

# What We Want to Communicate to Children through Automobile Design and Manufacturing

## Subaru's efforts to support the next-generation development and career education

**Fuji Heavy Industries, through its SUBARU automotive business, wants to encourage children to have dreams and hopes about their future careers. To this end, we are supporting them in enhancing their abilities to think, make decisions, and express themselves and encouraging them to have even more “zest for living” through our unique position as an automaker.**

Learning about the automobile industry in line with the new educational guidelines

In Japan, the education of children is undergoing reform. For elementary schools, the government began to implement its new education guidelines in April 2011. Since then, elementary schools have been giving classes focusing on helping children enhance their abilities to think, make decisions, and express themselves, in addition to acquiring knowledge and skills, in consideration of the present educational situation in Japan and based on the philosophy of giving children a “zest for living.” Accordingly, the targets for

each grade and subject have also been renewed.

According to the new education guidelines, elementary school teachers need to encourage fifth graders to take more interest in Japan's industrial development and in the progress of informatization within Japanese society, as one of the targets for social studies. To this end, teachers give children opportunities to investigate how industrial products are supporting people's daily lives and how people engaged in industrial production are devising important measures and making efforts.

For children, the automobile industry is a good example of one type of industry, and in fact there are textbooks that introduce the industry as a major example. The manufacture of SUBARU automobiles is actually introduced in some of them! The automobile industry can help children understand how their lives are related to industry by showing how automobiles, which are familiar products to children, are manufactured. Children can also learn about automobile-related factories and about how the industry is connected to the world, and can actually visit automobile factories to observe how people are working there.

Many fifth graders have visited our

SUBARU automobile factories as part of their social studies classes and we have also supported schools in giving career education to children, conducting relevant activities continuously at each of our sites. In the future, we will give more support to education and help children have more “zest for living” in line with the government's new educational guidelines.

We want to help children understand Japan's industries, the role of work, and relationships between the industries and the global environment as much as possible by showing how we are manufacturing SUBARU automobiles, as well as providing them with tips to develop themselves through aspirations for their future careers. To this end we are conducting a range of activities, some of which are introduced below.

Helping children understand how automobiles are manufactured through hands-on experience

“Now, please watch the images that show how SUBARU automobiles are manufactured.”

Subaru Visitor Center is located within the Yajima Plant of the Gunma Manufacturing Division. On one day, fifth





graders of Komemaki Elementary School of Minakami Town, Gunma Prefecture were visiting the Center. The children were listening seriously to the explanations given by their attendant\*1.

The center has a total of about 100,000 visitors per year, of whom about 90% are elementary school students, including not only children living in Gunma but also those from other prefectures. In the recent boom of “factory tours,” the center has been accepting an even greater number of visitors.

Visitors to the center are briefed on the automobile manufacturing processes and the size of the Yajima Plant through visual images and slides before they make a tour of the plant. In the tour, they walk around the entire plant—except for the areas that visitors cannot enter, such as the site for the coating process, which has strictly limited access to prevent dust from entering. The images and slides include explanations about these inaccessible areas.

On the day, after being briefed on the plant, children from Komemaki Elementary School raised questions, such as “You are manufacturing automobiles also during the night. When do people working at night take a rest?” and “When do you eat meals?” These questions show that children are interested in the work style of employees, as well as the automobile manufacturing processes.

After the Q&A session, the children were guided to the exhibition hall, where past SUBARU cars are displayed,

including SUBARU 360 and SUBARU 1000. Looking at these models, they commented: “The seats are very different from those of cars today”; “I have never seen a car with this shape”; and many other opinions. They shouted with pleasure when they watched the movements of the horizontally-opposed engine and the symmetrical AWD system in a model displayed without the body to show the internal workings. Although they had already learned about the mechanism through images and in their textbooks, it was really exciting for them to observe the actual engine in operation.

#### Children will remember what they have actually experienced

After watching displays in the exhibition hall, the children made a tour of the plant. From an elevated place in the tour course, they could look down over the manufacturing floor, where many employees were engaged in various manufacturing processes and large machinery was being operated.

“What a loud noise!”

“I was surprised that so many people were working on the floor. I thought it would be mostly machines.”

“People and machines are cooperating together to make cars.”

