

#### July 2018

Curriculum Research Center, National Institute for Educational Policy Research, Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology

## **Objectives of the special activities**

To develop children's qualities and abilities through exercising their ways of viewing or thinking as members of group or society, making efforts to do various group activities voluntarily and practically and solving problems in their own life or group life while making use of their good points and potentialities so that:

- Children can understand the significance of various group activities that they conduct in cooperation with others and what is needed in conducting the activities and learn the way of acting;
- (2) Children can acquire the abilities to find problems in group or their own life and human relationships, make discussions for solving the problems, and try to form a consensus or make a decision on their own; and
- (3) Children can build a better life and human relationships in group or society using the abilities acquired through voluntary and practical group activities, deepen their thoughts about the way of living and develop attitudes toward self-actualization.

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Classroom environment



## **Revision Points in the Course of Study**

#### Important points of view on qualities and abilities to be developed in the special activities

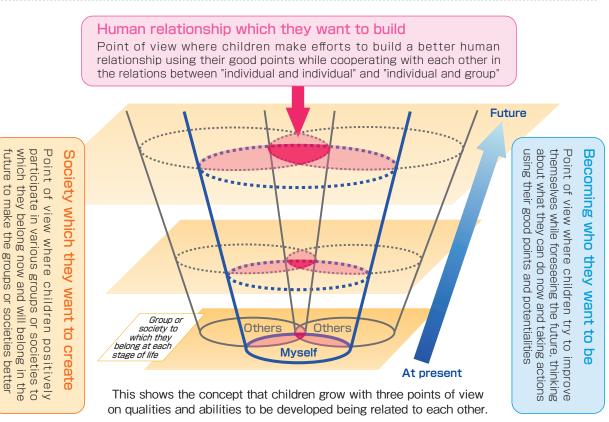
#### Building of human relationships

Recognizing each other's differences and developing the ability to live together

#### Participation in society

Developing the abilities for creating a better group or society Developing the abilities for making efforts to become what they want to be

Self-actualization



#### Improvement of classes toward realization of "Proactive, Interactive and Deep Learning" in the special activities

#### **Proactive learning**

Children find problems based on the actual status of school or classroom and actual condition of themselves and try to make their life better while practicing or reviewing the ways of solving the problems.

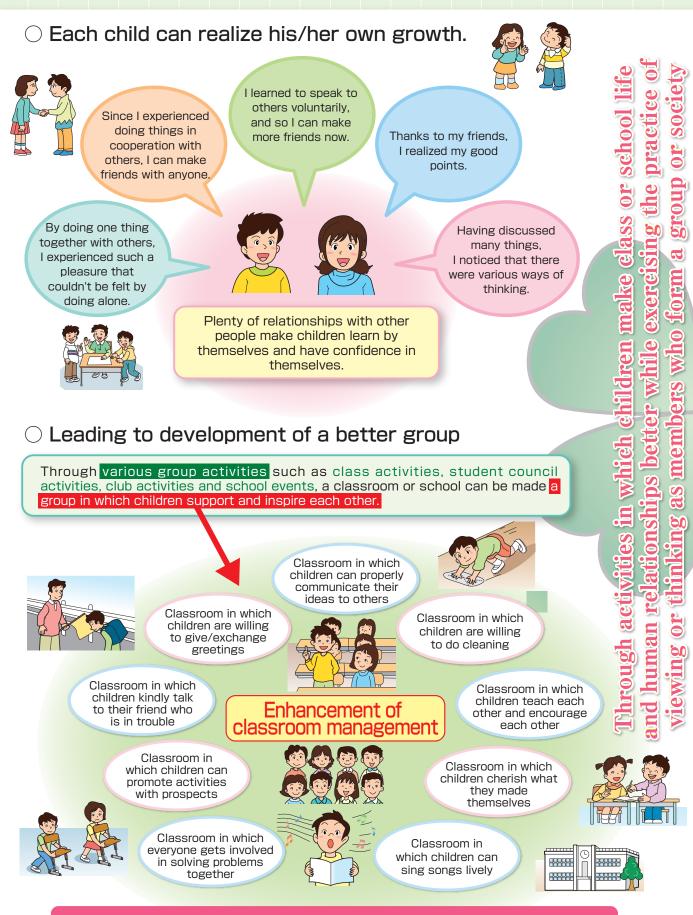
#### Interactive learning

Children learn to expand their thoughts and think flexibly and multi-directionally by trying to form a consensus in order to solve problems in life or listening to various opinions in discussions toward decision making.

#### Deep learning

While exercising the "ways of viewing or thinking as members of group or society" and repeating a series of activities from finding of problems and setting of tasks to reviewing, children use their knowledge or skills to solve problems in group or of their own by comprehensively using the "ways of viewing or thinking" according to characteristics of each school subject.

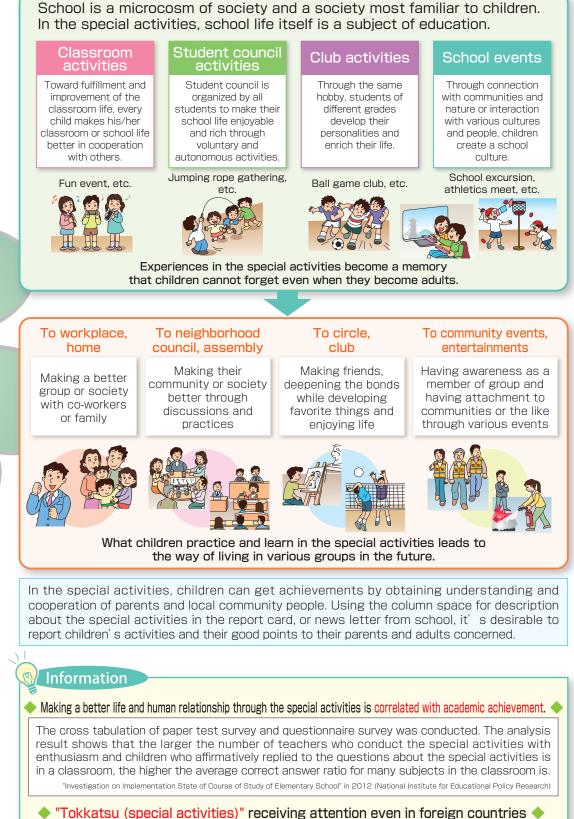
### Children grow up with richness of spirit through classroom activit



'Enhancement of class activities (1)" is a key point.

## ies, student council activities, club activities and school events.

○ School is a society where people are related to each other.



Overseas educational professionals pay attention to the special activities, in which children cooperate with each other in group to solve problems, as one of Japanese-style education methods.

