

Examining Early Childhood English Education Through the University - Kindergarten Program: Pursuing Field - Friendly Practice

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Introduction

In Japan, the debate over how to enhance English education is advancing, and there is progress toward an early start to English education. In order to create an educational environment that responds to globalization at the elementary and secondary education stages, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) is working to expand and strengthen English education in elementary schools and improve English education in junior and senior high schools. On December 13, 2013, the “English Education Reform Implementation Plan,” which aims to drastically improve English education, was announced ¹⁾. After that, MEXT’s curriculum guideline was announced in 2017. English as a foreign language course was introduced as a subject in the 5th and 6th grades (upper grades) of elementary education, and foreign language activities were introduced in the 3rd and 4th grades (middle grades). From now on, it is assumed that communication skills in foreign languages will be required for various situations throughout life. Therefore, it is important to improve communication skills, deepen understanding of languages and cultures through foreign languages, and acquire the ability to accurately understand and appropriately convey information and ideas ²⁾. Above all, English at the primary level of education is required to make foreign languages more familiar to elementary school students, increase

motivation to learn foreign languages by making them a subject, and to connect them to the secondary level.

To have concrete enhancement of foreign language education while emphasizing consistent learning at elementary, junior high, and high schools, educators provide support by developing new teaching materials, improving training, enhancing specialized instruction, and utilizing external human resources. In the middle grades of elementary school, the goal is to cultivate the foundation of communication skills centered on listening and speaking, while respecting the diversity of languages and cultural backgrounds and considering others through foreign languages. It is said that the homeroom teacher will mainly provide instruction centered on team teaching that makes more active use of ALTs (Assistant Language Teachers) once a week. In the upper grades, there are about two classes per week. Here, communication skills are cultivated through “foreign language activities” in middle grades. Students are taught to respect the diversity of foreign language and the culture behind it, and listen while being considerate of other people. In addition to speaking, the goal is to cultivate basic communication skills, including the development of attitudes in reading and writing. ALTs will be used more actively.

In this way, early English education is being implemented, but what about early childhood education (pre-school education)? Looking at the

Kindergarten Curriculum Guidelines and Nursery School Childcare Guidelines, there is no clear reference to “foreign language education.” From this, it can be seen that foreign language education at the early childhood education stage is not actively considered at present. However, the Kindergarten Curriculum Standards and the Elementary, Junior High, and High School Curriculum Standards state that it is important to “smoothly connect the school levels” such as kindergarten, elementary, junior, and junior high school in order to “enhance consistent learning in elementary and secondary education.” Therefore, it is important to be aware of the smooth cooperation and connection between the early childhood education stage and the elementary education stage. In fact, along with the early introduction of English education in elementary schools, there is an increasing demand for English education in early childhood education, and the current situation is that English programs are being implemented not only in kindergartens but also in nursery schools.

In order to better grasp these specific circumstances, we would like to take an overview of the situation surrounding early childhood education in Japan. As the demand for nursery schools grows, the unification of kindergartens and nursery schools has created a new environment for early childhood education, namely certified centers for early childhood education and care. A new movement has also begun in early childhood education, which is extended childcare after regular daycare hours. While efforts are being made to improve the long-standing problem of children on waiting lists, the decline in the number of children due to the declining birthrate has had a major impact on early childhood education³⁾. For that reason, each kindergarten puts emphasis on special activities (extracurricular activities) as one of the points of appeal to parents, and among them, many kindergartens incorporate English-related

activities. Some people interpret this movement as an effort to express the concerns of parents. There is also a survey result that in response to the early adoption of English education, the number of children enrolled in nursery schools and kindergartens that actually incorporate English education is increasing, even though the number of children decreases⁴⁾. In other words, even in the field of early childhood education, the approach to English education is regarded as a feature of the kindergarten and is regarded as one of the conditions when parents decide where to enroll their children. In many cases, the class is initiated by native speakers, and English-language play is the mainstream, but there are various specific implementation methods and program types⁵⁾. It is somewhat difficult to describe English education in the field of early childhood education in a few words. This is probably different from English in the curriculum of primary education. From what we have said so far, when thinking about English education in the future, it is important to take into consideration the linkage and connection of the educational stages. However, at the early childhood education stage, there are a wide variety of practice formats, and it can be seen that the implementation bodies are mainly outsourced and tutored mainly by native teachers.

