

Message from the Director

Time certainly flies, and CRN will mark its fifteenth year this spring. A number of successful conferences made this past year an exciting one for academic exchange. CRN co-hosted the Sixth Annual Child Science Conference of the Japanese Society of Child Science on September 12 and 13, and the Fourth Conference of Child Science Exchange Program in East Asia on September 11. We were pleased to welcome researchers from China and South Korea and introduce the activities of the Japanese Society of Child Science and CRN. The Fifth Conference of Child Science Exchange Program in East Asia was held in Shanghai on November 2 and 3.

Children will always be at risk, anywhere and anytime, unless we follow their emotional, intellectual and physical growth with gentle concern and from the perspective of child-caring design. To solve the problems children face today, we need to bring together researchers and practitioners in a wide range of fields. In particular, comparative studies of countries, peoples, cultures and even different eras will certainly yield significant and effective results that will make a difference.

In 2010, CRN will further develop its website content, paying special attention to our English language and Chinese language sites to expand our international capabilities. We hope that you will continue to support us in the year ahead.



Noboru Kobayashi
Director,
Child Research Net

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Report on the Child Science Exchange Program in East Asia

The 4th Conference of Child Science Exchange Program in East Asia was held in September 2009 at Ochanomizu University, Tokyo, Japan, and the 5th Conference of Child Science Exchange Program in East Asia was held in East China Normal University, Shanghai, China in November 2009. For details, see page 2 and 3.

What is the Child Science Exchange Program in East Asia?



Inaugurated in Shanghai in November 2007, this exchange program has held five conferences as of 2009. Past conference reports are available on the CRN website.

<http://www.childresearch.net/RESOURCE/PRES/EN/index.html>

Objective

This program aims to promote a wider understanding of Child Science through research exchange. Its particular focus is child-rearing, child care, and early childhood education with a view to solving the problems of children and improving the environment in which they live.

- Sponsored by Child Research Net (CRN)
- Supported by Benesse Corporation and Benesse Institute for the Child Sciences and Parenting

What is Child Research Net (CRN)?

- CRN is a research institute based on the interdisciplinary perspective of Child Science. Through our internet-based network and research activities, including symposia and lectures, we communicate with researchers and institutes around the world to solve the problems faced by children today.



Report on the 4th Conference

(September 11, 2009; Ochanomizu University, Tokyo, Japan)

●Theme

Language Development and Neuroscience: Research and Practice in East Asia

●Speakers and Presenters

Noboru Kobayashi (Director, CRN; Professor Emeritus, The University of Tokyo); Hideaki Koizumi, (Fellow, Hitachi, Ltd.), Jiaxiong Zhu (Professor, East China Normal University); Yong Jiang (Assistant Professor, East China Normal University), Minghong Zhang (Assistant Professor, East China Normal University), Nobuko Uchida (Professor, Ochanomizu University); Ki Sook Lee, (Professor, Ewha Womans University); Nianli Zhou (Assistant Professor, East China Normal University), and Yoichi Sakakihara (Professor, Ochanomizu University). ※In order of presentation

Speakers and Presentations

●Second Language Acquisition as a Foreign Language and Neuroscience



Hideaki Koizumi

With globalization, not only has second-language acquisition become essential for communication, but it has also become a central social concern. What is the situation in Japan? Does neuroscience offer effective learning methods? This presentation focused on problem areas in English-language education in Japan and pointed out that learners in Japan lack the necessary “passion” that it takes to learn English.

●Early Reading in the Kindergarten Curriculum



Jiaxiong Zhu

The presentation “Fish is Fish” addressed the importance and effect of early reading in Chinese kindergartens, which involves reading picture books and texts. Using two different interpretations and deductive reasoning to analyze a children’s story, Professor Zhu gave concrete examples of the theory and practice of early children education in Western and Asian countries.

●Cultural Conditions of Kindergarten Teachers in Shanghai



Yong Jiang

Improving the teaching skills of kindergarten teachers raises the quality of early childhood education. Taking the view that teaching skills are primarily cultural factors, this presentation reported on the findings of a survey of 304 teachers in 13 districts in Shanghai.

●The Design and Practice of Early Reading Education in Chinese Kindergartens



Minghong Zhang

Early reading education in kindergarten has yielded remarkable results. Particularly interesting was the importance given to incorporating Chinese culture into the curriculum, learning Chinese characters and the written language, and fostering critical thinking in children.

