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Policy History of Connection Curriculum for Kindergartens and Elementary Schools in Japan

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Policy History of Connection Curriculum for Kindergartens and Elementary Schools in Japan

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I. Introduction

Heating "academic ability" competition and "the figures that it is desirable to grow by the end of early childhood".

The publication of the results of the “National Academic Achievement / Learning Situation Survey” in recent years and the news reports of the mass media are increasingly stirring the” academic ability” competition among the prefectures. “National Ability and Learning Situation Survey” started in 2007 is conducted in late April every year for 6rd-grade elementary school and 3rd-grade junior high school. Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology (MEXT) has published the average correct answer rate of the prefectures and ordinance-designated cities. However, the attentions of people always focus on the rankings and scores of prefectures in the report on the announcement. Each prefectural board of education is obsessed with the results, and the educational scenes are under the tangible and intangible pressure of the further work. In fact, on August 2, 2018, the (Osaka City) chief said that the results would be reflected in the teachers' performance review and a fear went through the educational scenes around the country. On the other hand, a pre-practice with the past questions for the test has become normal in the schools. Of course, this situation was different from the intention of MEXT. At the press conference on April 20, 2016, the Minister of MEXT Hase pointed out that some areas of the students had solved the past questions to improve their grades around February. 'The Academic Ability Test is not for a competition of scores, but for improving teaching. It's putting the cart before the horse.' he let out his anger. (Mainichi News Paper)"

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In this way, although it was not the intention of MEXT, the new guidelines for teaching which is revised every 10 years was published in March 2017, in a situation where fierce competition was taking place over “academic abilities” that was able to be scored and visualized. From the perspective of "the collaboration of preschool and elementary school", the new guidelines revised all of the "Kindergarten Instruction Procedure", "Nursery Childcare Guidelines", "Collaboration between Nursery and Kindergarten Type Certified Children's Garden Education and Childcare Guidelines", and "Elementary School Education Procedure". The main feature of this revision is "the figures that it is desirable to grow by the end of early childhood" (so-called “10 Figures”).

The details will be described later. For the time being, I will extract only the headlines from the “Kindergarten Instruction Procedure”.

(1) Healthy heart and body
(2) Self-reliance
(3) Cooperation
(4) Awakening of morality and norm consciousness
(5) Connection with social life
(6) Awakening of thinking faculty
(7) Connection with nature and respect for lives
(8) Interest and sense of quantity, figure, sign and character
(9) Communication with language
(10) Great sensitivity and expression

Of course, the childcare site responded sensitively to the presentation of 10 Figures. Just then, the competition for “visible academic abilities” was intensifying. In other words, there may have been a way of thinking that emphasized the importance of early childhood education as "a thing of preparing intellectual school education after elementary school”. But is the nature of early childhood education like that?

Before discussing that issue, it is necessary to review the history of policy history and discussion in Japan regarding the collaboration between kindergarten and elementary school.

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II. The Current of the Policy History and Discussion Regarding the Collaboration between Kindergarten and Elementary School

So-called the First Grade Problem became a social problem at the beginning of the 2000s, and the Kindergarten Instruction Procedure in 2008 which was led by the problem, and the revision of Elementary School Education Procedure has raised the arguments about the importance of the collaboration among nursery, kindergarten and elementary school. However, there is a record on the connection issue, especially between kindergarten and elementary school, which has been treated as a topic of discussion since the Taisho period before that. In the following, I would like to take a look at the current of the discussion by taking up the main claims, laws, and regulations, and major events related to the collaboration between kindergarten and elementary school at each period.

a) Meiji Period: Beginning of Kindergarten and Elementary School

The beginning of kindergarten in Japan dates back to 1876. This year, The Kindergarten Attached to Tokyo Women's Normal School (currently The Kindergarten attached to Ochanomizu Women's University) opened, and kindergarten education started in Japan. The law was based on Article 40 of the Ordinance for Enforcement of Elementary School. It was said that municipalities should establish kindergartens, libraries, blind and dumb schools, and schools matched for elementary schools. At that time, kindergarten did not have its laws, and the independence law was not enacted until the "Kindergarten Ordinance" on April 21, 1926. And the beginning of a nursery in Japan was the day when a nursery in Niigata was established by Kanemi Akazawa and his wife in 1890. The purpose of the nursery was to raise infants of poor families on behalf of their mothers.