What should be considered in order to implement meaningful English education at the early childhood education stage in preparation for the possibility of further early English education in the future? In particular, we think it is necessary to examine aspects related to early childhood education in Japan and the nursery teachers and kindergarten teachers who are the bearers of that.

There are several streams of thought in early childhood education in Japan, and each has its own method⁶⁾. In practice, however, rather than mechanically applying the method at each school, it is often the case that they carefully captured each child’s behavior and development stage and applied

those method flexibly. As for the specific content and methods, each school stimulates each other and incorporates the other's good points, and each kindergarten's method of early childhood education is established. However, there are some kindergartens that stick to one form and are stuck in their own ways without trying new methods. In other words, although the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology and the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare indicate the general direction of early childhood education and childcare, the details are left up to each institution that implements childcare. As a result, childcare forms diversify, making it difficult to incorporate them into the curriculum. In light of this, it is important to consider English activities that take advantage of the nursery school style and characteristics of the kindergarten, so that the children will be familiar with Japanese early childhood education. However, it is difficult to achieve this by outsourcing, which is currently the mainstream, so it is necessary to increase the involvement of nursery teachers and kindergarten teachers in English education.

In order for English education to be effective not only at the early childhood education stage, but at other educational stages as well, it is essential to improve the teaching skills of on-site teachers. It has been pointed out that the hurdles are very high. In response to the early adoption of English education, surveys of elementary school teacher's awareness of English have shown that teachers in charge of foreign language activities at elementary schools have various concerns. They are concerned about things such as the teacher's English ability and teaching ability, teaching experience, cross-cultural experience, and understanding of the essence of elementary school English education⁷⁾. It can be seen that it is formed by various factors. What is common to much of the related research results is the fact that teachers are particularly concerned about teaching methods and the English

ability of teachers themselves. It has been pointed out as an issue for many years. Related research has been conducted towards the introduction of systematic English education. Based on the findings of that research, it is not hard to imagine that the current situation and problems in elementary schools may also occur in early childhood education in the future.

For this reason, when considering effective English education at the early childhood education stage, the points to keep in mind are to design a program that is easy to adapt to, based on the characteristics of the childcare format of the kindergarten. It is to enhance the teacher support system that considers psychological hurdles while increasing the involvement of teachers in the field.

Therefore, the purpose of this this paper is to examine how teachers can take the lead in implementing childcare while making the most of the kindergarten's childcare style through analyzing the English program promoted by the collaboration between Koka kindergarten and Kyoto Koka Women's University. This paper is positioned as a preparatory study to verify the effect of English education in kindergarten and to propose a more optimal practice. For this reason, this paper mainly aims to reflect on the design and practice of the kindergarten- university collaboration program and draw provisional suggestions.

The structure of this paper is as follows: Section 1 outlines the kindergarten-university English program and grasps its purpose and implementation status. Next, in Section 2, we will examine the practices discussed in Section 1, extract the factors that make them more friendly to the field and increase the independence of the leaders, and connect them to proposals for desirable practices.

In addition, this paper is a study related only to the field of education, and does not include information that can identify personal information such as children, teachers, parents, etc..

I . The University-Kindergarten Program

In the 2021-2022 school year, the University and Kindergarten Collaboration Program was launched. With the successful implementation of the program during that school-year, It was decided to continue in 2022-2023. The University has been tasked with finding and utilizing effective English language classes at all levels at Kyoto Koka, beginning with kindergarten and running through elementary, junior high school, high school and the university. All levels at Kyoto Koka are beginning to adopt a comprehensive curriculum and methodology to better coordinate the English Education at all levels. The program in this paper is the first piece of a larger program that the university is beginning to implement into the other levels beyond kindergarten as well. It was decided that kindergarten would naturally be the best place to begin implementation of this new integrated English education program.

There is one native English teacher who is responsible for the native English classes at the kindergarten as well as the elementary and junior high school. This ALT was a key component who worked closely with two university teachers who are authors of this paper.

Currently, the main ALT teaches three to four classes every Wednesday to all ages of kindergarteners. The youngest grades only get two or three shorter lessons a term but the higher grades get one 20 minute lesson almost every week. With the beginning of this collaboration program, two researchers, one with a TEYL (Teaching English to Young Learners) research background and the other who is a native speaker of English with a long experience in TEYL, joined most of the main ALT's lessons to team-teach and see to the implementation of the new program.

