

## English in Nursery Schools (Hoikuen)

English in Nursery Schools is the same in Kindergarten. We sing songs, do dances, read picture books, and put English into many things that we do.



In this picture, we're practicing "tip-toe" walking, which is similar to Ninja walking.

The thing I love best about Nursery Schools and Kindergarten, is that the kids aren't afraid to try anything. Everything is new to them, so everything has the same level of challenge, even in Japanese. Being so young, it's so easy to integrate English into their activities, and help them learn English as they get older.



We teach them how we start class, with "Stand up! Let's Start English!" "OKAY!" It's scary for the class leaders at first, but it's something that everyone gets to do, so it's a good experience. We also end class with "Let's finish!" "OKAY!" "See you!" It's also good that it's similar to the aisatsu of a Japanese lesson, so that it's not so strange to them.



For me, one of the important things to teach, is not to “just repeat” something new. Here, the kids are practicing “I’m sleepy” as a response to “How are you?” Too many people repeat the question if they don’t understand it, or if they don’t know how to answer it. Nursery School, Kindergarten, and 1st-3<sup>rd</sup> grades is a great time to teach the children how to answer this very simple and common question. These children can now confidently answer “I’m happy!” “I’m hungry” “I’m sleepy” “I’m hot,” in response to “How are you?” We will add more later, so we can ease them into more answers, and not all of them at once. I like to add gestures with the responses, so it makes them easier and faster to learn. By the time the school year ends, they will confidently know ten responses to “How are you?”



As I’ve said, we use English in our everyday activities. Here, we are practicing “run” as well as “walk,” “stand up,” “sit down,” and “stop.” These are very common words and actions, and when we say them while we do them, they are easier to remember.



Here, an intern teacher is helping me with a “jump” activity. Since the children are still learning how to do things, we have to put tape on the floor so they can understand how much they move...when they're supposed to jump in place. The tape gives them a great target to land on. One thing I like about this activity is that it will help them when they use a jump rope.

I also read picture books...but I don't have a recent picture of me reading to the students.  
Sorry.

I love teaching at Nursery School, and I'm able to apply things from Elementary to our activities, and sometimes I can apply things from Nursery School when I teach in Elementary.