relationship with the children rather than merely listing what happened during the day, namely, writing down goals for the day, comparisons with what was actually accomplished, and the children's reactions. Professor Omameuda proposed creating an episodic record that would report what the teacher felt and discovered in interactions with the children and a record that would document the group play of children from a comprehensive perspective. Professor Kamigaichi suggested that each kindergarten and day-care center should draw up methods for assessment and record-keeping in line with the curriculum and principles of childcare that are set forth in the Course of study for Kindergarten and the National Guidelines for Care and Education at Day Nursery.

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### Session 2 Workshop

In the Session 2 Workshop, eight childcare professionals spoke frankly on the topic "Impediments to Realizing Playful Learning in Child Care" in a discussion that went beyond the usual frameworks of public and private facilities and differences between kindergartens, day-care centers, and Early Childhood Education and Care centers (*nintei kodomo en*). Discussion was first held in two separate groups: the kindergarten group and the day-care group with Professor Omameuda and Mihoko Hashimura, editor of Benesse newsletter, "Thinking about the Future of Infant Education", serving as respective facilitators. This was then followed by an overall discussion with the combined groups.

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## Young teachers, in both kindergarten and day-care centers, need more experience in play

Both the kindergarten group and day-care group noted that young teachers showed some difficulty regarding play. In fact, all childcare facilities, regardless of type, reported an increase in teachers who seem not to have played much as children and to lack experience in play. Although they have read childcare materials and studied the subject, they do not know the aims of childcare, such as knowing what children should derive from play, because they have not experienced it themselves. One proposed solution to impart the fun and joy of play called for both experienced teachers and their younger counterparts to learn about play together.



At the same time, the discussions also highlighted large differences between kindergarten and day-care centers in terms of time and space. Staff of day-care centers commented that it was difficult to find the time to discuss matters pertaining to the children and play because even when their own work was over, the facility was still open. They also noted that engaging in sustained play was also difficult because play and living spaces are not separate, which means that activities, such as playing with blocks, etc., have to be interrupted to clear the space for mealtime. In contrast, the kindergarten group expressed no such views. Given that the current situation cannot be easily resolved, this will require further discussion from the perspective of government policy as well.

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### Session 3 Free Discussion

Session 3 featured free discussion that included all the panelists and childcare professionals of the previous sessions, Mariko Ichimi, Senior Researcher, National Institute for Educational Policy Research, Yoriko Isobe, Advisor of Benesse Educational Research and Development Institute (BERD), and Director Sakakihara serving as the moderator. Bringing up issues that were raised in Sessions 1 and 2, the discussion addressed specific measures to improve play-centered childcare and extend its social significance.

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### What can directors do to enhance playful learning?

How to develop childcare professionals who will stimulate rich learning experiences? The free discussion started off with a discussion of this question which was raised in the workshop. One participant (senior teacher, private kindergarten, Edogawa Ward, Tokyo) stressed the importance of team childcare as a way for teachers to learn from one another, a view that drew wide

support. Another participant (director, public day-care center, Kita Ward, Tokyo) proposed pairing experienced and young teachers to promote information exchange and thereby reinforce team childcare.

What should directors of childcare facilities do to enhance playful learning? Participants expressed a number of views that included creating an atmosphere of free expression and mutual support for teachers (director, public kindergarten, Taito Ward, Tokyo); ensuring an environment in which teachers can always interact with the children with a smile (director, private day-care center, Yamagata Prefecture); and creating a facility with a well-defined mission that respects the individuality of each teacher (Professor Omameuda).

The discussion extended to information targeting parents and the community. Ideas included regularly posting photographs and comments on the homepage to better inform parents of the facility's childcare policies and stance (director, public day-care center, Taito Ward, Tokyo) and cases in which the directors networked with local organizations to promote further understanding.

