

**【One more step for zero-waiting list for nursery schools!】**

Hello, I'm Masao Omori, Mayor of Okayama.

As of October 1<sup>st</sup>, it is announced today that the number of children on the waiting list for nursery schools and certified Centers for Early Childhood Education and Care is 380 (minus 272 compared with the same month of last year and minus 171 compared with April of this year).

The April before last, after re-examining the definition about the waiting list, it has become clear that the actual number on the waiting list was 729 (the 2<sup>nd</sup> worst in Japan then.) It has long been considered zero on the waiting list before.

The fact that we were in the 2<sup>nd</sup> worst situation in Japan was a great impact on many parents and made them feel anxious and hasty that they must apply early otherwise their children could not be admitted. In addition, due to the revision of system, parents in childcare leave must withdraw their children from nursery schools and the number on the waiting list rose to 849 at one point. However, the number has been decreasing these days as a result of preparing nursery schools at an unprecedented pace.

Toward next April, new nursery schools and certified Centers for Early Childhood Education and Care for 1,337 children will be prepared and the number of accepting expects to exceed the number of application for the first time in the last dozen years. If the number of application is within the expectation, we can take a big step toward the solution of children on waiting lists for nursery schools next April and it can be said that we are forming the environment for having a family with peace of mind.

To solve the issue of children on waiting lists for nursery schools, we still remain worried about ensuring nursery teachers, disagreement of age between applications and acceptances and free education in nursery schools planned for next October. However, on the whole, the condition of acceptance is going well and we will continue to do our best, aiming for zero on the waiting list in April, 2020.

We would like to help you to care for your children. Please feel free to ask Concierge for childcare (086-803-1431) when you consider about entering nursery schools and certified Centers for Early Childhood Education and Care.