Symposium

The Influence of Socio-cultural Factors on Literacy Acquisition in Young Children: A Comparative Study of Japan, South Korea, and China

Organizer: Yoichi Sakakihara

Panelists: Nobuko Uchida, Ki Sook Lee, and Nianli Zhou



This symposium was the first public presentation of joint research by Ochanomizu University (Japan), Ewha Womans University (South Korea), East China Normal University (China) and Benesse Institute of the Child Sciences and Parenting.

This research focused on the relation between language development and disciplinary styles. Japan and South Korea both showed reliance on the three following types of disciplinary styles: shared-experiential (communication, enjoying and sharing the child’s experience), coercive (adult-centered, top-down discipline or the use of coercion), and self-sacrificing (child-raising as highly burdensome and characterized by two extremes, either anxiety or lack of discipline). In Japan and South Korea, children raised in the shared-experiential disciplinary style had a rich vocabulary.

By contrast, the three disciplinary styles in China could be classified as: shared-harmonious type (parent-child relationship based on shared emotion and harmony), shared-strict (shared emotion, but strict parental discipline), and distant-disregard. These categories reflected the different parental expectations and child-rearing views within the context of the one-child policy.

Report on the 5th Conference

(November 2 and 3; East China Normal University, Shanghai, China)

●Theme

The Child Science of Emotion

●Speakers and Presenters

Noboru Kobayashi (Director, CRN; Professor Emeritus, The University of Tokyo); Jiaxiong Zhu (Professor, East China Normal University); Tomio Watanabe (Professor, Faculty of Computer Science & System Engineering, Okayama Prefectural University); Toshiya Yamamoto (Professor, Waseda University); Yuehua Shen (Doctor, Shanghai International Peace Maternal and Child Health Hospital), Nianli Zhou (Assistant Professor, East China Normal University), Aihua Hua (Assistant Professor, East China Normal University); Masako Tanimura (Director, Department of Maternal and Child Health, Research Institute, National Center for Child Health and Development). ※In order of presentation

Day-1

Why have Human Beings Evolved a Mind? - Considerations on the Triune Theory of the Brain



Noboru Kobayashi

From the perspective of human evolution and the triune brain theory, why have human beings evolved a mind? The programs of instinct and the emotional brain are the basis for the rational brain and are important to child development. Encouraging positive emotions and feeling joy are critical in activating the programs of intelligence and reason.

Research and Practice in Early Mental Health Education in China



Jiaxiong Zhu

This report was a study of a mental health education program in kindergartens in Shanghai. Results indicate that such programs can effectively enhance children's communication skills and problem-solving ability.

Human-Entrained Embodied Interaction and Communication



Tomio Watanabe

Professor Watanabe introduced E-COSMIC, a human-entrained communication system. Building on his discoveries over two decades ago that infants respond to rhythm even when they are too small to understand language, this project is part of his ongoing work on robots capable of human communication. The audience was captivated by Pekoppa, a new artificial plant developed with this entrained technology.

Comparative study of ownership behavior in Japan and China: when do children become "Chinese" ?



Toshiya Yamamoto

A discussion with Chinese and Japanese university students after watching the Chinese film "Not One Less" by Zhang Yimou revealed clear differences in communication and views on ownership and ethics. According to research, significant differences in views on ownership can be noted from age two.

Baby Massage and Attachment Research



Yuehua Shen

This report on the relation between body massage for babies and attachment indicates that massage can be an effective means for babies to develop the ability to control and adjust the emotions.

Parental Expectations and Psychological Development of Children (ages 1-6): A Study of 3000 Children in 11 Cities in China



Nianli Zhou

This presentation introduced the results of a large-scale survey of parents with children ages 1-6 in 11 cities across China. Parental awareness is shifting from a sole preoccupation with scholastic achievement to concern for developing social skills, leadership, cognitive ability, and independence. Regional differences were also highlighted.

Day-2

Children's play from the perspective of education



Aihua Hua

In recent years, education reforms in China have made "play" a part of the kindergarten curriculum, stressing its educational importance. Pointing out that "play for education purposes" and "play" are fundamentally different, this presentation examined the meaning of genuine play and its role in education.

Infants are Interested in People



Masako Tanimura

This presentation was based on a study of infants from 3 to 24 months in 1987 and their reaction to TV. Given the high interest in both China and Japan in the influence of the mass media on infants, there were many questions from the audience.

●Japan Good Toy Exhibition

This Japan Good Toy Exhibition was the second in China, following the first held last year at Zhejiang Normal University, Hangzhou College of Preschool Teacher Education.