Regarding elementary schools, the school system was enacted in 1872, the Elementary School Attached to Tokyo Norm School (currently the Elementary School Attached to Tsukuba University) was established in the following year. Since then, elementary schools spread out throughout the country, but the school enrollment rate didn't reach 90 percent of school-age children until the end of the Meiji era.

b) Taisho period: Rising a question from Sozo Kurahashi

During the Taisho era when the modern education system was established and expanded in Japan, Sozo Kurahashi, a professor at Tokyo Women's Higher Normal School and a director of the Kindergarten attached to the school, raised the question regarding the connection between kindergarten and elementary school. His idea was not only about a problem of the connection between kindergarten and elementary school at that time but also seems to include many problems that we should return to today.

> The side of elementary school tend to blame the side of kindergarten, but as the result, the people of kindergarten say that kindergarten education will not directly prepare for elementary school education. (...) However, life itself in the lower grades of elementary school has changed the learning attitude of them. After all the life of the same kind of project as kindergarten, that is, if the children solve their purpose by themselves, or if the producing becomes the main subject those who have been adapted at the kindergarten in advance are ready for elementary school life. Then, real collaboration will be created between kindergarten and elementary school for the first time.

What Kurahashi, a pioneer of early childhood education in Japan, pointed out at that time overlaps with the current connection problems between kindergarten and elementary school. Kurahashi said that kindergarten is not a prep school for elementary school, but it is natural that kindergarten is the foundation of elementary school. Kurahashi introduced the Project Method which is a problem-solving study carried out in the United States at that time and asked for the establishment of consistent teaching from a kindergarten to the age of eight by reforming the lower grades of elementary school. It can be said that this is an idea of extending the life of early childhood to an elementary school.

c) School Education Law (1948)

As time goes by, the transition to a new educational system during the post-defeat reconstruction period, the School Education Law in 1948 , which became a pillar of post-war education policy, showed the position of kindergarten at that timefirstly. Article 1 of the School Education Law states, "In this law, schools means elementary school, junior high school, high school… university,…, and kindergarten". They are Article 1 School. In this sentence, it is not the order of the stages of development, but kindergarten was dared to be placed at the end of the kind of school, "… and kindergarten". The order had continued with various debates until the revision of the law in 2007, which I will describe later.

The reason for the arrangement in the School Education Law was that kindergarten which was prescribed by the original law called Kindergarten Ordinance before the World War 2 was combined with elementary school and other types of schools in the law. That was why kindergarten was generally placed at the end. "I think that early childhood education and childcare leaders would have dared to put the kindergarten rather at the end than in front of elementary school as kindergarten childcare and elementary school education are fundamentally different." Gen Tamiaki

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suggested the intentional involvement of early childhood education at that time. Yutaka Oda also supported his suggestion, and stated that "because early childhood education is similar to but different from elementary school education."

d) Childcare Procedure (1948)

In the same year, the Ministry of Education announced the Childcare Procedure as a guidebook for early childhood education and the first policy document after World War 2. The procedure was the preliminary predecessor of the current Kindergarten Instruction Procedure which is really different from that because the target readers of the previous procedure were nurseries and families in addition to kindergartens.

In the Childcare Procedure, the childcare content of early childhood was 12 items and positioned as “a fun experience for early childhood”. In Section 4 of Chapter 7, it referred to the connection between kindergarten and elementary school as “Communicating with Elementary Schools,” “It is necessary to keep close contact with teachers in the lower grades,” and “both of pre-school education and school education must have consistent purposes and methods."

e) Kindergarten Instruction Procedure

Furthermore, the Kindergarten Instruction Procedure was announced in a way to substantially revise the Childcare Procedurein 1956. Unlike the previous procedure, which was widely used as a handbook for early childhood education, it was compiled as a standard just for the kindergarten curriculum. In the Kindergarten Instruction Procedure, the aim was to strengthen cooperation in terms of educational content, as it said, “it has made the content of childcare have consistency with elementary schools.” As a result, the Kindergarten Instruction Procedure was classified into 6 areas which was close to the design of the elementary school curriculum as follows. "1. Health" "2. Society" "3. Nature" "4. Language" "5. Music and Rythm" "6. Painting" Moreover, the procedure clarified the uniqueness of early childhood education, "Kindergarten has a very different character from education in elementary school or higher," “Therefore if the plan and method of elementary school teaching are directly applied to kindergartens, it will result in making mistake in early childhood education.” However, these six areas were regarded as “subjects”, that cause a problem that childcare activities were separated as a result.

f) Kindergarten Instruction Procedure (1964)

Following the situation, the Kindergarten Instruction Procedure was revised for the first time in 1964. To respond to the criticism including misunderstandings that the 6 areas were confusing because they followed the subject in elementary school education, it has been changed to “5 areas”. And, to further clarify the uniqueness of kindergarten education, it advocated providing comprehensive instruction in according with the life experiences of early childhood, with taking advantage of their interests and desires.