Table 1. Kindergarten Student Class Details

age	number of classes (groups of students)	number of lessons per term	class length
5	3	10	20 minutes
4	3	3	15 minutes
3	3	2	10 minutes

Source: Author.

In the past, the kindergarten classes were more traditionally taught with a series of English flashcards, songs, and games. This style of English education does teach new words and the fun aspects of class instill interest in English and the desire to learn more. However, that has the potential to be a shallower and more basic form of learning. Flashcards can teach words that may not have direct associations with each other or situational context. The new teaching program is focused mostly on LBS, "Learning By Storytelling" through picture books. LBS is an integrated four-skills English communication method starting with reading English picture books and has been studied since 2018, starting with the JES Project Research. The LBS method is an instructional method to improve literacy in reading and writing as well as to develop communicative competence in English starting with reading English picture books to students in Japanese elementary school. As reading picture books has been one of the major activities in the kindergarten, teachers are already familiar with storytelling strategies though it's all in Japanese.

Table 2. Class Activity Outline

story: Taokyoaki Boy					
class	opening song	activities			closing song
1	Color Song	ALTs act Takoyaki Boy.	Teach key words.	Teachers quickly review the story with key words.	Color Song
2	Color Song	ALTs act Takoyaki Boy.	Review key words.	Students, as a group, organize story cards on the board in the order of the story.	Color Song
3	Mary Had a Little Lamb	ALTs act Takoyaki Boy.	In small groups students organize story cards in the order of the story.	Students and teachers check accuracy together.	Mary Had a Little Lamb
4	Mary Had a Little Lamb	ALTs act Takoyaki Boy.	In small groups students act the story with guidance from the teacher.		Mary Had a Little Lamb
5	Mary Had a Little Lamb	ALTs act Takoyaki Boy.	Volunteer students act the story in front of the class.		Mary Had a Little Lamb

Source: Author.

Training the kindergarten staff is an important element to this program so that they are able to continue this storytelling practice in the future after the university teachers have moved on to the next stage in the program. Training the homeroom teachers in LBS storytelling began after the teachers had some experience observing this style of teaching during that first year. Two special training sessions were held for the Kindergarten teachers at the university.

The first step of that training was teaching how children learn English as their second language. Following that, the kindergarten teachers had a chance to take a look at all the popular picture books, some of which are already translated into Japanese and widely read among children. In the

second session, they saw a storybook reading demonstration with an ALT.

The trainers demonstrated how the homeroom teacher can ask the native teacher about new vocabulary words. The native teacher can repeat new or complex key words so students can learn through repetition. The homeroom teacher can anticipate words they expect that the students wouldn't know and pause the story.

“Crouch? What does crouch mean?”

The ALT would physically demonstrate a crouch here. This serves two purposes. Not only does it facilitate the student's learning of new words but it also models how to ask about words you don't understand. It shows how questions are rewarded with deeper understanding and are not something to hesitate to ask. The teacher would pause the story to ask the audience what they thought might happen next. Finally there was a quiz activity to check student's understanding and memory.

After the demonstration, the Kindergarten teachers were split into groups of 4 and given two books “From Head to Toe” by Eric Carle and “Go Away, Big Green Monster” by Ed Emberly.

In those groups the teachers took turns reading the stories to their peers, demonstrating the techniques they had just seen. Finally there was time for peer feedback and comments from the trainers.

Because the teachers had the opportunity to learn the principles of LBS and take action to use those techniques in an open, helpful learning setting, the workshop was successful in helping the homeroom teachers to be more comfortable with English storytelling and the valuable and effective teaching principles of LBS.

The following are some of those principles of content based teaching.

One way picture books engage learners is by setting a colorful scene. They present a contextual situation that students will be able to relate to. This context will show them where and how

English can be used.

Storybooks introduce characters who create opportunities for English greetings, introductions and simple everyday conversation expressions.

These characters act and react in emotional ways and use English expressions that the students can absorb by listening to the story. This also gives students the opportunity to connect the content of these situations to their own experiences. They can easily translate the meaning of new words from a situation using their own situational knowledge. The story is teaching the English. The teacher is facilitating that story's teaching.

Having one or more ALTs is very advantageous to this kind of LBS because they can add dramatic intonation and cadence which demonstrates natural pronunciation of language. English tone and word usage can change depending on the emotion of a scene. A student can use the teacher's movements and facial expressions to further draw meaning from the story and use those clues to translate the meaning of these new words themselves.