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## Conclusion

The program brought together researchers of early childhood education and childcare professionals who care for and interact with children on a daily basis and provided an opportunity to discuss and exchange views on children's play. In addition to bringing up a variety of issues, solutions were proposed that promise to more fully incorporate play into learning, and the discussions yielded fruitful suggestions for the role of play in childcare. The ECEC Research Conference will continue its research on learning and childcare in FY2014. We look forward to further research contributions and stimulating discussion in the future.

## Presenter Profiles (in Alphabetical order)



### Akita Kiyomi (1st and 2nd Conference)

Ph.D., Education. Professor, Graduate School of Education, The University of Tokyo. Specializes in child care and education, educational psychology, and lesson study. Currently, serves as President of the Japan Society of Research on Early Childhood Care and Education and the Japan Reading Association; Vice president of the World Association of Lesson Studies. Awards include the Kido Award, Japanese Association of Education Psychology; Science and Research Reading Award, Japan Reading Association; and Developmental Education and Research Award, Center of Developmental Education and Research. Recent publications include *Raising Children with Picture Books* (Iwasaki Publishing); *Real Life as It Is* (Froebel-Kan), *Day Care that Fosters Wisdom*, *The Attitudes to Day Care*, and *The Meaning of Childcare* (Hikari no Kuni), *The Psychology of Learning* (Sayusha), *The Psychology of Child Care* (Zenkoku Shakai Fukushi Kyogi-kai), *Collaboration Between Day-care centers, Kindergartens and Elementary schools: The Challenge of Building a Caring community Together* (co-authored and edited, Gyosei).



### Chang Shin-Tsung (2nd Conference)

M.Arch., Pratt Institute, M.A., Columbia University, Ed.D., Columbia University. Professor and Chair, Department of Art Education and Department of Plastic Design, National Taipei University of Education. Director, School of Toys & Games Design. Director, Center for Visual Arts Education, National Taipei University of Education. International Advisor for Practice Performing Arts School, Singapore.

Development and design of hardware, software, and firmware for educational environments such as kindergartens, children's museums, etc., in addition to systems design and research in Creative Design education.

Major publications include papers on edu-tainment and "the arts of amusement" as well as toys, play, amusement, traditional Taiwanese toys and games to develop intelligence, traditional scientific technology and idea edu-tainment, etc., and a series of manipulative educational materials for learners that develop intellectual skills.



### Goto Noriko (1st Conference)

Research Manager, Child Sciences and Parenting Research Office, Benesse Educational Research and Development Institute (BERD).



### Ichimi Mariko (1st and 3rd Conference)

Senior Researcher, Department of International Research and Co-operation, National Institute for Educational Policy Research of Japan. Specialized in Chinese language, comparative education, and history of education at university and graduate school. Interests include views of children, early childhood education, and the study of children. After studying in Beijing for one year and a half, has researched and surveyed the history of educational exchange between Japan and China, education policy and reform in Asia, child-raising support and early education in Asia in her current capacity.



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### Irie Reiko (2nd Conference)

M.A., Home Economics, Child Study, Graduate School of Home Economics, Ochanomizu University. Professor, Kyoritsu Women's University. Member of the Standing Board, the Japanese Committee of Organisation Mondiale pour l'Éducation Préscolaire (OMEF). Specializes in early childhood education and child care.

After working as a kindergarten teacher and child care practitioner for the class for children with special needs (currently, preschool of Aiiku Yogo School), stayed home and raised three children. Taught courses in professional child care and kindergarten training at university. Currently, professor of Department of Child Care, Faculty of Home Economics, Kyoritsu Women's University.

Publications include *The Child Science of Keeping a Child Raising Diary* (co-authored, Keishoshobo), *Parents' Stories* (co-edited, Minerva Shobo), *Infant Care and Education* (co-authored, Aikawa Shobo), *Child Care Today* (co-edited, Houbunshorin), *Child Care Content: Human Relations* (co-authored, Houbunshorin).

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### Kamigaichi Nobuko (3rd Conference)

M.A., Home Economics, Child Study, Graduate School of Home Economics, Ochanomizu University. Professor, Department of Early Childhood Care and Education, Faculty of Human Life, Jumonji University. Worked as a counselor in child health division, National Children's Castle and an assistant professor in Ochanomizu University before assuming current post.