However, because each area has a “fun experience”, the reason why the areas were established was explained as “for convenience to think about the contents systematically, and to draw up teaching plans, there was a misunderstanding that it was desirable to teach by each area in the end. Besides, the revised procedure is written as “the desirable experience and activities must be properly arranged and a harmonized teaching plan must be created and implemented,” which also spread as an idea of activity-centrism. Thus, it cannot be said that the revision philosophy has infiltrated enough to correct the course of early childhood education even in this revision.

g) Period of high economic growth

It was just during the period of high economic growth. Regarding the relationship between the state of the Japanese economy and education at that time, Teruyuki Hirota referred: "The steady expansion of employment opportunities and the growth of new industrial sectors and industries resulted in that less specific education skills and knowledge were required for school education (…) The Japanese employment system was organized in a way that takes advantage of the general basic cognitive skills of workers. In that sense, the school has conducted educational activities that are closely related to the economic system, such as the formation of basic cognitive abilities and learning of the disciplines of corrective life." The educational community which has consistently focused on ensuring autonomy from politics since the end of the war seems to have disregarded such economic trends, but in the hindsight-based opinion, it has been given the room to function as an important tool for economic development.

This economic trend inevitably brought about a kind of early talent development and competition which was based on the “capability-based” view of education also in kindergartens as describing below. It included the danger of making a kindergarten into a cram school. And the entrance rate of nursery and kindergarten of 5-years-old children reached 80%in 1972. But there was a growing demand for unification of nursery and kindergarten in the context of “correcting inequalities” before compulsory education due to differences in facilities and systems between nursery and kindergarten at that time.

h) Central Council for Education (1971)

In such a social situation, the Central Council for Education made a report in 1971. It was so-called the 46 Report. While the report admitted that there was obviouslya problem with the connection between the kindergarten and the elementary school, the report was

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an attempt to draw a concrete conclusion on the proposals for the reexamination of the school-age corresponding to early maturity in childhood, and the possibility of the talent development by early education. The section of 'Basic Ideas for Primary and Secondary Education Reform' and the article of 'Development of School System According to Human Development' in the report are as follows.

> In order to find out the way to investigate to solve the problems pointed out about the current school system, it is necessary to start a leading trial with the following goalsas the first step.
> (1)To improve the educational effect of early childhood by providing consistent education from 4 to 5 years-old-children to lower elementary school children at the same educational institution.
> (...) In the future, after evaluating the results of the leading trials based on the spread and content enhancement and basic concept 1, necessity and possibility of pre-school education as a compulsory education should be considered (...)

This report proposed a solution to the problem during connection by "consistent educating at the same educational institution". But contrary to Kurahashi's idea described above, the context means that it is the tries as a possibility to advance schooling to early childhood, and to provide early education.

The 46 Report also refers to the lower grades of elementary school. Tatsuji Hatano found the path leading to the later establishment of living environment studies. "(In this report,) it is important to cultivate basic attitudes and abilities of life and learning through comprehensive education and training of intelligence, emotion, will and body in the lower grades. It (the report) suggests reexamining the way of the curriculum which is not confined to traditional subject categories.

i) Kindergarten Instruction Procedure, Revision of Elementary School Course of Study Procedure (1989)

After that, the policies changed greatly in 1989. And both of the Kindergarten Instruction Procedure and the Elementary School Course of Study Procedure were revised. In the Kindergarten Instruction Procedure, which was revised for the first time since 1964, there is a statement that emphasizes the uniqueness of early childhood education, and no description about the cooperation between kindergarten and elementary school in reversal: "Perform through the environment based on the characteristics of early childhood."

On the other hand, there was a dynamic change in the Elementary School Course of Study Procedure, in which science and social studies were abolished in the lower grades, and the new subject living environment studies were introduced, considering the connection with kindergarten. Hatano said that living environment studies was not simply a new subject that combined traditional science and social studies, but was based on two factors. The first factor is the developmental characteristics of children. In early childhood education, children learn comprehensively through play. Since elementary school suddenly focuses on subject learning, children feel a gap and their smooth transition is difficult. Second is the development of the ability to respond independently to social changes. In the lower grades, children must acquire knowledge, skills, and customs through independent, concrete, and comprehensive activities rather than teacher-centered classes. In other words, it is a way of thinking of handing over the kindergarten education method to elementary school. Basically, the ideas were inherited in the revision of the Kindergarten Instruction Procedure and the Elementary School Course of Study Procedure in 1998.