## Practice of classroom activities based on characteristics

There are three kinds of classroom activities, (1), (2) and (3). The basic learning process is divided into two categories: class activities (1); and class activities (2), (3). Children conduct voluntary and practical activities, according to the characteristic of each activity, under an appropriate guidance of teachers, so that they enhance their autonomous abilities, self-leading abilities and self-actualization abilities.



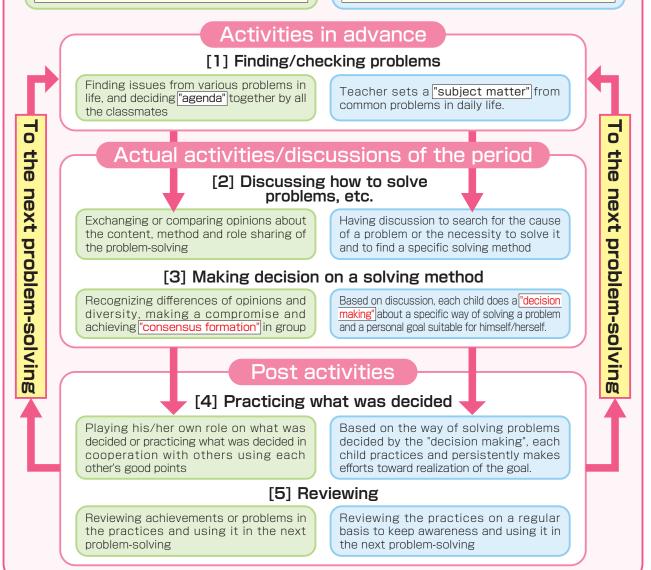
The classroom activities are activities based on "classroom". Classroom is a basic group to which children belong and are most familiar in school life. Through various group activities, children try to make a better life and human relationship and fulfill and improve school life, by discussing the ways of finding and solving group's or individual problems in classroom or school life, trying to achieve "consensus formation" in group and practice in cooperation, or each child doing 'decision making' about how to solve his/her own problems and practicing the decision.

#### Learning processes (example) for class activities (1) and (2) (3)

#### (1) Participation in creation of life in classroom or school

Taking up issues, for example, things children want to do or make together or problems they want to solve together, in order to make classroom or school life enjoyable and fulfilling (2) Adaptation to daily life and learning, and securing growth, health and safety of individuals
 (3) Career-building and self-actualization of each child

Taking up issues in the present life for (2), and issues on life and learning in view of the present and future for (3)



## Guidance before class meeting in order to "enhance the quality of discussion"

Sharing the necessity of solving a problem, making a plan of discussion and leading children to have their own ideas toward solving of the problem

#### In the example of the agenda "Let's have a welcome gathering for OO-san" (3rd grade)

## [1] Finding problemsC: "I want to hold a gathering where the transfer, O

- C: I want to hold a gathering where the transfer, ○-san can get to know our class and we can make friends."
- T: "I see. How about submitting your idea in the agenda post?"

#### [2] Selecting agenda (At planning committee)

- T: "Let's select some agenda proposals."
- C: "Let the proposers whose agenda proposals were not selected know about what we do."

#### [3] Deciding agenda (All students in class)

- T: "Which agenda is related to everyone in the class and needs to be discussed now?"
- C: "This time, let's talk about "Let's have a welcome gathering for  $\bigcirc\bigcirc$  -san"."

#### [4] Preparing activity plan (Planning committee, proposer)

- T: "Let's make a plan of class meetings for talking about the reason for the proposal, subjects to be discussed, purpose of discussion, etc. and prepare for them."
- C: "In class meetings, let's talk about what we will do, how we can devise, or the like."



#### [5] Awareness of problems

- T: "Put down your ideas in the class meeting notebook."
- C: "According to the activity plan, let's post opinions, check the way of proceeding, etc." (Planning committee)

#### How to collect agenda

- From proposals put in the agenda post
- From topics at morning meetings and end-of-the-day meetings
- From what is written in the class journal or the like
- From remarks about tasks or duties in classroom
- From requests of the student councils such as the representative committee and other committees or from proposals by classroom to the student councils
- From reviews of past activities
- Based on the class management policy, a teacher may present a subject.

#### Major preparations at the planning committee

#### Specifying the "reason for the proposal"

©Clarifying "for what is the activity conducted?" and "how is the activity conducted?" while respecting the proposer's thought.

[Content of the reason for proposal (Example)]



- Actual problem (Currently, the problem is like this.)
- 2 Possible way of solving the problem (By doing this)
- ③ Image after the problem is solved (want to do this, want to be like this)
- Deciding "what to discuss"
- OThe content should be what needs to be discussed in 1 unit time.
- For example, "what should be done", "how should it be done", "how should the roles be allocated", or the like. In view of the development stage, importance should be given to "how should it be done".
- Deciding the "goal of discussion", in some cases

In the following cases, the goal may be set: In the case where the reason for proposal should be clarified

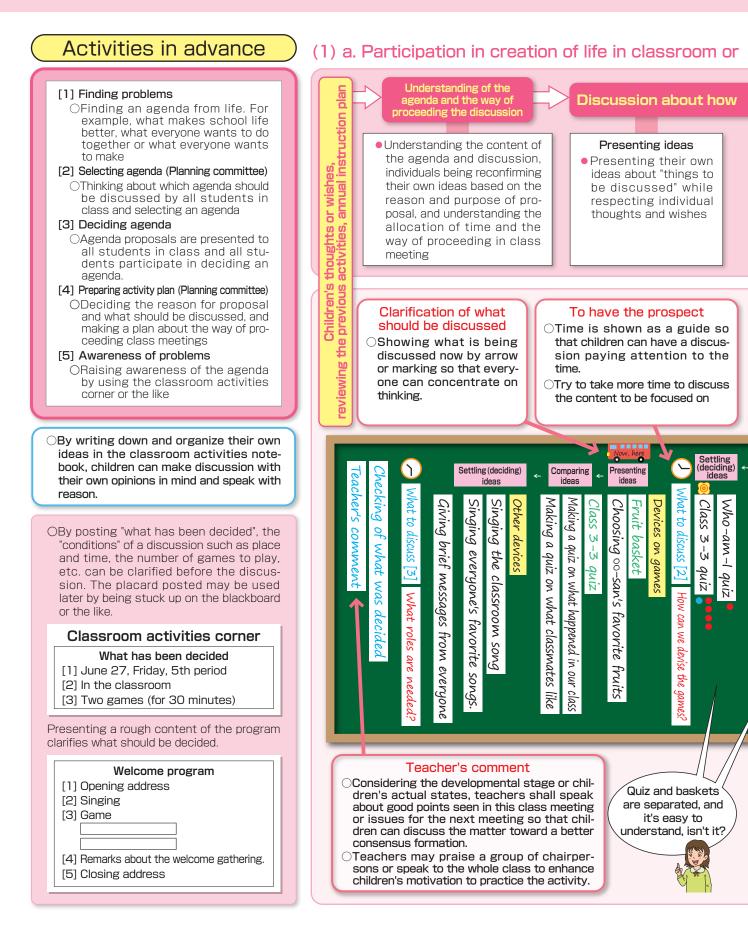
In the case where the subject in the last discussion or the way of discussing should be set as a goal

