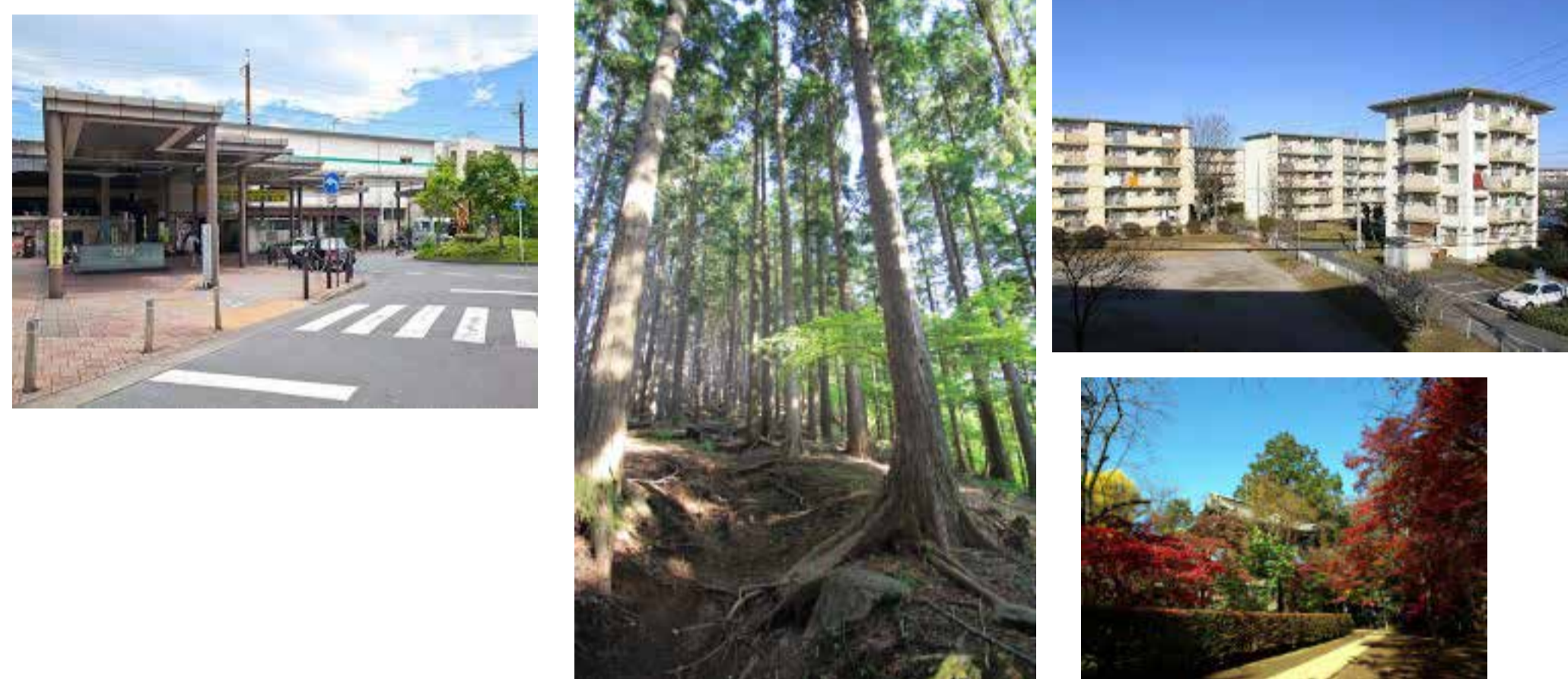


Title : “Kids’ voices can be heard from “Zohki-bayashi” --Developing play-place in the Metropolitan Suburbs of Japan, Niiza-City

Niiza city

Niiza is a commuter-town city of Tokyo with 160,000 inhabitants. About 30,000 children under age of 18 are growing up here. Though located within the reach of commuters to Tokyo, we have remains of farm fields and “Zohki-bayashi”



Two Children’s Center @ Niiza city

We have two “children’s center” facilities which bear roles of healthy growth and wellbeing of children outside schools where children under 18 can visit and make use of. These facilities are, under contract with the city, managed and administrated by Niiza Child Care Network (CCN), an NPO organized mainly by the citizens.



What is “Zohki-bayashi”? What is “SOTO-play”?

“Zohki-bayashi” is small suburban open space woods with trees and bushes.

In the mid-17th century, Niiza City was a forest area called Musashino. The government of the time, the Edo Shogunate, cultivated the forest areas of Musashino, developed the waterways, and developed it as farmland. “Zohki-bayashi” is a remnant of Musashino’s natural forest.

Today, much of the farmland has changed to residential land. However, small farmers still remain in Niiza. And there are also “Zohki-bayashi” .