Besides, the Kindergarten Instruction Procedure revised in 1998 includes a description that positions the early childhood as the basis of lifelong learning: "Considering that kindergarten education leads to the development of basic life and learning after elementary school…"

j) First Grade Problem becoming a social problem and revision of the Fundamental Law of Education and School Education Law

From the late 1990s to the 2000s, the First Grade Problem got attention as a major problem related to the collaboration between kindergarten and elementary school education law. It is said that the term of the First Grade Problem came to be received attention by the mass media reports in 1999. At that time, the cause of the First Grade Problem was thought to be early childhood education, and there was an opinion that they should have cope with 5 years old school. It would be a recurrence of the 46 Report.

Under the arguments, the Central Council for Education set up Early Childhood Education Committee in 2003. In January 2005, the subcommittee submitted a report titled "The Future Way of Early Childhood Education Based on Changes in the Environment Surrounding Children". The report pointed out strengthening and improving cooperation between early childhood education and elementary school education, encouraging "collaborative learning" for 5-years-old children, and reviewing the School Education Law Article 1 and the order of school types, based on the continuity of development and learning.

Although the report aimed at strengthening the cooperation between kindergarten and elementary school, it explained the necessity of improving early childhood education after clearly separating early childhood and childhood. As Kurahashi argued, it is different from the idea of providing consistent teaching from early childhood to 8-years-old. There is a view that this is "the resistance of the Early Childhood Education Committee to admission to 5-years-old children".

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And the School Education Law was amended about 60 years after the enforcement in June 2007. Kindergarten was involved in the context of "a foundation for lifelong learning," but it was finally positioned as the first type of school. Also, the revision achieved another epoch to define "academic ability" in elementary school education, and the meaning related to the collaboration between kindergarten and elementary school which will be described later.

In December of the same year when the following year was scheduled for the revision of the Kindergarten Instruction Procedure and the Childcare Guideline, a report titled "The Revision of Childcare Guidelines for Nursery" of "Study Group on Revision of ' Childcare Guidelines for Nursery'" was issued. In this report, there are the words that "Based on the continuity of children's lives and developments (...) actively collaborate with elementary schools".

The following the report of Central Council for Education "The improvement of the curriculum standards of kindergartens, elementary schools, junior high schools, and special-needs school" in January 2008, focused on the issues of normative consciousness and adaptation to cope with the First Grade Problem. The movement of the policies was premised on the "personalization of problems" that gives back to the personal issue of the growth of children, rather than the social structure and educational system.

k) Revision of Childcare Guidelines for Nursery, Kindergarten Instruction Procedure, and Elementary School Course of Study Procedure (2008)

After the arguments, the Childcare Guidelines for Nursery, the Kindergarten Instruction Procedure, and the Elementary School Course of Study Procedure were revised at the same time in 2008. It is apparent that the guideline and procedures are revised with a common purpose, from the background of the arguments and the simultaneous revision. The purpose was to nurture Zest for living, but the context is would not just Zest for living, but "Zest for living in a knowledge-based society". However, if we extract only the content related to the period of the connection between kindergarten and elementary school, it seems that even the child's own experience and attitude to cherish each child's unique growth are emphasized rather than trying to give children some kind of power.

First of all, the Childcare Guidelines for Nursery was the first "notice" from the Minister of Health, Labor and Welfare, and it has normativeness as a standard for the contents of childcare at nurseries. In the guideline, the Record of Nursery Children Childcare was clearly written that it was to be sent to elementary schools, and the educational function was strengthened in a direction to ensure the unique "continuity of development" for each individual just as kindergartens.

The Kindergarten Instruction Procedure clearly stated that "kindergartens would lead to the development of a foundation for life and learning after elementary school...", and was based on the philosophy of lifelong learning. This is in accordance with Article 11 of the Fundamental Law of Education which was revised in the previous year: "Education in early childhood is an important part of fostering a foundation for lifelong personality development."

In the Elementary School Course of Study Procedure, the cooperation with the nurseries and the kindergartens was positioned as one of the collaborations with the various institutions, and it was decided to "devise measures such as providing comprehensive teaching which is centered on living environment studies". It was recommended to implement a so-called "Start Curriculum" that consciously organizes a curriculum with the connection with early childhood at the beginning of the entrance. The schools would take over the results of early childhood education and be conscious of educating while utilizing the resultsat the beginning of the lives of elementary school. Regarding such a series of revisions, Kiyomi Akita referred to the importance of a viewpoint that guarantees "a meaningful experience for children":

> The kindergartens and the elementary schools should have not only the short-sighted meaning of cooperation for the prevention of the First Grade Problem for avoiding a situation that the children bother the teachers immediately after entering the elementary school, but also the viewpoint of connecting more meaningful experiences from the viewpoint of children.

l) Research Council of Study for the way of the Smooth Connection of Early Childhood Education and Elementary School Education (2010)

As a major event after the revision of the Childcare Guidelines for Nursery, the Kindergarten Instruction Procedure, and the Elementary School Course of Study Procedure, MEXT established the Research Council of Study for the Way of the Smooth Connection of Early Childhood Education and Elementary School Education in March 2010. The council considered the smooth connection between early childhood education and elementary school education based on the continuity of development and learning. And it was epoch-making because it focuses just on the connection between kindergarten and elementary school.

