



Naka Ward promotes the Naka Ward Multicultural Coexistence Promotion Action Plan to help non-Japanese residents build ties in the local community. This newsletter is published by Naka Ward in English and Chinese to provide foreign nationals with useful information on topics such as municipal administration, social programs and rules for everyday living.

Naka Ward Town News

English Chinese



Let's Think About Childraising Together

Are you worried about raising a child in a country with a different language and culture? The City of Yokohama offers a variety of support services for children with foreign connections. In this issue, we hear from those providing such support, those who have received such support and those who have experience raising such children in Japan. Let's think together about childraising in Japan by listening to their stories and advice.



Principal Masumi Kanazawa (p1)
Himawari (ひまわり) (Japanese Language & Culture Support Center)



Mr. Taichi Okunuki
International Support Class Teacher (p2)
Yokohama Yoshida Junior High School



Mr. SUN HAO TIAN (p2)
Arrived in Japan in Grade 6

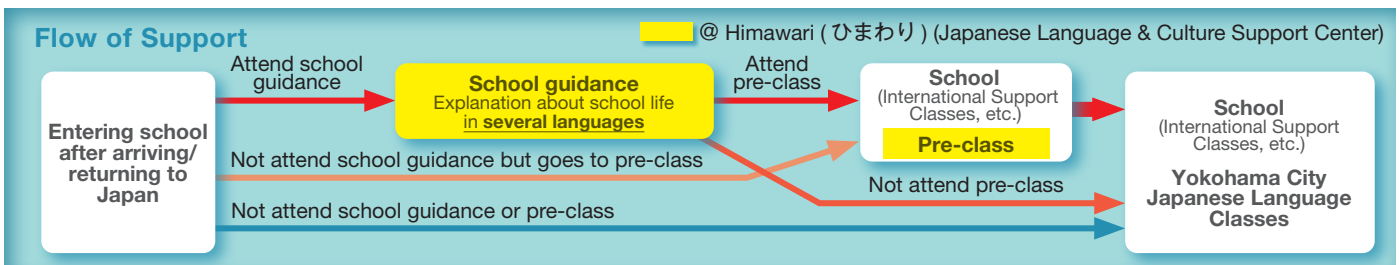
Helping Support a Reassuring School Life (Principal Masumi Kanazawa of Himawari (ひまわり))

◆ Study Support after Arriving in Japan

For elementary and junior high school students who need Japanese language instruction, the City of Yokohama offers **International Support Classes at some schools**. Outside of school, **Himawari (ひまわり) (Japanese Language & Culture Support Center)** provides school guidance in multiple languages and Japanese language instruction, etc.

Many countries do not have school customs such as students having rotating daily duties, cleaning responsibilities, etc., and it takes a lot of courage to suddenly attend school in Japan. The **pre-class at Himawari** is a place for such children new to Japan to start learning the Japanese language and experience school life in Japan. Students attend the pre-class three days a week for the first four weeks after arriving in Japan and study at their registered school twice a week to gradually become accustomed to Japanese school life.

Himawari tries to provide an environment where children can feel happy they have come to Japan.



◆ What Children and Their Parents Need to Know

Many children blame themselves, saying, "I have something to say, but I can't express it well," or "I can't keep up with the class." But don't ever blame yourself. It makes me happy each day to see the children studying hard and trying do their best. Remember that you are a valuable person.

To parents, there may be times when your child's grades do not improve. But please understand that your child is in a difficult environment with a different language and culture, so praise them for trying their best.

As a parent, you may have many concerns about Japan's school system and entrance examinations. If so, please consult with teachers at your child's school or the Naka International Lounge, or attend school guidance.



Use Support Programs and Deal with Your Child Honestly

(Mr. Taichi Okunuki, International Support Class teacher at Yokohama Yoshida Junior High School)

◆ Support at School

In the International Support Classes, students who need Japanese language instruction are taught basic Japanese. For the regular school subjects of Japanese, Science and Social Studies, teachers of that subject provide study support with an assistant who provides support in the student's native language.

The teachers make every effort to ensure that students with foreign connections are included, even if they are not fluent in Japanese, and can work independently in class.

Yokohama Yoshida Junior High School also offers a variety of support services to parents, such as providing support staff in the native language to explain about enrollment procedures, running multilingual parent-child guidance sessions for future path choices, and providing counseling and telephone support by Chinese speakers.

◆ One Last Word

Some children think, "I'm not really confident in myself," but it is wonderful to be able to speak another language! I really want them to be proud of that ability. Japanese schools have many events. Please enjoy the cultural differences since you have come all the way to Japan.