 Allocating roles and checking how to proceed and what students should be careful about

Checking "what has been decided"

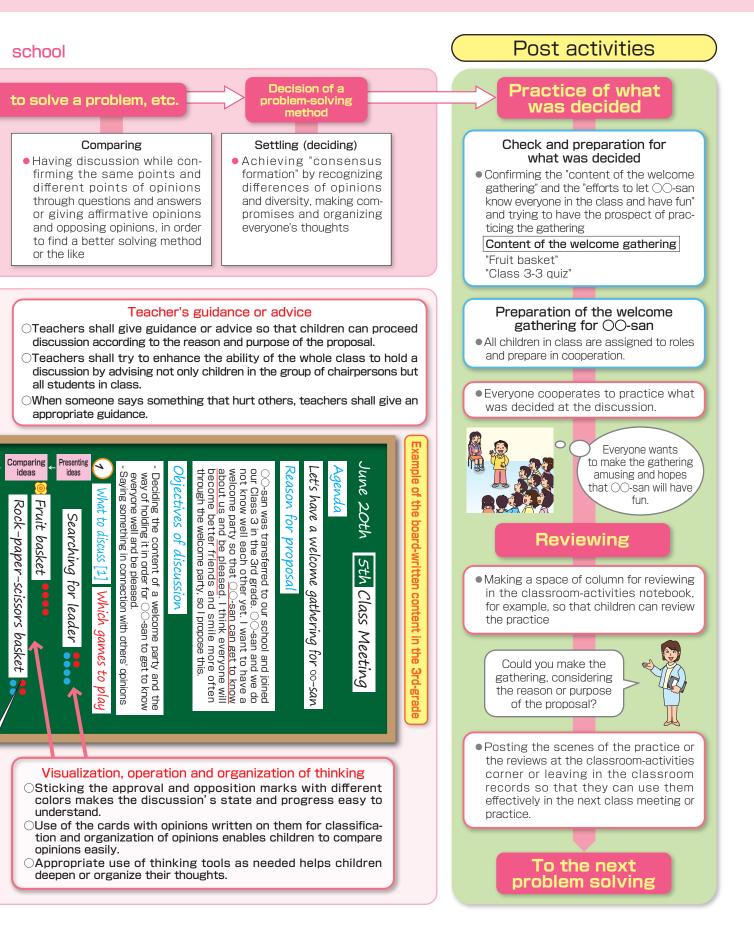
## Classroom activities (1) for children to realize their thoughts and fulfill their life at classroom or school

### • Classroom activities "(1) Participation in creation of life in classroom or school"/



In a class meeting, discussion is made based on children's thoughts and wishes. Teachers provide an appropriate guidance or advice according to their developmental stage so that children can achieve a better consensus formation on their own based on the reason for proposal.

#### Agenda "Let's have a welcome gathering for OO-san" (3rd grade) , as an example



## Guidance after the class meeting toward next activities What was decided throu

What was decided through discussion or allocation of roles shall be presented at the classroom-activities corner so that children can always check them, enhancing the motivation to practice.

#### In the example of the agenda "Let's have a welcome gathering for OO-san" (3rd grade)

#### [1] Check and preparation for what was decided

- T: "Check what was decided or allocation of roles."
- C: "Let's allocate roles and tasks and prepare in cooperation."
- C: "Let's try to let everyone enjoy it."

#### [2] Practice of what was decided

- T: "Considering the reason for proposal, let's cooperate to make the gathering amusing."
- C: "Let's pay attention to time as well during the gathering."

[Welcome gathering for OO-san (example)]

- Opening address
- [2] Song of classroom
- [3] Messages from classmates
- [4] Games
- Fruit basket
- Class 3-3 quiz
- [5] Making remarks
- [6] Teacher's comment
- [7] Closing address

praise individuals or group for good points to enhance their motivation to practice.

Teacher tries to

#### \_\_\_\_\_

#### [3] Reviewing the activities

- T: "Could you do the activities while considering the reason and purpose of the proposal?"
- C: "I think everyone has made friends with each other and smiles more often."
- C: "It was good that OO-san had fun."
- $\bigcirc \bigcirc$  "I'm glad that I could know about everyone through the one-word messages."

#### Practice

- OBased on the consensus formation, the roles are allocated to all children and they are to cooperate to achieve the objectives.
- Owhile preparing and practicing together in cooperation, children exercise their own good points or notice each other's good points and efforts.
- OChildren's feeling of belonging to the class is enhanced.

#### Reviewing

- ○After the practice, children express remarks or write in the review card, thereby not only reflecting back on the activities but recognizing each other's good points and efforts.
- OReviewing along with the reason and purpose of proposal
- Olt is important for teachers to provide guidance on how children find each other's good points, to conduct a self-evaluation for reviewing their own behaviors or a mutual evaluation for recognizing each other's good points, and to organize the achievements and problems.
- OBy reviewing the pre-activities, actual activities and post activities, children can improve themselves using the reviews in the next activities.

#### Step to the next activities

- ©"Reviewing" is a step to the next activities. The "satisfaction" and "sense of accomplishment" obtained in the activities become a source of energy for the next activities. The reviews will lead to the next problem-solving including proposal of new agenda.
- ©It is important to leave the activity records. For example, after the practice of the activities, what was practiced is posted at the classroom-activities corner. Also, the states and achievements of activities are reported to their families through the classroom newsletter or the like so that their understanding and cooperation can be obtained.

Task activities and gathering activities for making classroom life enjoyable and fulfilling

In task activities, children discuss and make task groups in order to make their classroom life enjoyable and fulfilling on their own, so that they can share tasks and cooperate to voluntarily and independently practice them using their originality and creativity. In gathering activities, under appropriate guidance of teachers, children make their classroom life enjoyable and fulfilling and make friends through planning and operation.

lt is

important to review according to the purposes of activities

#### Points on guidance for task activities

#### Clarifying the difference between task activities and duty activities

Teachers not only provide guidance intentionally but make children clearly understand the difference between task activities and duty activities. In a lower grade, teachers may talk to children so that their originalities are expanded from duty activities.