The 6 Pillars were shown in the presentation of the final report in July 2010: (1) Importance of the smooth connection, (2) Abilities to acquire from early childhood to elementary school, (3) Activities to develop them, (4) Necessity of device in the teaching methods and systems in the connection period, (5) Way of cooperation and connection between early childhood

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education and elementary school education, (6) Relation to educational environment "(2) Abilities to acquire from early childhood to elementary school" was named as Basis of Learning

The following report in November 2010 emphasized the continuity and consistency of education in early childhood and childhood, and intended to define early childhood education and childhood education as a difference considering the stage of development. The council also proposed the development of three independences as “development of Basis of Learning”: "independence in learning", "independence in life", and "mental independence". In addition, the council mentioned that early childhood was the time when learning begins, and a smooth transition to a time of subjective learning was required. So there was not the familiar term in early childhood education “play”, and “learning” was unified.

III. Considering the Simultaneous Revision of the Courses of Study in 2017 from the Viewpoint of "Collaboration between Kindergarten and Elementary School"

a) *"Two positions" that led the collaboration between kindergarten and elementary school*

Now, looking back at the flow of arguments on the collaboration between kindergarten and elementary school, there would be two main reasons in the backdrops and they have competed and complement each other.

The first is the position to guarantee “the abilities that children should acquire". This is also the basic idea that modern public education consistently has as a national policy. Focusing on "the development of useful human resources for society (the people and the nation)", and the purpose is developing the qualities and abilities that children should have when they become adults and bear society in the future.

Since the goal is clear, these expected qualities and abilities are organized and subdivided in a step-by-step manner from the basic to the application and are subdivided systematically in reverse. The learning is evaluated as “(measurable) academic ability” based on the achievement level of the intents which are set for each element and stage and are able to be grasped objectively. The forms of subject learning are based on the concept. As long as the goal is determined by the social demands, the learning is affected by the circumstances surrounding Japanese society, especially the economy, such as the past high economic growth and the globalization in these days, with visible or invisible ways.

For this reason, “continuity” which was in reverse from the subject education after elementary school, will be emphasized as a policy of this cooperation, and early childhood education is inevitably required for early intellectual education and compulsory education. Naturally, the arguments are taken place from the view of the social demand in regardless of whether or not the child feels necessary, so it is “children's happiness that adults think”. In that sense, children are assumed to be “anonymous presence in the system”.

The second is the position to ensure “children's own experience”. Whereas the first position assumes children to be “anonymous”, the second position is based on the premise that each child has a unique name and develops as a whole person through communication in the living world. The education of young children whose individual differences are large is based on the idea which places emphasis on the child's own empirical and holistic learning that cannot be recovered by the subjective element. Therefore, the inner meaning that is continuity which is unique to each person like "context" in other words, of the child who is a learner is centered above all.

What this idea tries to secure is the pursuit of “your child's own happiness” and stands the same place of living environment studies and integrated studies in elementary schools. "Lifelong learning" would share the same-root personality from the view of learner-centered. Therefore, this idea has the character of continuing the independent learning of the child in the early childhood to the elementary school while protecting the uniqueness of early childhood education when it appears as a policy of the collaboration between kindergarten and elementary school. It has the character of antithesis to the first position.

These two positions generally correspond to the controversy between “systematicism” and “empiricalism” in pedagogy, or the educational arguments of "cramming" or "pressure-free".

b) *"Qualities and abilities" and "academic abilities"*

Based on this perspective, let's take a look at the simultaneous revisions including the Courses of Study.

Three laws and regulations, the Kindergarten Instruction Procedure, the Childcare Guidelines for Nursery, and Early childhood education and Childcare of Collaboration between Nursery and Kindergarten Type Certified Children's Garden Education and Childcare Guidelines (three laws relating to kindergartens and nursery) are revised around the same time on the announcement on March 2017. It is a simultaneous revision in with the Elementary School Course of Study Procedure and is based on a common purpose of the previous simultaneous revision of the Childcare Guidelines for Nursery, the Kindergarten

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Instruction Procedure, and the Elementary School Course of Study Procedure in 2008.