Many Naka Ward residents have connections to foreign countries. Some students experience problems after graduating junior high school because they mostly interact with people who speak the same language and can therefore spend their time day-to-day without learning Japanese.

I think it is important for people to value their own culture, regardless of whether they have foreign connections, but also remember that others around you are trying to go along with you.

◆ To Parents/Guardians

Some children are told to come to Japan "for a visit," and then suddenly forced to live in without being able to say goodbye to their friends back home. Such children will no longer trust their parents and won't be motivated in their studies. When you know you will bring your child to Japan, please give them a proper explanation.

Are you turning your back on your child because you can't understand Japanese? For instance, there are many ways you can help your child with preparing to enter high school—some schools send out information in multiple languages or you can use Internet translation functions to help you check things. Children are really doing their best, and we hope that parents will face this important time together with them.



Cherish Your Own Feelings (Mr. SUN HAO TIAN)

◆ Arrived in Japan the summer of Grade 6

My parents called me to Japan from China. At the time, I couldn't speak any Japanese, so I began to learn the language at the International Support Classes and the **Yokohama City Japanese Language Classes*** during elementary and junior high school.

I was surprised that Japanese schools have home economics and health classes, and that physical education covers so many things. In China, the emphasis is on studying, so I would sometimes be taken away during physical education classes by teachers of other subjects. But in Japan, I was able to enjoy learning a wide variety of subject in a relaxed way.

◆ About higher education

Because of financial issues and academic performance, I ended up choosing a high school that emphasized junior high school grades rather than my first choice. Changing my study path in the middle of the school year was difficult, so I advise you consider your future plans carefully.

I am currently studying computer graphics at a vocational school. My parents opposed my decision, saying, "You should study something that will ensure you get a job," but I stuck to my intention and enrolled in the school through the school recommendation process. My dream is to create characters enjoyed by many people through my work.

◆ My message to parents and students

I hope that parents will listen to their children's opinions without imposing their own values. Please consider the matter carefully before deciding to bring your children to Japan.

One of the best things about Japanese schools is that there are many events. I hope that students will not only study but also get involved in events and make good friends through such events.

◆ Contributing to the community and finding a place of belonging

In my second year of high school, I joined the **Rainbow Expedition Team**. I volunteer as an interpreter, etc. at local events. The Rainbow Expedition Team is a third space where I can enrich my life. I was also assigned to create posters for local festivals. I am happy to be able to contribute to the community by doing something I like.



* What are Yokohama City Japanese Language Classes?

The City of Yokohama provides Japanese language classes by certified JSL teachers for elementary and junior high school students. For elementary school students, the teacher comes to the school once a week. For junior high school, students go to an intensive class twice a week.

Did you know the following kinds of support are available?

Financial Aid for Educational Expenses System

For those parents whose are finding it financially difficult for their children attend a municipal Yokohama elementary or junior high school for compulsory education due to financial reasons, support for expenses such as textbooks, field trips and school lunches is available.

Certain eligibility conditions apply. Parents with questions about how to apply, etc. should inquire with their child's school.

For more information, refer to "Notice Regarding the Financial Aid for Educational Expenses System."



▲ Notice Regarding the Financial Aid for Educational Expenses System

Support for Advancing to High School

To attend high school in Japan, it is necessary to pass an entrance exam. A special exam system is available for students whose native language is not Japanese. Multicultural Education Network Kanagawa (**ME-net**), an Authorized NPO, holds guidance sessions in various languages about attending high school and has created an entrance examination guidebook.

If you are thinking, "I'll take care of it once my child arrives in Japan," it might not be enough time. Make sure you look into this matter early and get advice. **Naka International Lounge** can provide you with information about places to consult about your child's education. Please feel free to inquire.



▲ ME-net



▲ Naka International Lounge

A long-lasting cold could be tuberculosis

Tuberculosis (TB) is an airborne infectious disease caused by inhaling tubercle bacilli, and usually results in inflammation of the lungs. It is said that one in ten people will develop the disease after exposure.

Tuberculosis is not disease of the past. Each day in Japan, 35 people develop TB and five die. In Naka Ward, 17.8 people per 100,000 develop TB (2022 data).

If you have symptoms such as a cough, phlegm, a slight fever, general fatigue or weight loss that persists for more than two weeks, visit a medical institution as soon as possible.