Specializes in early childhood education, clinical study of development. Main research themes are ECEC, preschool teacher training. Concurrently serves as Secretary General, The Japanese Committee of Organisation Mondiale pour l'Éducation Préscolaire (OMEF), and member of the Board, Children's Future Foundation. Publications include *What is Unstructured Child Care?: Child Care for the Heart and Mind* (Froebel-Kan Co., Ltd).

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### Kawabe Takako (3rd Conference)

Ph.D., Education, Professor, Department of Education, University of the Sacred Heart, Tokyo. Worked as a kindergarten teacher at a public kindergarten in Tokyo for 12 years, and teacher's consultant in preschool education research division, Tokyo Metropolitan Institute for Educational Research and In-Service Training (current Tokyo Metropolitan School Personnel in Service Training Center) before assuming current job. Main research themes are methodology for child care practice recording and theory of assisting child's play. Served as member of the Board, Japan Society of Research on Early Childhood Care and Education, and collaborator in *Case Studies in Fostering the Emergence of Morality in Kindergarten* by MEXT, Japan. Publications include *The Roles and Functions of Recording Child Care Practice: A suggestion for "Activity Map Recording" to improve daily planning* (Seikokai Publishing).

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### Kobayashi Noboru (2nd Conference)

M.D., Ph.D., Professor Emeritus of the University of Tokyo; President Emeritus of the National Children's Hospital; Honorary Director of Child Research Net (CRN); Honorary President of the Japanese Society of Child Science; Honorary Director of the Japanese Society of Baby Science; Honorary President of the Japanese Society for Breastfeeding Research; Honorary President of the Japanese Society for Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect.

Graduated from the Graduate School of Medicine, University of Tokyo in 1954. Studied in the United States and England. Served as Professor, University of Tokyo; President, National Children's Hospital; and Chair, International Pediatric Association. Awards include the Japan Medical Association Award for Outstanding Distinguished Service (November 1984), the 56th Mainichi Shuppan Culture Prize (October 1985), International Pediatric Association Award (July 1986), Second Class Order of the Sacred Treasure (Autumn 2001), and the Takemi Prize (December 2003). Books outside his area of specialization, pediatric medicine, include *Human Science* (Nakayama Shobo), *Children are Our Future* (Medi-Science Inc.), *Reciprocal Development Through Childraising* (Futoshsha).



### **Omameuda Hiroto (1st and 3rd Conference)**

M.A., Education, Graduate School of Aoyama Gakuin University. Associate Professor, Department of Education, Tamagawa University. Worked as a teacher in Aoyama Gakuin Kindergarten before assuming current post. Specializes in early childhood education and care, parenting support. Concurrently serves as member of the Board, Japan Society of Research on Early Childhood Care and Education, and member of the Board, NPO bi-no bi-no. Publications include *Parenting Support through Mutual Support and Development: A practical theory of parenting support in day-care centers, kindergartens, and childcare support facilities* (Kanto Gakuin University Publishing), *To See Children As Humans* (co-authored, Minerva Shobo).



### **Sakakihara Yoichi (1st, 2nd and 3rd Conference)**

M.D., Ph.D., Professor, Graduate School of Humanities and Sciences, Ochanomizu University; Director of Child Research Net (CRN); President of the Japanese Society of Child Science. Specializes in pediatric neurology, developmental neurology, in particular, treatment of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Asperger's syndrome and other developmental disorders, and neuroscience. Interests include mountain-climbing, listening to music. Father of two sons and a daughter.

Born in Tokyo in 1951. Graduated from Graduate School of Medicine, University of Tokyo in 1976, and taught as an instructor in the Department of Pediatrics before becoming professor in the Research Center for Child and Adolescent Development and Education, Ochanomizu University.