They are “Zohki-bayashi” between 2000 and 8000 square meters. Until about 1970, “Zohki-bayashi” was a natural playground for children. However, today’s children do not play “Zohki-bayashi” . Children have not inherited the culture which plays in “Zohki-bayashi” already. We can not hear the voices of children from “Zohki-bayashi” . “SOTO-play” is an activity to regain the voice of children to “Zohki-bayashi” .

*SOTO=Outside ; to play outside

Challenge of “SOTO-play”

In 2015, we tried to expand our activities from the centers into the community, and adopting the concept of play parks, we tackled the issue to extend the above mentioned right to play into community activities.

Community development of playing in the parks and Zohki-bayashi, named “SOTO-play” (SOTO=Outside ; to play outside), was realized with coordination with and cooperation from elementary schools, parents, neighborhood associations, the education board, and universities in the town and many other organizations.

As a part of “SOTO-play,” very wild plays called “PLAY plus” through cooperation from the local women’s university, were carried out over 4 weekends.

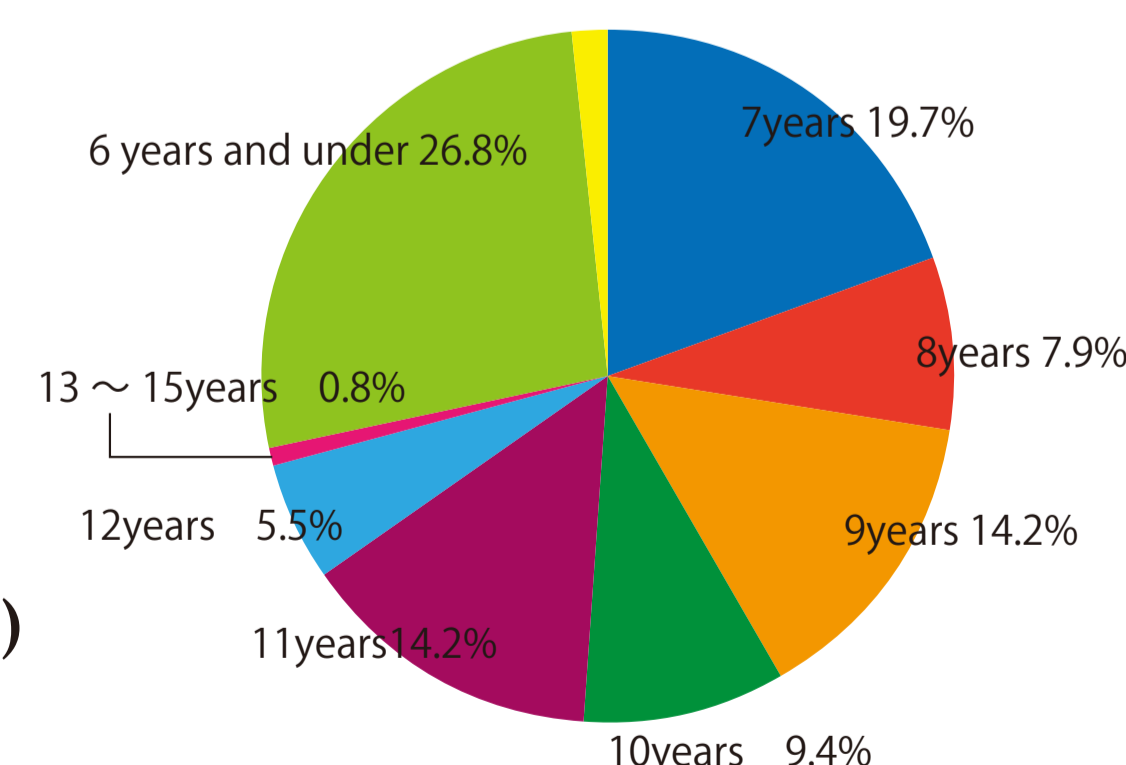
Keywords of play

createl swing tarzan branch
fallen leaf bamboo secret base
tent hiding eating hanging shaking
connecting joining pulling jumping
burning sucking blowing digging
muddy water



Date of December 5, 12, 19, 15 Day 2015

Time 10: 00-15: 00 on Saturdays
Place : SOTO-play @Jumonji-no-mori (Jumonji Women’s University)
Number of participants 416 people (Children : 215 Adult : 125 Volunteers : 76)



Passage

- May Planning proposal
- June Meeting with university
- July Subsidized by the National Youth Education Promotion Organization
- September Niiza City Board of Education sponsored
- October Preliminary briefing session for local residents, schools and stakeholders Advance meeting
- November Training for volunteers
- December SOTO-play @Jumonji-no-mori

EFFECT



Some members of city council came to notice this community development of “SOTO-play” and have started to work for preservation of these Zohki-bayashi and securing of places where children can be and play.