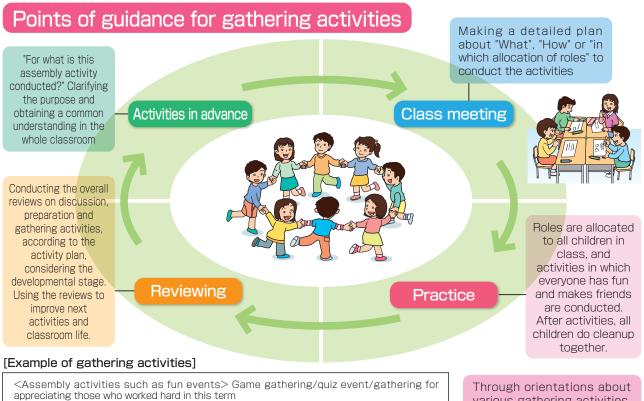
Task activities	Duty activities
Children find tasks to make their classroom life enjoyable and fulfilling together and make voluntary and practical efforts using their <b>originality and</b> <b>creativity</b> .	Duties in classroom are <b>allocated to all children</b> so that their classroom life can be smoothly operated.

#### Cooperate to do task activities using their originality and creativity.

○Kinds of tasks or contents of activities are discussed by each task group or at class meeting so that children can do tasks using their originality and creativity.

Oln order to liven up all task activities in classroom, it is effective that a task-activities corner or task-activities post for collecting ideas is set or the efforts are reported at morning meetings or end-of-the-day meetings.

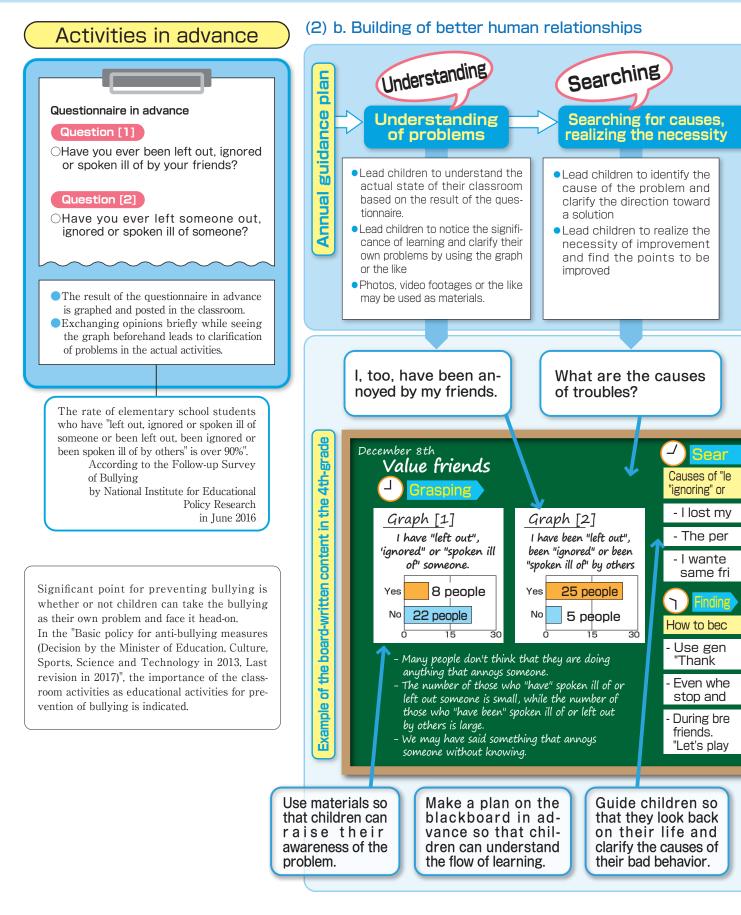
OBy conducting a task-activities presentation, children can recognize good points of each task group, improve their own task activities based on the good points of others' activities and have exchanges and cooperation among task groups, resulting in invigoration of task activities.



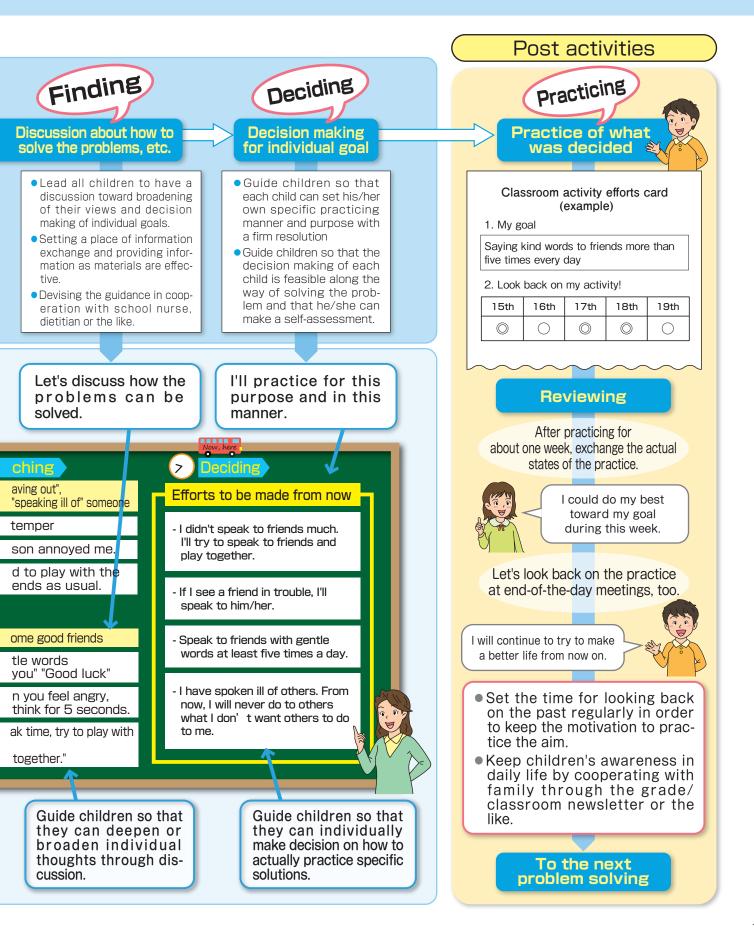
< Assembly activities such as sports> Long rope jumping event/Interclass Olympic Games <Cultural gathering activities> Interclass music competition/book report writing competition/newspaper competition/presentation of play or drama Through orientations about various gathering activities, each gathering is made by all children and for all children.