In organizing this show, Mr. Chihiro Tada, Director of the Tokyo Toy Museum supervised the selection of past recipients of the Good Toy Award, a prize given in Japan to excellent toys. The toys were selected on the basis of how well they cultivated the mind and body in fostering the imagination, curiosity about nature and science, sensitivity to music and art, athletic ability, and communication skills. The exhibition attracted educators, researchers, and students from all over China, and toys with imaginative power were especially popular.



New Website Page

Early Childhood Education (ECEC) around the World (Posted on our Japanese, English and Chinese sites!!)

In 2001 and 2006, the OECD published *Starting Strong (II)*, a report based on comparative analysis of childhood education in OECD member countries. Now understood as crucial to the quality of later life, early childhood development and education are increasingly becoming a key component of government policy. Responding to this growing interest, CRN's *ECEC around the World* analyzes and reports on early childhood education in three languages in 23 countries and 2 regions from the perspective of researchers around the world. Early childhood education is strongly influenced by the national context, culture, and language. These articles provide a critical look at early education in one's country and instructive developments elsewhere.

- English: [ECEC around the World]
<http://www.childresearch.net/PROJECT/ECEC/index.html>
- Japanese: [世界の幼児教育レポート]
<http://www.blog.crn.or.jp/lab/01/>
- Chinese: [世界学前教育報告]
<http://www.crn.net.cn/eccec/index.html>



In English

[Monthly Articles on Children]

Here you'll find the latest news, timely topics, and conference reports by researchers and CRN staff. Recently, Dr. Kobayashi, CRN Director, has written about the Orange Ribbon Relay to Prevent Child Abuse, a campaign conducted by the Children's Rainbow Center,

where he serves as director of the organizing committee.

[Research Papers]

Researchers and educators from around the world share their research and findings here. A three-part series, "Learning to Question: Children's University Kawagoe," follows the development of Japan's first Children's University from its founding to the first day of class. "Teacher Quality: National Trends in Teacher Policy" addresses the difficulty of defining teacher quality and the importance of working to raise it.

[Presentations]

Material on symposia, seminars, and conferences related to Child Science and CRN. Recent additions include the lectures and addresses from the first three Conferences of Child Science Exchange Program in East Asia in 2007-2008.

[Essays]

These essays, both educational and fun to read, cover trends and a wide range of topics popular with young people today. Sarah Ogawa, a teacher at Doshisha International Junior/Senior High School contributes "Free Talking" and "Why Not Read?" with tips on how to improve English conversation and reading skills.

[Teens' Photo Project]

Teenagers contribute photographs on their everyday life here and now.

Other language sites

<Japanese-language site>

[Research Lab]

● Children and the Media

How do children adapt to the rapid developments of the information age? How are they changing? This section offers research findings on children and the media that will help us learn from them.

[Papers and Reports]

● The Future of Children

A wide-range of issues from the perspective of Child Science

● The Brain and Education

Dr. Noboru Kobayashi, CRN Director reviews articles from the journal *Mind, Brain, and Education (MBE)*, introducing important topics and offering commentary.

● Viewpoint

A compilation of views from professionals and specialists in child education, child care, education, etc.

● Education for the Net Generation

Reports on education necessary for the internet generation

● (Serialized) The Everyday Pediatrician Neuroscience of Child-rearing

Starting in 2008, this pediatrician and father of four children has written a series of over 40 articles on neuroscience and child-rearing.

<Chinese-language site>

[Child Health Counseling]

Advice on child health and child-raising

[Vaccinations]

Information on vaccinations

[Research on Informal Preschool Education]

Research on informal preschool education provided by volunteers for children of migrant workers

[News]

Latest news about children, related events and information

Societies and Conferences

■ Japanese Society of Child Science — 2009 Report

"Children, the Environment, and Neuroscience," the Sixth Conference of the Japanese Society of Child Science, was held on September 12-13, 2009 at Ochanomizu University, Tokyo.

Program

Day 1 Sept. 12 (Sat)

Opening Address: Noboru Kobayashi, Representative, Japanese Society of Child Science
Keynote Address: Masuko Honda, former President and Professor Emeritus, Ochanomizu University
Symposium1: Early Childhood Education Now
Symposium2: The Past, Present, and Future of Children's Games

Day 2 Sept. 13 (Sun)

Symposium1: What is Quality Child-Caring?
Symposium2: Creating Dependable Information Environments to Support Child-Raising
Discussion: Wolf Girl did not Exist
Kotaro Suzuki, Professor, Niigata University
Nobuko Uchida, Professor, Ochanomizu University
Yoichi Sakakihara, Professor, Ochanomizu University



Upcoming Publications

■ Report on the Child Science Exchange Program in East Asia (March 2010)

This booklet is an important compilation of the two conferences and their activities in 2009. Coming soon!