For example, students now have the experience of seeing a sad character acting and speaking in a sad way. The student will have a reference point on how to speak and act in the future should a sad situation arise in their own experience.

On the surface, all these different elements can seem too complex to younger learners or those who have a very limited understanding of English. The university's program has carefully selected stories that are not only entertaining, but have very basic English expressions that are appropriate to these young learners.

Teachers who select their own text for this style of teaching should take great care to think about the language content as well as story length and complexity, when considering use for the classroom. Many children's stories have a lot of repetition built into the story and repetition is valuable to learning new language. In "The Three Little Pigs," the

characters repeat the same greetings, challenge, defiance, and shock over a series of interactions.

Generally, at Koka Kindergarten, the two native English speaking teachers take turns reading a narrative or take the role of different characters to clearly simulate dialogue and situations from the chosen story.

In order to add more depth to the listener's experience there are a number of educational techniques utilized to encourage the students to think and connect more to the language of the story.

Here are a few examples:

While going through the story, teachers stop sometimes to ask the students to look at what is happening in the moment and guess what will happen next.

"The yellow rabbit is jumping into the blue paint. What color do you think it will change to?"

After some stories there is a quiz asking students to remember details of the story.

"What color was the horse?"

Sometimes the teacher gives hints for the student to guess what is coming to the next page.

"The next animal can fly."

After the students have been presented with the full story the teachers will then proceed to review some thematic vocabulary words that are appropriate to the student's levels. The vocabulary chosen is related to the content of the storybook chosen and the language theme of that class. Past themes for these kindergarten classes have been colors, animals, movement verbs, etc.

There is usually a follow-up activity where the students speak or identify something or move around based on the vocabulary of that lesson. Usually, the same vocabulary is utilized for a few classes and the same storybook is read a few times to increase familiarity of understanding and repetition of the new words. The second or third lesson with a theme may put those vocabulary into

simple sentences or questions to expand their use.

The most important element of LBS is that the teacher isn't just reading the story but there needs to be a lot of student interaction. English input is important to student's learning but they need to have the opportunity to speak and react and move and use the English from the story.

It is helpful to have stories with slightly complex narratives. These are stories with characters talking to each other in simple dialogues. These are stories with a clear beginning, middle and end. This creates opportunities to utilize specific types of activities with these complex stories. One example is giving students picture cards and asking them to lay out the cards in the order they occur in the story. As they become more familiar and comfortable with the language, students can put on mini-plays in smaller groups or take turns in front of the whole class, where different students say the simple English lines or a speak as a specific character.

It isn't important for students to be able to recite a complete, memorized story at this point but just be able to use some basic expressions and key terms from the story, enough to give the narrative, the beginning, the middle and the end.

The following is a detailed lesson plan of one story and the activities utilized in the LBS methodology in order to build understanding and familiarity and to model the ways in which students would eventually be able to use the language themselves to tell the story.

LBS has a series of 5 steps in it's basic strategy⁸⁾.

1. Story telling interactively
2. Sequence check - put the pictures in order as a class activity
3. Sequence check - as a group activity
4. Re-telling
5. Dramatizing

The above class schedule was designed following this strategy.

II. Consideration

1. Features of the Study

One of the unique features of this study was having experts in teaching English to young learners visiting kindergarten sites to examine the current situation and issues, and then developing and proposing a new program.

The first part of this process was teacher training for kindergarten teachers. Prior to this practice, all instruction and curricula were left to native English teachers, who only taught the kindergarten pupils their English classes for 10 or 20 min. per week. The visiting teachers did this to understand the content of the program before becoming involved in the curriculum. Some teachers, although experienced in teaching kindergarteners, avoided talking to native English teachers and even avoided eye contact with them because they felt they were not good enough English speakers themselves.

In other words, English instruction was not integrated into kindergarten instruction, but rather was positioned as an independent entertainment for the children, with teachers monitoring from behind and assisting children who could not participate in the activities. The primary purpose of the training was to eliminate teachers' concerns about such English instruction, and to further deepen their understanding of early English education.

During training sessions, based on the latest findings in early English education, the teachers who usually know the actual situation of the children best could play a role as T2s in Team Teaching. Following the lecture, a workshop was held using storytelling in picture books, which are very familiar to kindergarten teachers, and simulating teaching scenarios.

