

English in Kindergarten (Youchien)

English in Kindergarten Schools is the same in Nursery School. We sing songs, do dances, read picture books, and put English into many things that we do. This year, I teach at Nagaoka and Mikajiri Kindergartens.



(Nagaoka Kindergarten, Himawari class)

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-3rd 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?”

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

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