

【Egypt】 Let's Be Healthy: Food Education as a Gateway to Holistic Learning in Kindergarten



Caption

Children engaging in food education, movement, and mindfulness activities during the “Let’s Be Healthy” event, implemented across Egyptian Japanese Schools as part of holistic kindergarten learning.



Grade : Kindergarten (KG1 & KG2)



Activity category : Food Education / Holistic Education / Life Skills / Outdoor Learning



Time (How long) : One week (21/12 – 25/12)

With follow-up activities integrated into weekly KG plans



Aim

- Promote healthy eating habits and food awareness
- Encourage physical activity through structured movement
- Support emotional well-being through mindfulness practices
- Strengthen cooperation, independence, and responsibility
- Apply holistic education principles in daily kindergarten routines



Teaching materials

- Healthy lunchboxes (prepared with parents’ support)
- Food sorting cards and food group visuals
- Picnic mats and outdoor station materials
- Exercise signs, cones, and bean bags
- Water bottles and hydration posters
- Mindfulness mats and visual schedules



The process of the class

- ① The day started with a morning circle in the EJS schools garden, where children were introduced to the concept of a healthy lifestyle through visuals and guided discussion. Simple rules focusing on healthy eating, movement, and hydration were agreed upon.

- ② During the Healthy Picnic Preparation, children sorted their lunchbox items into healthy and “sometimes” food categories. KG1 children were supported by teachers, while KG2 children practiced independence by building balanced plates.
- ③ Outdoor movement stations followed, including food-themed relay games, exercise circuits, hydration stations, and teamwork activities. Each station was clearly labeled and designed to promote physical development, cooperation, and joy.
- ④ After movement, children engaged in water breaks and mindfulness activities to restore calm and body awareness. The day concluded with a Healthy Habits Workshop and reflection circle, where children shared what they learned and made personal healthy promises.
- ⑤ Activities were documented and followed up through weekly KG plans to ensure continuity beyond the event.

As part of my action plan developed during the KCCP program in Japan, I aimed to translate the concept of holistic education into daily kindergarten practices, with a special focus on food education (Shokuiku). This vision was implemented through continuous curriculum planning and a nationwide event titled “Let’s Be Healthy,” conducted from 21/12 to 25/12 across 69 Egyptian Japanese School branches.

During the event, children participated in structured yet joyful experiences that connected healthy eating, physical movement, mindfulness, and social interaction. A noticeable change was observed in children’s awareness and behavior. They began to talk confidently about healthy food choices, hydration, and caring for their bodies. Many children showed increased independence while organizing their lunchboxes, choosing balanced meals, and following healthy routines. The classroom atmosphere shifted toward calmness, cooperation, and engagement. Outdoor learning spaces, especially school gardens, became active environments for exploration, teamwork, and movement. Teachers reported that children were more focused after mindfulness activities and more motivated during group challenges.

This practice reflects the Japanese holistic education philosophy by addressing the child as a whole—physically, emotionally, socially, and cognitively. Food education was integrated naturally into daily routines, transforming learning into a meaningful life experience rather than a standalone lesson.





Message from the author:

This practice was deeply influenced by my learning experience through the KCCP Holistic Education Program in Japan, organized with the support of JICA. The program helped me reconsider education beyond academic outcomes and focus on nurturing the whole child physically, emotionally, socially, and mentally.

Through the program, I gained a clearer understanding of how daily routines, food education, movement, and mindfulness can work together to create meaningful learning experiences for young children. This perspective guided me in designing and implementing the “Let’s Be Healthy” activities, not as a one-time event, but as part of an ongoing holistic approach within the kindergarten curriculum.

I am sincerely grateful to JICA for providing this valuable opportunity, which allowed me to translate educational philosophy into practical, child-centered practices. The experience continues to shape my professional journey and supports my commitment to building learning environments that promote well-being, independence, and lifelong healthy habits.

SALEH, Marwa Medhat Mahmoud Saleh
Kindergarten English Academic Coordinator

To teachers:



Food education becomes meaningful when it is lived, not taught. Integrating healthy habits into daily routines, outdoor learning, and reflective discussions allows children to internalize values that support lifelong well-being. Teachers are encouraged to see food education as part of holistic learning rather than a single event. Thank you for reviewing my article.



References:

- ☐ *KCCP Program: Holistic Education in Japan*
- ☐ *Egyptian Japanese Schools Kindergarten Curriculum*
- ☐ *“Let’s Be Healthy” Event Documentation*