The three laws relating to kindergartens and nursery are designed to be consistent with the aims and content of the kindergarten, and newly indicate “qualities and abilities to be fostered” and “ideal images to be brought up by the end of early childhood” as “matters to be shared as facilities for early childhood education”. The idea of “qualities and abilities”, or competency is the warp (from birth to lifelong learning) that runs through the current revisions of the procedures and is also the principle that is a weft (cross-disciplinary) too. The Course of Studies in elementary school and over are organized and organized based on the same principle.

In 2007, it was 11 years ago prior to the previous revision, “academic ability” whose the definition was ambiguous and apt to jeopardize the premise of the arguments, was defined and written when the School Education Law was revised. According to the revision, "academic abilities" in elementary school education were prescribed as 1. Basic knowledge and skills 2. Abilities of thinking, judgment, and expression 3. Independent attitude to learn These “three elements of academic abilities” correspond to the current “three pillars of qualities and abilities”. In other words, 1. Knowledge and skills 2. Abilities of thinking, judgment, and expression 3. Power and humanity toward learning. So today, “academic abilities” must mean “qualities and abilities”.

And “qualities and abilities” means “academic abilities” and that is “power”. Therefore, you may think that "the position to secure the power which you want to give children” mentioned in the previous chapter, that is the idea of subject education after elementary school has begun to encroach on early childhood education. Certainly, this idea is not a mistake when you just see the style of thinking. In fact, it seems that early talent development has finally started when you see that the world is obsessed with the “results” and “ranking” of National Academic Ability and Learning Situation Survey. But I would like to emphasize that this is a misunderstanding at least from the viewpoint of the revision.

c) *Identity of early childhood education and "non-cognitive abilities"*

In the three laws relating to kindergartens and nursery and the Elementary School Course of Study Procedure of "living environment studies", the words of “the base of ...” follow for 1 and 2. In other words, 1. The base of knowledge and skills 2. The base of abilities of thinking, judgment, and expression 3. Power and humanity toward learning. These seemingly insignificant differences among the words are a modest but distinctive indication of the “identity of early childhood education” that the ancestors have preserved, which is different from the education after elementary school. Both of these qualities and abilities are intellectual aspects, in other words, “cognitive abilities”, and one of the parts that have been emphasized in the education after elementary school. That is to say, these roots are fostered in early childhood education and living environment studies, but education of cognitive ability should not be brought forwardin early childhood education and life sciences, Kurahashi Shinzo's suggestion that “Kindergarten is not a prep school for elementary school, but it is natural that kindergarten is the foundation of elementary school” is exactly true. At least, he spoke eloquently with using different words that it should not be aimed for the acquisition (in the first place, it is suspicious that this may be called acquisition) of abstract, fragmentary, and elemental knowledge and skills for early childhood and children in the connection period, or the establishment of non-independent "abilities of thinking, judgement, and expression" that is far from the context of their lives.

And how about "3. Power and humanity toward learning"? There is no phrase of "the basis of ..." here. That is why it was originally an unrivaled sphere for early childhood education.

Japan's early childhood education has historically focused on the development of “emotions, motivations and attitudes” that are premised on intellectual ability. “Power and humanity toward learning” in early childhood from MEXT's “Organization of qualities and abilities that should be fostered in early childhood education", listed 8 matters as examples: "Sympathy", "Stable emotion", "Confidence and acceptance of other's feeling", "Curiousness and spirit of enquiry", "Conflict, and facing and compromising with themselves", and "Discussing, sharing of purpose, cooperating", "Sense of beauty and fun such as for color, shape and sound", and "Interest in natural and social phenomena". Hearing “power to learn and humanity,” you might be wondering if you have to work on something new, but that is not a big deal. It is needed to cherish developing “emotions, motivations and attitudes” that have been valued by early childhood education, in other words, “emotional abilities” such as motivation, self-regulation, self-esteem, and empathy for others, at the same level as before or higher.

These are called as “non-cognitive abilities” in contrast to the previous “cognitive abilities”, and these are qualities and abilities that have recently become recognized as important. Toshihiko Endo explained the significance and nature of the “non-cognitive abilities”.

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> Psychology has traditionally emphasized the abilities including numerical or linguistic ability, that is basically desirable as much as possible. However, it has become clear in recent years that it is not only possibility to predict the happiness of a person's in whole life just based on such abilities. It has become clear that it is the characteristics of the social and emotional aspects which are the power to support happiness throughout a person's lifetime rather than that. Originally, each person has a different innate temperament and personality. (...) Non-"cognitive ability", "characteristic features that are not cognitive abilities" in other words, does not make sense of that all children should have it unlike abilities. In that sense, we use the word "competence" instead of the word "ability" in our research. Competence is translated into Japanese as "yuno-sei"(有能性) and "yuno-kan" (有能感). It is not the measurable ability that children can do something but means the ability to interact effectively with various environments in a flexible manner. That is how well they interact with the environment.