## Classroom activities (2) for children to look at their present selves and thinking about their own growth

#### Classroom activities "(2) Adaptation to daily life and learning, and (4th grade), as an example

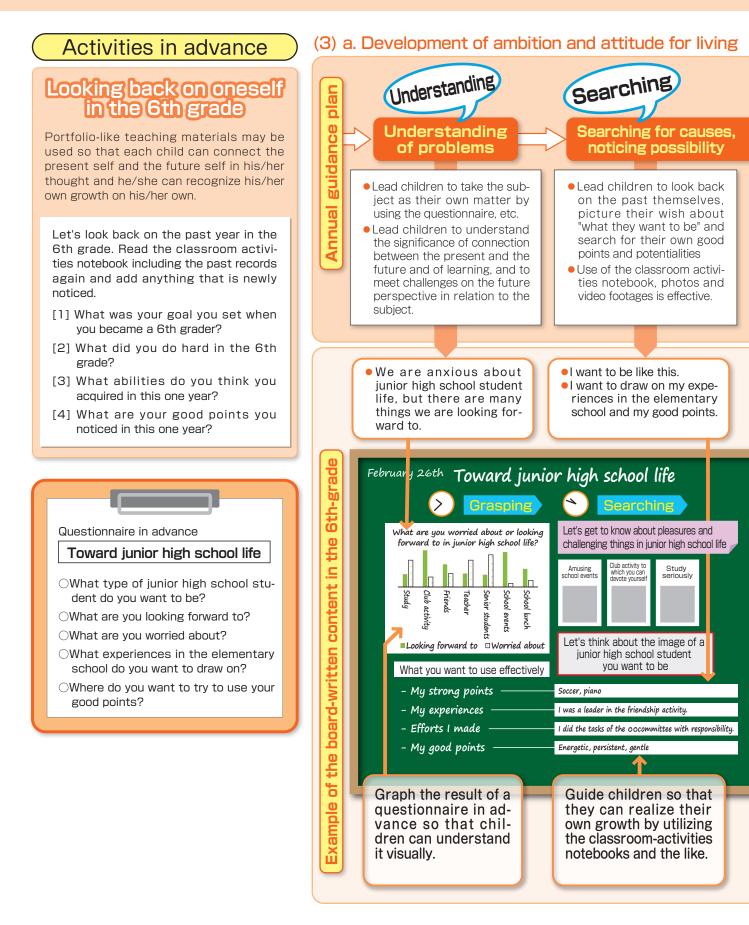


### growth and health and safety of individuals"/Agenda "Value friends"



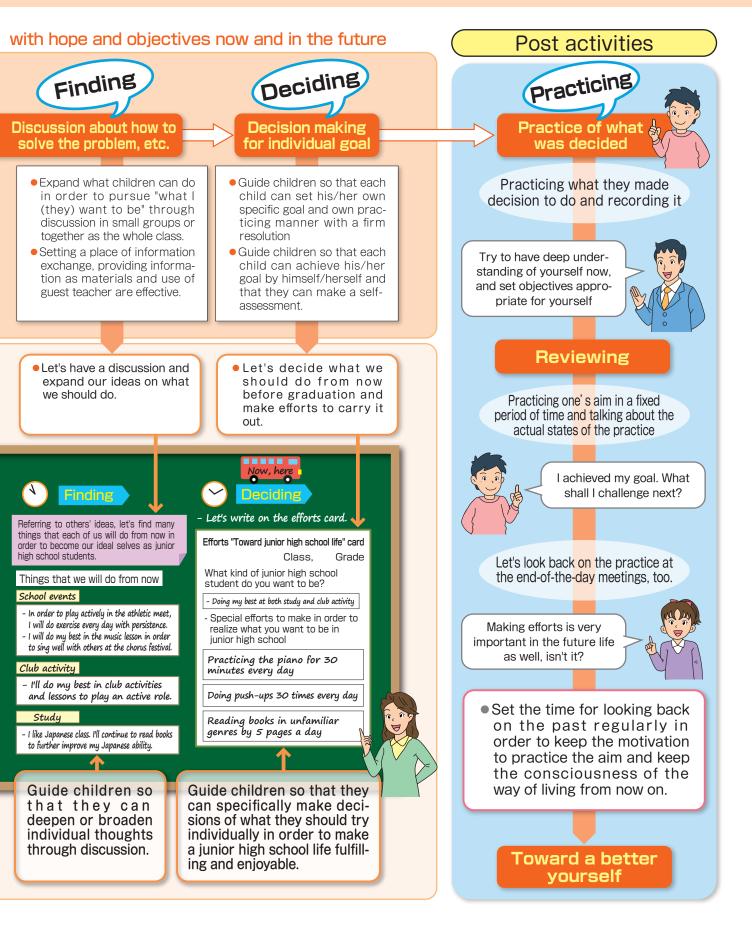
## Classroom activities (3) for children to foresee the future and make efforts to become what they want to be

• Classroom activities "(3) Individual's career development and self-actualization

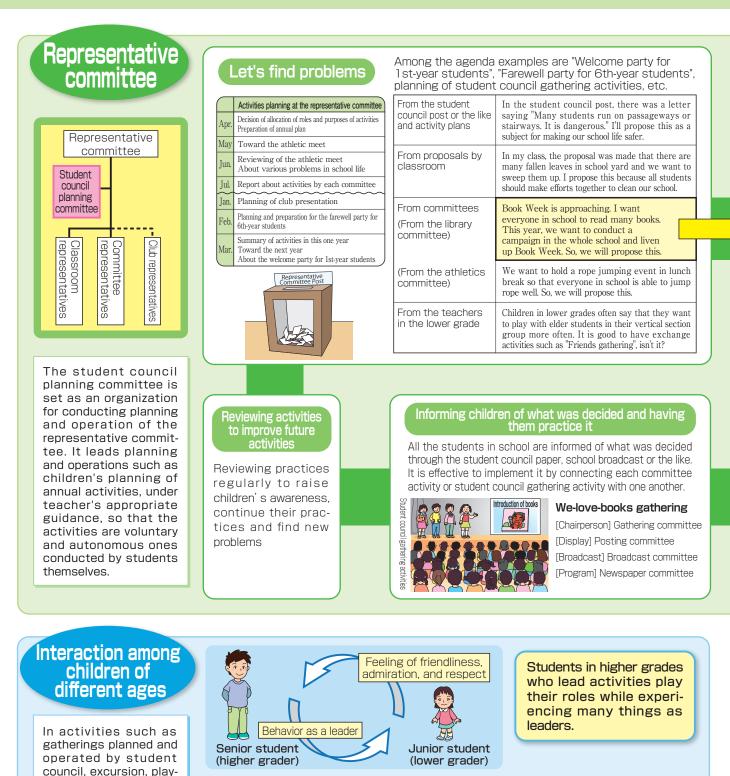


The special activities play an important role for career education. Through the activities, children look back on the past activities, foresee the future way of learning and living and make decision about individual goals. Each child decides his/her own goal in life or learning and practices toward achievement of the goal.