As a result of these training sessions, moving forward, the homeroom teachers began to sit next to the T1, native teacher at least during the English

picture book storytelling time. When necessary, the teacher would ask questions to the T1 in English, point out pictures and paraphrase them in simple English so that the children could understand, rather than translating them into Japanese.

The kindergarten teachers, who until now had not been active in the class due to anxiety about the native teachers' lack of understanding of English, gradually began to be involved in English instruction, making use of their daily teaching skills, by proposing their position as a "bridge" to the children's understanding of English.

Second, we attempted to revise the content of instruction. There are many leading foreign textbooks in early English, and we have seen many kindergartens and other schools using these textbooks as the basis for instruction, such as learning many English expressions and vocabulary through TPR instruction using their bodies, and using songs and chants to familiarize themselves with English sounds, rhythm, and intonation, which are different from those of Japanese. Some of these instructional methods are also found here and there. Considering the developmental stage of children, as we have already seen in conventional instruction, kindergarteners love singing and physical activities, so 15 or 20 minutes of instruction often ends up being enough time for such activities. That said, once-a-week instruction was considered too limited as an English input time. One improvement measure was to place sound files in the classroom so that kindergarten teachers would have the opportunity to listen to the sound files repeatedly between English lessons, making full use of ICT.

In addition, we proposed that the instructional content should include many opportunities for the children to actually "think" and speak English as their own language. Examples of such activities include a memory quiz after reading a picture book, in which students are asked the names of the animals in the book and what the animals did,

questions about color mixing, and activities in which students tell each other what they like in English.

The teachers also suggested that the students should be given tasks such as "Tell us your favorite dishes," "Make a page for your original picture book," or "Draw a monster," and that they should learn the necessary vocabulary from native speakers during the English class, and then the homeroom teachers should do the arts and crafts during the regular kindergarten activities and finally present their work to the English class. The teacher then created the arts and crafts during the regular kindergarten activities and presented them to the English class at the end of the unit.

Through these activities, the teachers not only aimed for students to be able to say the names of colors and animals in English, but also to gradually promote a common understanding among the native English speaking teachers and kindergarten teachers through language activities such as how to express thoughts and meaningful interactions in English.

The third point was the use of the LBS method as part of the instruction, which we explained in Section 2 in detail.

In this study, the main target group was older children, and since there was no significant age gap between the older children and the younger children who are the target of LBS instruction, we thought it would be possible to implement the method with kindergarten children by adjusting the instructional method accordingly. The following six pillars of instruction are considered to be applicable to kindergartners, although they are not yet at the level of (3) and (4), which are related to phonograms.

- (1) Take advantage of situations! [Importance of context].
- (2) Start with what the child knows! [Use of children's existing knowledge]
- (3) Value the connection between sound, meaning,

and spelling! [From phonetic training to textual instruction.]

- (4) The first step to reading in English!
- (5) Learning together is important!
- (6) Evaluate in a way that children can understand! [Visualization of evaluation criteria]

The topics that can be covered in English are limited for kindergarten children, who are still inexperienced and the world around them is also limited due to their age. For such learners, activities that draw them into the world of a story and have them express their thoughts and feelings in fantasy, or become the main character and say the lines, as mentioned in (1) and (2) above, are often used in early English language instruction. It is also clear from elementary school practice that the younger the students are in grade, the more actively they tend to engage in these activities. Therefore, in the kindergarten instructional program, the goal of the unit was to have the students pretend to be the characters in a play and speak their lines (in English). The instructional flow, as described in the practice, consisted of reading the story to the students, sequencing scenes, retelling, and presenting the play as a communicative activity.

What all three of the above-mentioned features have in common is that they are all things that kindergarten teachers practice in their everyday early childhood education, and the proposals emphasize the use of picture books, crafts, and dramatic presentations in a way that is reasonable and sustainable.

2. Implications of the Study

Through this research, we strongly felt the need for kindergarten teachers to take the lead in curriculum management, rather than a system that requires native English-speaking teachers and specialists from beginning to end.

In addition, parents' perspectives on English

education in preschools cannot be ignored there. Parents' interest in English education is extremely high in accordance with the introduction of English as a school subject in elementary schools. As this has become a key factor in the selection of kindergartens, it is imperative that not only kindergarten teachers but also parents be held accountable for their understanding of the goals they aim to achieve through their practice.

The lectures on early English education given by university experts following the parent-teacher visits that were held this time could be a model of support through collaboration between kindergartens and universities, in that the university experts will be responsible for what cannot be explained by the kindergarten side.

