

Supporting both work and childcare: MHI establishes the Kira-Kids Nursery

In April 2010, at the Nagasaki Shipyard & Machinery Works, MHI established its first nursery, the Kira-Kids Nursery, where you can see happy children playing in the sandbox, racing around and singing. It was established as part of the company's efforts to build "A bridge to the next generation," which is one of MHI's CSR Action Guidelines.

Until now, many experienced female staff members would end up leaving the company once they married or had children, and it was also not uncommon for male staff members to have a hard time finding nurseries for their children. A company nursery was established from the notion that it was necessary to make arrangements for coping with both work and childcare. Children of staff members at the Nagasaki Shipyard & Machinery Works, the Nagasaki Research & Development Center and MHI group companies from newborns to pre-school age are eligible for admission.

The name of the facility "Kira-Kids" (the word "Kira" means to shine in Japanese) was selected from suggestions submitted by employees. It expresses the hope that each of the children will be supported as they grow, walking with freedom and strength towards their own shiny future. Age groups are also named using precious stones in increasing order of hardness to parallel the children's growth: "Pearl" for newborns, "Sapphire" for three-year olds, and "Diamond" for five-year olds.

The facility is fully equipped with security for the children's safety and the parents' peace-of-mind, and also includes photovoltaic modules (PV modules) manufactured at the Nagasaki Shipyard & Machinery Works that provide power for its lighting.



(Top) Nursery electricity powered by PV modules on roof
(Bottom) First enrollees and their parents at the nursery opening ceremony



(Top) President Hideaki Omiya on a visit to the nursery
(Bottom) Joy of watching the next generation grow

Currently the nursery has 25 children enrolled, aged two and younger. Experiencing the convenience of having a nursery at the workplace is the mother of a two-year-old boy, who explained that "children can be left there from 7 a.m. until 8 p.m., so I can work longer if sudden overtime becomes necessary." The mother of a one-year-old boy also shared her joy: "I used to have his grandparents come and pick him up, but now my son and I go home after work together, so I get to spend more time with him."

The children seem at ease with the situation, with some enthusiastically donning their shoes and being eager to go any morning the word "nursery" is mentioned. The support and understanding from co-workers is also reassuring, with comments such as "even people who don't use the nursery appear interested in it" and "my co-workers are supportive of balancing work and childcare" being heard.

The company nursery makes it easier to accommodate childcare and working hours and also reduces the burden of dropping children off and picking them up at a nursery outside of the works. MHI aims to make more of a contribution by considering other support for staff members on leave for maternity or childcare, as well as from the aspects of "a gender-equal society" and "support for both work and family" sought by society today.