### "/Subject "Toward junior high school life" (6th grade), as an example



## Student council activities which are voluntary and autonomous activities for making school life enjoyable and fulfilling



ing and school lunch, children in different grades and classrooms spend fun time together and have interaction with

each other.

In the case where school sets activities for continuous interaction among different-age students in daily life, separately from student council activities, it is important that teachers clarify the qualities and abilities to be developed through the activities and instruct the students on the activities in concert with "Interaction among children of different ages" conducted in student council activities.



Student council is a group of students of different ages organized by all students in school. It is important to lead all the students of school to voluntarily participate in student council activities. Mainly higher graders make plans and manage activities with the representative committee as their core organization. Students can make their school life fulfilling by positively cooperating in activities for students of different ages or school events.

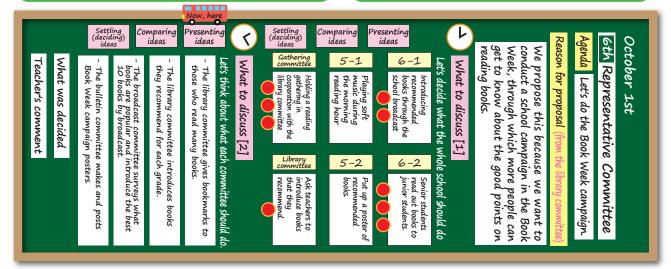
## Let's discuss/decide activities together

The flow of implementation of the children gathering activity "We-love-books gathering" is shown here as an example. In it, students at the representative committee discuss what efforts should be made towards Book Week by all the students in school. What is decided will be implemented.

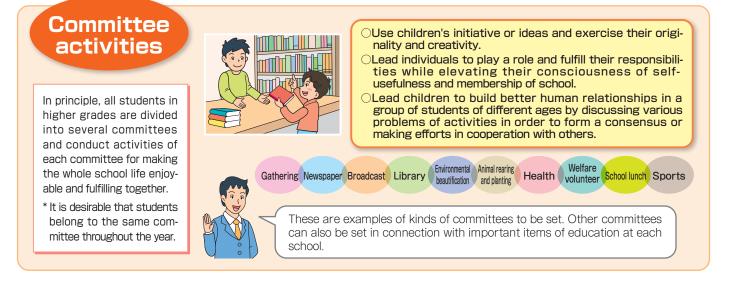
[1] Have the student council planning committee decide agenda, inform the whole school of it, and discuss what activities could be conducted by students at classrooms or each committee.

[2] Classroom representatives, committee representatives and club representatives (depending on the agenda) gather and hold a representative committee for discussion.

Preparations such as preliminary survey of opinions of lower and middle graders should be made so that that they can be reflected to discussion. Making a system for certainly informing everyone of what was decided raises students' consciousness that they belong to school. Discussion time should be set at the time when higher graders and teachers of other grade can participate in or observe the discussion. It is important to make sure that activities can be implemented throughout the year.



Discussion is made on the drawing on the experiences in classroom activities. Unifying the tools used in classroom discussions contributes to smooth proceeding. Opinions from classrooms collected at morning meetings or the like and opinions from committees collected at preliminary committees are brought to the representative committee. The whole school is informed of the agenda and the reasons of proposals through student council paper, school broadcast and the like. It is essential to fully inform children of the proposers' thoughts and wishes.



## Club activities in which students pursue common hobbies or interests in a group of students of different ages

#### Orientation

Lead children to understand necessaries for club activity such as its purpose, significance, contents and examples of clubs.

#### Orientation is conducted before observing club activities



Orientation is conducted in the end of the 3rd year. It may be conducted in the 4th or 5th year as well.

Select a club in which you can conduct activities with interest. The important thing is what you want to do.

- Activities in which you enjoy what you like or what interests you.
- Upper-grade students and lower-grade students help each other in activities.
- Everyone thinks about planning of activities together.

Club activities are fun because I can select myself. Planning on our own is a pleasure.

## Observing and experiencing club activities

Observing and experiencing club activities in preparation for deciding which club you will belong to in the next school year



Guide children so that they can take more interests in club activities and make a better choice.

Club observation card is prepared, in which children can write the order of clubs to observe and what they felt.

We found the pleasure of the clubs through the trial session. We are looking forward to joining club activities in the next year.



## Setting of clubs and membership

In club activities, children pursue common interests. To that end, the club activities shall be organized with respect for children's hope.



- Children from different grades belong to the same club and are led to cooperate to conduct the activities.
- Children can continuously conduct the activities throughout the year.
  The environment for activities shall be made through securing of places for activities, preparation of tools and so on.
- Characteristics and tradition of local community and school shall be considered.
- Children are led to observe school rules and conduct the activities safely.
  Care should be taken so as not to make individuals bear high expenses.

Generally, teachers conduct survey of what clubs children want, and decide what clubs to be set, considering children's request basically as a top priority and the number of teachers or facilities in school. Various other methods for respecting children's proactive choice may also be adopted. A questionnaire or a survey on children's desires may be used to raise their awareness of participa-

tion or children may propose clubs that they want

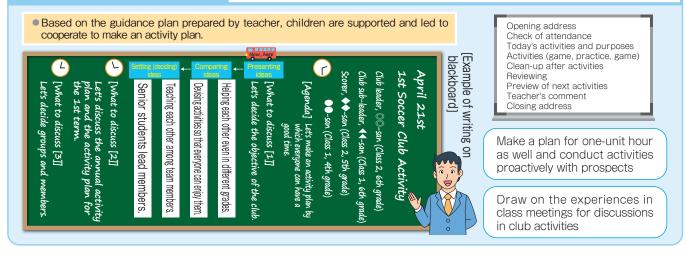
to have and invite members.



In club activities, students mainly in the 4th grade or higher pursue common hobbies or interests with like-minded peers. An appropriate number of class hours for each month, term and year should be secured so that the goals of club activities can be fully achieved and three contents below can be implemented. In addition, club activities should be incorporated in the annual event schedule and class schedule so that activities can be continuously conducted.