Major publications include *The Monkey Who Wears Diapers* (Kodansha), *Children Who Can't Concentrate* (Shogakukan), *Hyperactive Children* (Kodansha + a Shinsho), *Asperger's Syndrome and Learning Disorders* (Kodansha + a Shinsho), *The Medical Science of ADHD* (Gakken), *The Critical and Sensitive Periods of the Child's Brain Development* (Kodansha + a Shinsho).



### **Ueda Nobuyuki (2nd Conference)**

M.A., Ed.M., Ed.D., Professor, Doshisha Women's College of Liberal Arts, Faculty of Contemporary Social Studies, Department of Childhood Studies. Director, neomuseum. Born in Nara, 1950. Graduated from Doshisha University; Central Michigan University, M.A.; Harvard Graduate School of Education, Ed.M., Ed.D.

Specializes in educational technology and learning art. Has created many innovative and original sites for learning environment design and media education. Visiting Researcher, Harvard Graduate School of Education, 1996-1997. Visiting Professor, Media Laboratory, MIT, 2010-2011.

Publications include *Playful Thinking: Ways of Thinking to Make Work Fun* (Senden Kaigi), *Playful Learning: The Source of Workshops and the Future of Learning* (co-authored, Sanseido); *Workshop in Cooperation and Expression: Environmental Design for Learning* (co-authored, Toshindo). <http://www.neomuseum.org>



### **Wong Leefong (2nd Conference)**

Ph.D., Faculty of Education, The University of Tokyo. Professor, Department of Early Childhood and Family Education, National Taipei University of Education. Currently, overseeing research on the licensing system of ECEC educare giver in Taiwan. She has been training preschool teachers in Taipei and also traveling around Taiwan and to the outlying islands once a month to evaluate kindergartens and educational programs. Observing the field of early childhood education from the perspectives of a parent, educator, and administrator, her research considers early childhood education and care that is relevant in the global era.

Major publications include *Issues and Trends in Child Care Support* (co-authored, Gyosei), *Reform in Global Early Childhood Education and Care and Scholastic Aptitude* (co-authored, Akashi Shoten), and *Preschool Education in Asia and Children Living in a Multicultural Age* (Akashi Shoten).



**Zhou Nianli (2nd Conference)**

Ph.D., Psychology, Professor of East China Normal University.

Specializes in child development, the parent-child relationship, evaluation of multiple intelligences and child-rearing planning for children aged 0-3 years, and other areas. Received her Bachelor of Psychology from Ochanomizu University in 1995, Master of Education from University of Tokyo in 1998, and Doctor of Psychology from East China Normal University in 2003. She conducted a survey on emotional development of infants as a visiting research fellow at Arizona State University in the U.S. from June to December 2004, as well as a survey on integrated education as a member of Japan Foundation fellows from May 2006 to March 2007 at Nagoya University in Japan.

Recent publications include *Developmental Psychology of Preschool Children*, *Guidance on Mental Health of Preschool Children*, *Social Cognition of Autistic Spectrum Disorder young children: Theory and Experimental Research*, *Comparative Analysis and Experimental Study on Preschool Children with Special Needs in Early Childhood inclusive Education*, *Evaluation of Multiple Intelligences of Children aged 0-3 years and their Development*.



**Zhu Jiaxiong (2nd Conference)**

Professor Emeritus, School of Preschool and Special Education, East China Normal University. Member of Research Center for Reform of Basic Education and Developmental Research in East China Normal University, the MOE Project of Key Research Institute of Humanities and Social Sciences; Advisor, Doctoral Course.

Currently, Executive of the Chinese Society of Education; Member, Science Committee; Chair of Committee for Mainland China, Pacific Early Childhood Education and Research Association (PECERA). Serves on the editorial board of four international publications on early childhood education.

Specializes in the theory of early childhood education and kindergarten curricula and has published numerous research papers, translations, and teaching materials. Recipient of many distinguished awards and a special grant of the State Council of the People's Republic of China. Jiaxiong Zhu Early Childhood Education Research: <http://www.zhujx.com>