



2 Pre-school education

Pre-school education for children under school age is provided at kindergartens.

2-1 Kindergarten

A kindergarten is an educational institute for children above age three to children until they enter elementary school. There are national, public and private kindergartens run by the national government, local governments, and incorporated educational institutions respectively. Depending on the regions, subsidies may be provided to children who go to private kindergartens.

* There are also facilities known as nursery kindergarten (houikusho, hoikuen) where infants and young children who would otherwise lack children are consigned by their parents/guardians to be taken care of. For details, please refer to section [5-1 Certified nursery schools on chapter H Childbirth/childcare](#).

	Public kindergartens	Private kindergartens
Open to	Four- to five-year-olds within the residential district (in some municipalities, three-year-olds are also accepted)	Children of age three to five.
Open hours	9:00-14:00; closed on weekends and during national holidays and long vacations.	Differ for each kindergartens
Application period	Around Oct. to early Nov. each year	Around Oct. to early Nov. each year
Where to apply	Respective kindergartens	Respective kindergartens
Fees	Entrance fees (at time of entry) and day-care fees	Some kindergartens charge extra fees for facilities or ask for donations. in addition to entrance fees and day-care fees. Interviews or examinations prior to entrance will require examination fees.
School district	Your local municipality	No particular limitation
Other	Pick-up and drop off by parents/guardians and preparation of lunch are essential. Expenses differ for each municipality. For details, please enquire at the educational affairs section of the Board of Education of the municipality where you reside for details.	Some municipalities provide subsidies, such as assistance with entrance fees, subsidies for day-care fees, and subsidies to assist with attending kindergarten. Private kindergartens are each managed under various education principles, so it is important to enquire at the respective kindergarten for details.