

## **Beyond the Japanese Traditional Virtue The Focusing on Creative Activities for Young Children**

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### **Abstract**

The purpose of this study is to clarify the role of artistic expressive activities as a method of childcare and education that supports the development of all children especially from the diversity and inclusive perspective. This study focuses on the production of original picture book as an expressive activity. In Japan, where keeping feelings inside is traditionally regarded as a virtue, children are no exception. It is an urgent issue from the viewpoint of guaranteeing children's human rights that all children learn to express their thoughts and feelings in a safe manner and to listen to others. We report on the production of an original picture book, *Amica*, as a case study.

The protagonist of the work, *Amica* is a lonely, young witch who has a frog in her throat. In order to remove the frog, *Amica* embarks upon a search for a special lily in the dark forest where she encounters a monster. Throughout her journey, *Amica* builds a friendship with the monster, who teaches her how to develop relationships with others and how to be kind, even to a small creature like a frog. The original picture book, *Amica*, as an example, the research shows creative activities could be a great help for young children to learn how to express themselves, open up their vulnerable feels and accept not only themselves but others.

**Keywords:** creative activities, diversity and inclusion, picture books, self-expression, storytelling