



## Let's Understand- Difficulties of Parents/ Guardians from Different Backgrounds

point  
1

### Difficulty in understanding Japanese

Even if I speak a little, reading or writing Japanese is difficult. I can't find which documents are important for me. Handwriting is even harder because I can't use translation apps. Japanese does not have alphabetical character, so it is difficult to find keywords to look up on internet.

point  
2

### Communication concerns

I feel teachers hesitate to communicate with foreigners, but I do not want to bother them. I don't want to ask my children or spouse to translate for me.

point  
3

### Culture Difference

I don't understand the annual events held in HOIKUEN. It would be nice if you could give me a simple explanation or show me how to find it on my own.

### About the use of the term 'parents/ guardians from different backgrounds'

We added an annotation about why we don't use the word, gaikokujin or "foreigner" on the Japanese version of this pamphlet. This word often makes many of you feel excluded. Instead, we use the expression, "foreign-born parents/ guardians" just to recognize diverse ethnic, cultural and linguistic backgrounds many of you have regardless of citizenship.

This pamphlet was made based on the findings of the following research for parents/ guardians from different backgrounds.

### Research Title

Difficulties experienced by parents/ guardians from different backgrounds in Japanese Early Childhood Care Center (HOIKUEN): Current situation and issues regarding with providing information.

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Creating society where  
children with linguistically and  
culturally diverse backgrounds  
can grow up together.

3 Proposals towards  
meaningful information  
delivery in HOIKUEN

Making all information  
useful for everyone

# HOIKUEN is becoming more diverse

3% of children in Japan have at least one foreign-born parents<sup>1)</sup>!

Let's create a diverse society for everyone!

The number of foreign residents in Japan in June 2020 is 2.8 million, which accounts for 2% of Japanese population. Children born to at least one foreign-born parent accounts for 3.1% of all birth in Japan<sup>1)</sup>.

It is highly recommended for children of foreign-born parents to enter kindergarten or nursery schools in order to facilitate their smooth enrolment in compulsory educations<sup>2)</sup>.

Improving the ability to deal with parents/ guardians from different backgrounds is no longer an issue for some HOIKUEN.

## References

- 1) The Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, 2014. Vital Statistics Occurring in Japan- Vital Statistics including Foreigners- Specified Report of Vital Statistics in FY2014.
- 2) The Ministry of Justice, 2021. Comprehensive Measures for Acceptance and Coexistence of Foreign Nationals. Revised FY2021.
- 3) Science Council of Japan, Committee on Area Studies, Multicultural Symbiosis Subcommittee, 2020. Recommendation Ensuring the right to education and schooling for foreign children: From Entrance to Exit of public high schools.

## 3 Proposals to solve the issues

point 1

### Difficulty in understanding Japanese

- ★ Add English headings or use animal stamps/ symbols to easily identify class name on handouts
- ★ Put marks on important documents
- ★ Digitize important documents and send it electronically as a PDF
- ★ Use emails and translation apps

I can find diary if it is written as "DIARY".

I won't overlook important documents if marked as "IMPORTANT" or "URGENT".

If documents were typed in Japanese, I could copy and paste it to translate into any languages I need.

After verbal explanation, it would be helpful if person send me the same details by email or LINE app so that I can translate it afterwards to understand better.

point 2

### Communication concerns

- ★ Speak Japanese slowly
- ★ Use gesture
- ★ Use an automatic translator or translation apps

Even if my Japanese is limited, please do not hesitate to talk to me.

I appreciate if you tell me how my child is doing in HOIKUEN in Japanese, if spoken slowly using simple words and gesture.

It's helpful if teachers could use translation apps.

I appreciate if they write it down on paper when I don't understand.

point 3

### Culture Difference

- ★ Provide simple English translation of the annual events in HOIKUEN
- ★ Write the events with Roman alphabet on the list of annual events.

If English translated list of annual events was prepared, it could be used every year.

I could look up on internet if a keyword was written with alphabet like "HINAMATSURI".

There are many Japanese cultural events in HOIKUEN like KOINOBORI, Sports Day, Bazaar, Graduation ceremony, which are unfamiliar to parents/ guardians from different backgrounds.

This is irrelevant to Japanese people, right?

It is relevant to everyone living in Japan!

Children are the future of society. To engage with families with different cultural heritage will offer an opportunity for children of the future and also for us to understand and appreciate people of diverse backgrounds. Many children with heritage other than Japanese are expected to become residents or citizens of Japan in the future<sup>3)</sup>. Why don't we discuss the future of childcare together?

## Voices of HOIKUEN teachers

We try our best talking to all parents either in the morning or evening. For parents/ guardians from different backgrounds, we talk with easy Japanese or simple English with gestures.

We make efforts to communicate with them by adding photos and simple English translation on diary. We want to do it within working hours.

We wish to have more staff and time for children just like other developed countries. If interpreters were here, we could provide better care for all children.

## Voices of parents/ guardians from different backgrounds

We appreciate for teachers and other parents/ guardians for their efforts. I don't want to put burdens on them translating documents. We can translate it on my own.

Japanese spouses also work, and it's difficult to explain everything from scratch to partners who don't speak or read Japanese. It's helpful if there was an environment where partners from different backgrounds to understand information on their own.

## Voices of Japanese speaking spouses