<Fukushi Hoken (Health and Welfare) Division, Naka Ward Office, TEL: 045-224-8332>

To enroll your child in daycare from April 2025

Nursery schools (daycares) take care of children when their parents are at work, have an illness, etc. and cannot look after them at home during the day.

You can apply to licensed nursery facilities, certified combined nursery and kindergarten facilities, small-scale daycare businesses, family-style daycare services and company childcare facilities (regional).

Application distribution from Oct. 10 (Thu)

Application packages are available at the following locations:

Sogo Annai (information desk, 1F) or Counter 54 (5F) of the Naka Ward Office, licensed daycares and Community Care Plazas in Naka Ward.

* An application package can also be downloaded from the website from October 1 (Tue).

Application period: Oct. 10 (Thu) to Nov. 6 (Wed)

Application method: By post, postmarked no later than Nov. 6.

For online applications, submitted no later than 11:59 p.m. on Nov. 6.

* If you applied in FY2024 but were not accepted, you will need to reapply for FY2025.

<Kodomo Katei Shien (Children and Families Support) Division, Naka Ward Office TEL: 045-224-8172>



▲ Website (in Japanese)

International Service Staff
Naka Ward Office (2nd floor)
English 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Chinese 8:45 a.m.-3:45 p.m.

International Service Staff provide assistance with matters such as guidance on Naka Ward Office activities, interpretation at various ward office counters and support for filling out certificate applications. Stop by if you would like assistance.



Yokohama International School (YIS) Celebrates 100 Years

This year marks the 100th anniversary of Yokohama International School (YIS), which is located in Naka Ward. YIS offers a comprehensive educational curriculum from early childhood education through high school. Education at the school seeks to foster children's creativity, critical thinking and leadership skills under the motto of "Live, Learn, Lead." YIS is

said to be the second oldest school in the world to use "international" in its name.

YIS was established in 1924 with six students between the ages of six and 12 and one female teacher. As it celebrates its 100th anniversary, over 800 students of more than 50 nationalities study on a beautiful campus built by a renowned architect.

For more information about YIS, please visit their website ▶



Help Me Know Q&A



What kind of places are there for children with foreign connections to spend time outside of school?

★ Rainbow Space

Rainbow Space is a place for young people run by the **Rainbow Expedition Team** under the motto of, "A safe place to be, a space to connect people who want to learn and study, and a place where people can realize and express their true potential."

With the aim of helping people who have moved away from their home country to a new place, or who are experiencing conflict or worries in their daily lives, Rainbow Space is committed to developing people through a variety of experiences and training opportunities, providing learning support for junior and high school students, generating useful information and making films in order to broaden future possibilities.

Why not come to Rainbow Space to meet new friends and find something special?

Location: Naka International Lounge (Naka Ward Office Annex 1F, 35 Nihon-odori, Naka Ward)

Hours: Mondays, 5:00-7:00 p.m. (excluding national holidays)



▲ For details

About the Rainbow Expedition Team

Rainbow Expedition Team is led by graduates of the Naka International Lounge's study support classroom for foreign junior high school students as a way to provide support to juniors who are having similar experiences as themselves. The team is now an important group in the local community that supports the promotion of multicultural coexistence.

★ Art Lab Ova "Yokohama Paradise Hall"

Yokohama Paradise Hall is an artist-run space open to neighborhood children. Many children with foreign connections use this space, which also provides food support and study support as needed.

Address: 3-51-3-101 Wakaba-cho, Naka Ward

Hours: Thursday to Sunday (irregular holidays)

Open around 3:00 p.m.

Email: artlabova@gmail.com (Please type "Inquiry" in the Subject line)



▲ Managing organization's Facebook page (in Japanese)

★ Study support classes are also a place to gather

If you go to a place that offers Japanese language support or study support, you may meet people in the same situation or people you get along with.

Using the detailed search function of the Database of Japanese Language and Study Support Classes in Yokohama, check "Child" under "Eligibility" to search for classes for children held in Yokohama.

▼ To access the database



(in Japanese)

☑ Examples of classes for children in the Naka Ward area

- Tomatoma Class
- Chikyukko Class
- Yukka no Kai Yokohama etc.

* Please check the database for class dates and application procedures.