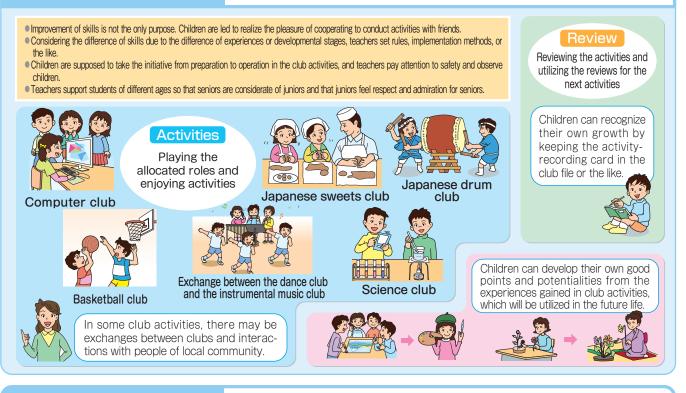
## (1) Organization of club and planning/operation

At the beginning of the year, all children who belong to a club gather and hold a discussion and prepare activity plan. Roles are allocated among the children and the club operation is conducted.



## (2) Activities through which children can enjoy the club

Based on the annual, term or hourly activity plans, children enjoy the club in pursuit of common interests while exercising initiatives and originalities in cooperation with friends from different grades.



#### (3) Presentation on achievements in club

Presenting merits and achievements of clubs to the whole school, parents of the students, and/or people in local community at a presentation session or the like contributes to lift children's motivation for activities.



The presentation may be conducted not only at club presentations, but at school events, at events in local community, by school broadcast, at exhibitions, or the like.



The performance of the instrumental music club at the athletic meet was nice. I want to join the instrumental music club next year.

School events which represent landmarks in school life or color school life according to the characteristics of school

• Five kinds of school events below are conducted in all grades. Teachers guide children so that they • Giving orientation is an important part of children's guidance on school events. Teachers guide children so that

(2) Cultural events (1) Ceremonial events (3) Events for health an Having a fresh feeling and setting landmarks in life Enriching children's life with culture and arts Developing a healthy mind and Entrance ceremony, graduation ceremony, opening/closing Music event, Presentation of learning Athletic meet, rope achievements, Exhibition, School plays, Arts ceremony of school term, ceremony for leaving teachers, examination, evacuation anniversary events, morning meetings, etc. appreciation event, etc. Examples of words to give from teacher Examples of words to give from teacher Examples of words The opening ceremony of school term is a turning In the school play, you can act in your Athletic meet is an point of your school life. This event reminds you that own way and find your friends' good best you can toward you should be thankful to people who support you, expected to cooperate points by using what you' ve learned. and leads you to make a determination of what kind school will be a better of person you aim to be from then on. Presentation of learning achievements united for the event. is an opportunity for you to show people The graduation In a disaster drill or traffic what you' ve ceremony is the last safety class, children learned in school lesson of 6-year school learn how to protect and create life. At this ceremony, themselves against an something you hold a new hope accident or disaster, and beautiful or good. toward junior high acquire attitudes and school life. behavior to act safely. • School events promote children's proactive activity under appropriate guidance by teachers. Graduation ceremony is an important Let's liven up the athletic meet this year Concerning the local-community-cleaning ceremony, so let's attend it with respect. with cheering squads. activity, what about sending letters of invitation We shouldn't be lax Let's devise how to to people in the local while being seated perform our own community from our during the ceremony cheering and teach it beautification committee? for the sake of 6th to lower graders. Making posters and posting graders. them up may be nice as well. In the whole school excursion, let's play In the music event, let's sing songs In group-lodging activity, we can enjoy games that everyone thinking about the meaning of lyrics. In nature, such as looking for insects or of all grades can practice of each part, we plants that we cannot enjoy in a group of

students of different grades to deepen conveyed to everyone.

can teach each other so that the beauty of

harmony can be



see in our daily life. Also, we can deepen our friendship by cooperating in orienteering or the like.



Oppending on the kind of school event, activities based on a plan in which children's initiative or ideas are incorporated or activities in which the contents of student council activity are implemented may be conducted.



Experiences in self-motivated activ of classroom and influence their

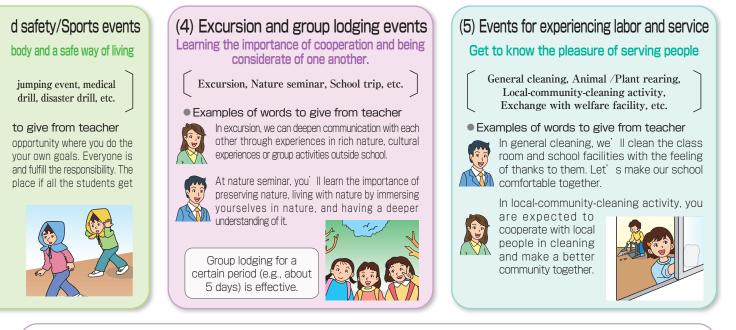
> The class has become a better group with united children cooperating to conduct activities toward a shared goal.



ties

A large group of children in school or in the grade conduct school events in cooperation. The real experiences they had together with friends enrich their school life. Also, children realize school membership and togetherness, which fosters their sense of responsibility to shoulder an inclusive society.

can recognize the connection between individual school events and develop their abilities. each child can understand the significance of each school event and conduct with his/her own objectives.



- In reviewing, lead children to think by themselves according to the significance of the school event and the goals set on their own which were checked in the orientation.
- Take some time to share individual reviews of activities by using words even when conducting preparation and practice. • Have children keep the record of their own growth by writing a summary or drawing a picture of each activity in school events.
- · Checking to what degree the goal was achieved Review · Finding good points and problems to be solved of their own points and of other pupils · Utilizing what they learned in school events in their daily life · Setting a new goal toward next activities



Examples of the methods for making a summary by words or presenting what children experienced

[Speaking/Listening] Presenting individual reviews in front of everyone and deepen their own thoughts based on the mutual reviews

[Writing/Painting] Writing about impressions on school events and compiling an anthology Making a file for school events, in which reviews are written and kept Writing letter of thanks to those who gave help Writing reviews of the performances of other graders, compiling them on a large simili paper or the like, and posting it up

> Announcing the results of children's activities to parents and people of the local community will result in obtaining trust and cooperation from them.

[Presenting] Announcing what children learned in school events to students of other grades and parents as well

ities will help improve atmosphere learning of subjects positively.

By repeatedly summarizing and reviewing their experience-activities, children have come to take more initiative and show more forwardness even in their ordinary life and learning.

Athletic meet associated with the local community will make the community lively. The neighborhood association wants to cooperate with school children.