Endo suggested that "non-cognitive abilities" are the different "context of each child", that is having different meanings and values depending on the individual "temperament and character born". In other words, although it is "qualities and abilities", "power and humanity toward learning" is not a kind of value that can be evaluated by a uniformly standardized standard, and it means that it has value only through the interaction between "the context of each child" and the surrounding environment. This is exactly the idea of early childhood education (and living environment studies), and it would be the essence or the foundation that support the learning that leads to "lifelong learning" as Endo suggests in terms of "happiness throughout life".

Early childhood education is never encroached (by the idea of subject education after elementary school). Conversely, the importance of "context of each child" which is the essence of early childhood education, would be reflected in the "qualities and abilities" of learning after elementary school. But it must be remembered that there is a risk of changing easily the essence because we fall into the "form of thinking" based on the assumption of making an anonymous child "obtain certain qualities and abilities".

d) Understanding "the figures that it is desirable to grow by the end of early childhood" from the view point of "emotion"

Now, let's return to the "the figures that it is desirable to grow by the end of early childhood", the so-called 10 Figures, which was taken up at the beginning. First of all, I would like you to take a look at the contents with focusing on "emotion". (* Underlined by the author)

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(1) Healthy mind and body

Children will fully work their minds and bodies toward what they want to do with a sense of fulfillment, act with prospects, and create healthy and safe lives themselves in kindergarten life.

(2) Self-reliance

While actively engaging in the familiar environment and enjoying various activities, children are to be aware of what they have to do, to think and devise to do it with their own power and without giving up, to feel the sense of accomplishment, and to act with confidence.

(3) Cooperativity

While interacting with friends, children share each other's feeling and thought, and come to fulfill with the sense of fulfillment by thinking, devising, and cooperating to achieve a common purpose.

(4) The beginning of morality and norm awareness

As children have various experiences with their friends, they understand what they can do or not, look back on their actions, sympathize the feelings of their friends, and act from the standpoint of others. They also understand the need to follow the rules, to adjust their emotions, and come to make and follow rules while negotiating with friends.

(5) Relationship with social life

While having the feeling of valuing the family, children are to be aware of the various ways of interacting with people in the community, they interact with considering other's feelings, feel the joy of helping others, and become familiar with the community. In addition, in relation to various environments inside and outside the kindergarten, they take in information with necessary for play and life, and activities while making use of information, such as making judgments based on information, communicating information, and using them. And they are to aware of the connection with society by taking care of using public facilities.

(6) The beginning of thinking abilities

As children are actively involved in familiar events, they feel and notice the nature and structure of things. And they come to enjoy various relationships such as thinking, anticipating, and divicing. In addition, while touching various ideas of friends, they realize that others have ideas that are different from their own and make their ideas better while enjoying the joy of creating new ideas, such as making judgments and rethinking.

(7) Relationship with nature and respect for life

Through the experience of touching nature and being moved, children become to feel the changes in nature, to express in thought words with curiosity and exploration, to increase their interest in familiar events, and to have affection and respect for nature. And by being moved by familiar animals and plants, they are tobe aware of the mysteries and preciousness of life, to think about how to interact with familiar animals and plants, totake care of them as lives, and to be involved with them with warmth.

(8) Interest and sense of quantity, figures, signs and characters

In play and life, children experience to get close to quantities, shapes, signs, and characters, and notice the role of signs, and characters. And based on their own needs, they will use them and take interest, concern, and feeling.

(9) Communication with words

While communicating with teachers and friends, children become familiar with picture books and stories, acquire rich words and expressions, communicate their experiences and thoughts with words, listen carefully to other's story, and enjoy verbal communication.

(10) Rich sensitivity and expression

In touching events that move their mind and using the sensibility, children are to be aware of the characteristics and ways of expression of various materials, to express themselves what they felt and thought, to enjoy the process of expressing with their friends to experience the joy to express, and to be motivated

How about reading the above sentence focusing on “emotion”? (Although there may be some objection to the underlined parts…), some “emotion” would be emphasized in all issues.

This 10 Figures has been discussed in Central Council, Elementary and Secondary Education Section, Education Committee and Early Childhood Education Committee since 2010. It was summarized that “Based on the aims and content of the five areas of childcare content, what reorganized the human image requirements that care providers and parents wish to acquire these qualities and abilities until the end of childhood, that is before graduation, with a curriculum open to society by accumulating play and life suitable for early childhood in each kindergarten.”