Raising Your Child in Japan

Message from an Experienced Parent



Ms. LI SHUANGYAN, Coordinator,
Minami Citizens Activities &
Multicultural Lounge

◆ I was confused at first by from cultural differences and a different way of thinking

I came to Japan from China about 20 years ago. I now have two children who are university students. In Japan, parents are responsible for preparing many things for day-to-day school life. **I was shocked by the number of necessary preparations, and I had a hard time at first.** There were times when I had trouble understanding what was written on the Japanese handouts from the school, but **some of my Japanese friends with children around the same age were very helpful in providing detailed guidance.**

There was also a difference in the way of thinking about future. Besides studying and going to a good school, students in Japan **can choose various paths**—they can go into sports if they are good at that or find a job right after graduating from high school. I was surprised at the gap between Japan and China, but my way of thinking changed—**it's OK to be yourself and value what you want to do.**

◆ It's important to believe in your child and enjoy your own life in Japan

You may feel anxious if your child's grades are not as good as you expected. But **everyone has strong points**—some children may not be good at studying, but they can play the piano well or sing well. I think it's very important **to not judge your child only by their grades, but to believe in them and praise their good points.**

Another important thing as a **parent is to think about and act upon what you want to do.** Above all, **enjoy your life in Japan!** Children grow up watching what their parents do, so observing parents working hard toward a goal will have a positive influence. When parents are enjoying themselves, children will also surely enjoy their life in Japan.

◆ Don't be afraid to fail—give it a try!

If you don't understand Japanese, you may find it difficult to join a Japanese community. However, if you can find the courage to join the school PTA or your local neighborhood association, life will be easier since they can tell you various things about the school and daily life, etc.

Even if you can't speak the language, you'll be fine as long as you show that you want to contribute and try your best! You'll surely be welcomed if you can convey your feelings to others. Even if you fail at something, it's always a learning experience. **Don't be afraid, just give it a try.**

Thoughts of a Foreign Resident Life and Culture in Japan



Strong Determination at the Age of 18



"There's nothing to talk about."

The young man in his school uniform laughed and said this at the start of our interview. If you only briefly spoke to him, you wouldn't know he wasn't Japanese. Originally from the Philippines, JP lived in the US, Canada, Dubai and Hong Kong with his parents, arriving in Japan in Grade 6. There was already some hesitancy and confusion in his school life, but things took an agonizing turn after entering junior high school in Japan. His classmates were kind, but he couldn't make friends. How was he supposed to overcome the high and thick "Japanese language wall"? He was at a loss every day. There was no International Support Classes available to him at that time, being the only foreigner at his school. Still, he encouraged himself by saying, "Since I've come all the way to Japan, I have to learn something," and he would gather himself together and head to school while feeling conflicted. He didn't understand a single thing in class. When would he be able to get out of this situation?

While all of this was happening, he found some escape routes. One was gaming, a world in which he immersed himself at home. Another was the guitar. He loved practicing the guitar his

parents had gifted him. The third was anime, which provided an inroad for learning about school life and conversing with others. In the third year of junior high school, he finally made friends in the ping-pong club. Naka International Lounge's study support class was the only place where he could spend time with others who were in the same situation.

He spent his three years in junior high school desperately learning Japanese. In high school, he was finally able to understand class lectures. Adults say that "children learn Japanese in a flash," but this is not necessarily true. Each day is a long and overwhelming time of frantic struggle. I clearly remember his tone when he said, "Why didn't they let me study Japanese before I came to Japan?" as if he were appealing to his parents.

Next year, JP will take the entrance exam for a university in the Philippines. He followed his parents to Japan, but doesn't really feel that he belongs here. This is his decision as an 18-year-old adult. He will probably use the six years he spent in Japan as a springboard for his international career.

(Naka International Lounge staff member)

Good to Know! About Japanese Culture

七五三 (Shichi-Go-San)

An introduction to seasonal events and the foods and decorations associated with them



Shichi-Go-San is a rite of **passage in celebration of a child's healthy growth.** It is generally held on November 15 when a boy is three and five years old, and when a girl is three and seven. Families dress their children in kimonos called "*haregi*" and visit a shrine to celebrate the child's growth and pray for their long life.

At Shichi-Go-San, it is customary to eat long, thin stick-shaped candy called "**Chitose Ame,**" which means "thousand-year" (longevity) candy. The candy is made by stretching, so it is said to be a lucky charm that represents the wish for the **child to live a long and healthy life.** The rectangular bag that the candy is placed in is also distinctive. It has decorative picture of lucky things in Japan such as a pine tree, bamboo, a plum tree, a crane, and a turtle, a gorgeous design perfect for celebrations.



We are always looking for locations to distribute *Naka Ward Town News*. If you have many foreign visitors to your shop, clinic, organization, etc. and would like to make this newsletter available to them, please contact us at 045-224-8123 to arrange delivery. The next issue will be published on January 1.