That school has a good reputation in the neighborhood as being a good school with lively students.

## Devising classroom environment to enrich the special activities

#### Visualization of "classroom records"

To put up on the wall the "classroom records" which include school events or activities children discussed and practiced will help visualize the history of the class, lead them to look back on their own growth, and foster attachment for the school and pride in it.

#### Class A in the th grade with 36 students! At the "Nice-to-meet-you party", we became friends with one another. the you!

<u>0</u>

lass

⊳

## May

Excursion to park We played game for recreation in the bus. It was fun. To those in charge of the recreation: Thank you! The whole class can they learned or were with in the activities, them as fulfilling It may be a good idea photos of each an easy review or the school events and activities.

#### Setting of the Classroom Activities board

On the Classroom Activities board, an agenda, etc. is posted in advance of class meeting using cardboard or the like. Children can freely use the tools set on the corner for them to use at the planning committee in class meeting.

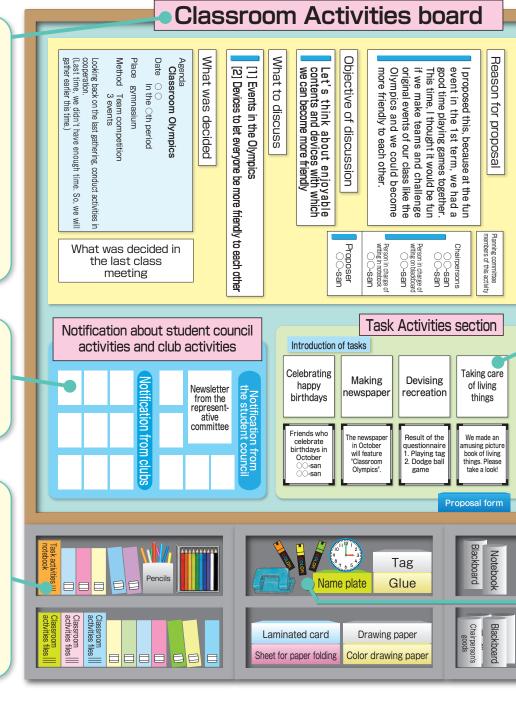
Also, by posting the flow of activities toward class meeting, children can plan and operate the activities with prospects. In addition, by writing the agenda on strips of paper, the strips can be posted on the blackboard at class meeting or used for notifications and records.

#### Notifications about student council activities or club activities

A section for notifying of committee activities, representative committee and club activities is set to elevate children's motivation.

#### Stationery, activity materials

Stationery which children can use freely should be prepared so that they can conduct activities on their own initiative at class meeting, task activities, gathering activities or the like. Materials and books which children can use for class meeting, task activities, gathering activities or the like should be also prepared in order to help children exercise their originality and creativity.



In guidance of classroom activities, improvement of the classroom environment including putting up bulletins, etc. is effective in motivating children. Through guidance before/after an activity related to posted bulletins or posters, children come to make efforts to improve their life voluntarily and practically, and their motivation to practice those things is elevated.

share what impressed and record experiences. to put up activity for schedule of annual



Color magnet

Plate magnet

### How to speak/listen

(3) c. Development of attitude for proactive leaning and utilization of school library or the like

By using a posting board, teachers can appropriately teach children about how they should speak about their own ideas to "let others see my ideas" and how they should listen to others to try to "understand others' ideas", at a class meeting or in lessons of subjects.

#### **Task Activities section**

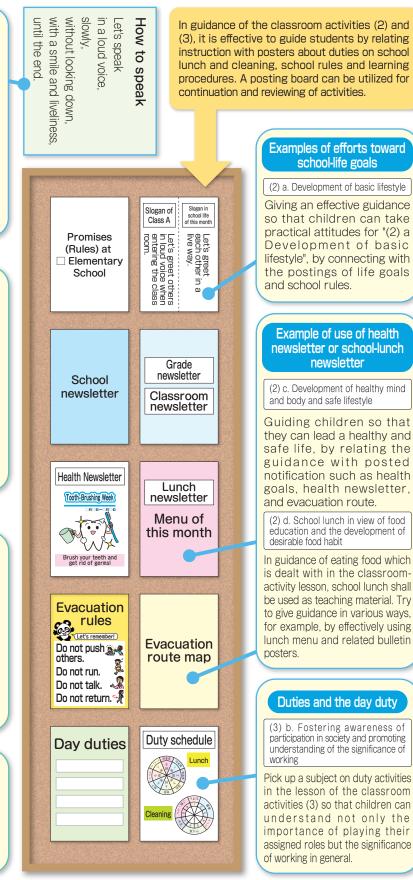
Teacher sets the task activities section so that children can visualize "members in charge of tasks" and "goals of activities for reviewing". Setting of the task post for collecting ideas on activities and the task-activities notebook (in which what was discussed, etc. is recorded) which children can read at any time will lead to improvement of the contents of activities.

#### Agenda post (Proposal form)

By setting the agenda post, teachers can raise children's awareness of problems and guide children to propose an agenda when necessary. Also, teachers guide children to value agendas not selected and show respect to any proposal, by replying to the proposer and tell him/her how they'll deal with matter.

#### Various goods for class meeting

Cards to put on blackboard at class meeting (agenda, what was decided, clock card, decision marks, strips, name cards, etc.)



# Now, it is the time to fulfill the special activities!

Through practical activities, we aim to develop children's general power which is genuinely helpful in leading a social life

## Key to career education

- Playing a role as a member of classroom or school develops child's ability and attitude required for his/her living independently.
- Through activities in which a child makes efforts using his/her good points and capabilities, the child learns how he/she can realize what he/she wants to be. (Career development)

## Helping classroom management

- Through activities toward a better classroom life, the cooperative relationship in classroom group is enhanced.
- Through activities in which everyone feels pleasure in being helpful and respects each other's good points, a classroom where individuals are valued is made.

## Improving academic ability

- The ability to solve problems together in a group, which is acquired through class meetings or the like, can be used in learning of each subject.
- When children develop a better life and human relationships on their own, an atmosphere in which they learn together in a classroom is created and their motivation to learn grows.

## Preventing occurrence of problems in guiding students

- Learning the importance of living with respect to each other's personality leads to prevention of bullying or the like.
- Through activities or opportunities when children make decisions on their own and make efforts, their self-guidance ability is enhanced.



## Connecting to moral practice

- Group activities and experiences in the special activities provide children the main field for learning of moral practice and play an important role in moral education.
- By interrelating the special activities in which children learn through practice and the subject of moral which nurtures their heart, their thoughts about how to live are deepened.

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