In the midst of the spread of immersion education for kindergarten children, such as aiming for early English acquisition and, in extreme cases, aiming for speaking by attending international kindergartens where all instruction is conducted in English, there is a need to sincerely research and implement the most necessary instruction that meets the developmental needs of Japanese children. In the field of kindergarten education, where research and practice are conducted, a major issue for the future is how to position English instruction and incorporate the most appropriate instruction for the children in front of them. The most effective aspect of this program was the use of storytelling, a method of reading and storytelling that has long existed in kindergartens, to train teachers, thereby lowering the hurdle for teachers to become involved in English instruction, and the incorporation of this instruction into the curriculum. It can be said that the project has provided one suggestion for English language teaching methods within the framework of Japanese early childhood education, based on its structure and teaching methods.

Conclusion

So far, we have considered the program promoted by the collaboration between Koka Kindergarten and Kyoto Koka Women's University, and examined the way of practice that can be more field-friendly and enhance the independence of teachers.

We were able to come to the conclusion that this could be one of the ways to increase sustainability to provide a program that considers children, teachers, and parents after having specialists in early English education go to the frontline of early childhood education and fully understand their practice at the kindergarten.

Based on this viewpoint, we suggest the items listed below.

(1) Building a support model through cooperation between kindergartens and universities.

An early English education specialist from a university provides contents and methods that can continue without difficulty, through proposing a curriculum that combines English with what kindergarten teachers usually practice in early childhood education (picture books, crafts, play, etc.). In addition, setting lectures on early childhood English education for the parents multiple times by the specialist will help fulfill accountability toward parents and gain their support.

(2) Conditions for successful practice

Regular practice of teacher training: As part of regular instruction, we repeat training in which teachers, who are familiar with the actual situation of children, can take on the role of "intermediary" by participating in team teaching with native teachers. With this, they can gradually increase the main role of English teaching while making use of their daily teaching skills.

Curriculum review: By connecting other activities such as English and arts and crafts with related curricula and conducting theme-based

learning, it becomes possible to provide consistent instruction while arousing learner's interest.

Introduction of a teaching method that is conscious of the connection of educational stages:

By implementing a teaching method for developing 4-skills-integrated English communication ability through "reading and speaking (*yomikatari*) picture books" at the early childhood stage, it will be possible to guide with an awareness of connection to the next educational stage smoothly.

Further study is needed to objectively identify the effects of long-term practice through qualitative and quantitative surveys of related parties and analyze changes in children and teachers from both aspects. By doing so, we will be able to find clues regarding early childhood English education that takes into account the developmental stages of Japanese children and a secure implementation method.

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幼大連携プログラムを通じた早期英語教育に関する考察

－現場のニーズを踏まえた実践のあり方を求めて－

全 京 和・田 縁 真 弓・ザックストリックランド

日本では初等教育段階における英語教育の早期化に向けた積極的な動きが見られている。幼児教育（就学前教育）段階においても、英語教育の要望は増加の傾向にあり、幼稚園のみならず保育園においても英語に関するプログラムが実施されている。しかし、その実践形式は多岐に渡り、実施主体も外部委託やネイティブ教員が中心といった現状がある。そこで本稿は、学校段階間の一貫した学びの充実及び円滑な接続が重要とされている現状に鑑み、光華幼稚園と京都光華女子大学の幼大連携によって進められている英語プログラムを対象とし、園の保育スタイルを活かしつつ、教員が主体となって実施できる実践のあり方について検討することを目的とした。

関連する一連の先行研究から考察の軸を設定した上で今回取り上げた実践を手掛かりに分析を行った結果、次のような結論を導くことができた。幼児教育段階における英語教育を検討する際、実施園の保育形態の特色を踏まえて馴染みやすいプログラムを導入することが成功の鍵となる。そこで、幼大連携による支援モデルの構築によって、その園の児童、教員、保護者を考慮したプログラムを展開することができる。具体的に本稿で提案しているのは、(1) 担任がネイティブ教員と児童との「橋渡し役」を担えるような指導への関わりから、徐々にその度合いを高めていく教員研修の定期的実施、(2) 英語を他の活動につなげ、テーマ学習を実施することで指導内容の一貫性を持たせたカリキュラムの構築、(3) 次の教育段階への接続を意識した4技能統合的指導法の導入である。