Compared with other items, it seems that Japan's early childhood education has not focused on 6 and 8 as well as other issues among them. Nevertheless, it is still too early to think that you should make children study something intellectual just looking at the headlines. What is important is that the children themselves “enjoy” and “experience” perceiving them while feeling “necessity” in their own context, and naturally learn these senses through the process of

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"feeling experience", that is the "original experience". So a child would have "learned" in the childcare though care providers weren't aware of and missed it. From now on, it will be necessary to carefully "reinterpret" and "discover" it.

Even though hoping that children "acquire by the end of early childhood", it would be understandable to the readers who have read the draft so far that this is not to assess whether a child's growth has reached a certain line or to drive the child to achieve that ideal. In other words, there is basically no change in the scenes of early childhood education, especially for daily childcare, at least in the short-term instruction plan level. If there is a change, it can be used as a clue to correct childcare by looking at the figure of the child's growth in the light of the 10 Figures as an opportunity to review and evaluate long-term instruction plans such as "month", "term", "semester", or "end of school year".

e) *10Figures which is living in curriculum management at elementary schools*

On the other hand, how do elementary schools receive the results of early childhood education? I hope it would be my groundless fear, but I cannot help thinking that the elementary school scenes do not show as much interest in the 10 Figures as the early childhood education scenes. It has long been said that elementary schools haven't had the same level of the awareness of the issue as early childhood education in terms of "common understanding of teaching views". But I think that the 10 Figure will prove its worth as a "common language" that connects both precepts of early childhood education and elementary school education.

In particular, it has great significance to understand the context of children in early childhood and the inner "story" when planning a Start Curriculum that leads children to soft landing immediately after entering elementary school, and the annual plan for living environment studies that share a common philosophy with early childhood education. Teachers should not make an end of a curriculum following the previous example just like every year. That is just the framework of thinking that assumes anonymous children. In the time when elementary school education was based on content, it may have been (ideally) good, but today's education is nothing more than helping a child learn by attracting objects to their context and make better transformations, with an individual name in front of us based on qualities and competency.

It is said that "All teachers are responsible for curriculum management." To turn the curriculum at the beginning of enrollment in the PDCA cycle, it is the first step Ex-ante Evaluation of the cycle, that first-grade elementary school teachers know how each child grew up in childhood and how the care providers perceived it. Educational activities are works that support the growth of children. That is why that "Ex-ante Evaluation = Understanding child growth in early childhood" is indispensable for teaching planning.

From this point of view, early childhood education is needed to understand the growth of each child using 10 Figures as a clue and to convey it to elementary schools. It is required that "the care providers can speak their childcare in their own language" for that. I also have experience of both early childhood education and elementary school education, so I can understand well that there is a nuance that can be communicated and sympathized with each profession without a word. On the other hand, care providers and elementary school teachers often use surprisingly different images and nuances, even with the same term. From the common perspective of 10 Figures, it is necessary to make the significance as a "common language" more certain by accumulating information exchange and joint training on the child-rearing and the Context of Each Child. I think that will help to make the collaboration between kindergarten and elementary school more meaningful.

IV. Means of an Afterword: it is Necessary to Develop Learning based on the Context of each Child in the Time of "Qualities and Abilities" Basis

In this paper, I tried to examine the value of the Context of Each Child in the connection period between early childhood education and elementary school education after reviewing the policy history of the connection between kindergarten and elementary school, and understanding where it is today.

The education-related laws and regulations were greatly changed to "learner-centered" with the revision of the Fundamental Law of Education Law and School Education Law about 10 years ago. At the same time, the conflict structure that has been shown in the arguments between "the position to guarantee 'the power people want children to acquire'" and "the position to guarantee 'the child's own experience", is changing its shape as something consistent while incorporating various academic knowledge, as a result of a paradigm shift to a competency base of fostering qualities and abilities.

The "learner-centered" approach based on the Context of Each Child is essential when thinking about child-rearing during the kindergarten and elementary school connected period. On the other hand, looking back on today's "academic abilities" competition, the separation from such a deep educational philosophy is serious and it looks like that people run around in all directions with inorganic numbers and rankings as a result.

Academic ability is the "qualities and abilities" that emerge as a result of each child with an individual name learning by attracting objects to the context in the

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life world. And in the light of "lifelong happiness", the value of academic abilities can only be evaluated legitimately only in mutual relationships of the children and the surrounding circumstance, and that is "different values in different contexts".

I hope that children will continue to learn while enriching their inner world, and be happy from early childhood to elementary school, and throughout their lives. Now is the time for learner-centered learning based on the Context of Each Child.

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