“It was surprising to see the robot arms moving so elaborately—just like human hands.”

In observing the manufacturing processes one by one, children made various comments. They watched large iron

plates being press-molded, cut, and promptly transported to be assembled into cars. They will remember this exciting hands-on experience long into the future. The two teachers who were visiting the plant with the children commented, “Every year fifth graders of our school make a tour of the SUBARU plant. This year, we have visited it today in the first school semester, but the lesson on the automobile industry will be given to the children in the second semester. We’re sure that children will remember what they have experienced here today, including the movements of the machines, how many people are working here, and what sounds they have heard, for the future lesson. We also want children to understand how automobile safety is being checked at the plant.”

At the end of the visit, children expressed their ideas and future dreams in relation to automobiles. “I was surprised to know that a lot of tests are conducted on cars before they are completed”; “The blue car was cool. I want to drive an electric vehicle in the future”; and “In the future, there might be a flying car. I want to drive a car when I become an adult, because it looks to be great fun!”

Making a tour of an automobile factory is just a part of education about industry for children. We believe, however, that hands-on experience outside the classroom will help children understand more deeply about the manufacturing industry, and we will continue to make efforts in this field in future.

V O I C E



#### SUBARU Visitor Center

The Visitor Center opened in July 2003 as a facility to display and introduce SUBARU cars from the past, unique SUBARU technologies, and SUBARU environmental measures to visitors to the Yajima Plant, including those joining a plant tour.

The SUBARU Visitor Center accepts many visitors throughout the year. The manufacture of automobiles involves a range of industries, including manufacturers of automobile parts, and indeed the automobile industry provides children with a good example of several aspects of industry. Visitors can watch impressive robots and employees working in teams at the plant, and members of the Visitor Center who are working as “attendants” are committed to helping visitors to take away unforgettable memories at our facilities. I want children to remember what they have experienced here, which they can refer to when they think about their future careers.



Noriko Kurosawa  
Director of the SUBARU  
Visitor Center



### Showing a way of life through motorsports

We have been conducting social contribution activities through motorsports in the SUBARU automotive business, including contributing to the development of next-generation leaders. Specifically, since 2006, we have been giving lectures to elementary, junior high, and senior high school students by inviting automobile developers and rally drivers as lecturers, aiming to communicate to children the importance of having aspirations for the future and making efforts to make their dreams come true.

In June 2012 we gave a lecture to students of Ikushina Elementary School of Ota City, Gunma Prefecture, by inviting Mr. Toshihiro Arai, who is a rally driver. This was the seventh lecture given by Mr. Arai at the school.

Ikushina Elementary School gives sixth graders a special class on ways of life and has been cooperating with us to provide children with opportunities to listen to world-class rally drivers and think about their futures seriously.

The lecture was given in the comprehensive learning class for sixth graders. First, an employee engaged in R&D for

SUBARU cars explained about SUBARU's manufacturing processes and environmental activities, and then Mr. Arai gave a talk about his life as a rally driver, discussing what is really necessary to make one's dream come true.

Then the sixth graders moved to the school grounds to watch a driving demonstration of the SUBARU WRX STI Group R4\*<sup>1</sup> rally car by Mr. Arai. The car was driven around with the Principal, Osamu Tsuchiya, riding alongside Mr. Arai. Watching the car racing past, the children shouted with joy, their eyes shining. It must have been an extraordinary experience for them to watch a rally car racing across their school grounds!

Such an experience gives children an opportunity to deepen their understanding of automobiles, motorsports, and the global environment. We will continue to conduct this activity to give children, who will be next-generation leaders, both excitement and inspiration.

### Increasing children's "zest for living" by giving them hands-on experience

We have also been dispatching employ-

ees to schools in Utsunomiya City to give special environmental classes to children, while at the same time accepting junior high school students to our sites to give them workplace experience. We are thus implementing initiatives to provide children with career education for their futures.

We are continuing all these efforts, seeking to demonstrate the wonder of manufacturing to children by giving them opportunities to watch employees at work in our manufacturing facilities and to learn about our latest technologies and cars, which will encourage their own development in the future.

The aspirations that children currently hold for their futures will, of course, change over time as the industrial structure and economy change, and as the aging of society progresses with the decreasing birthrate. But in any case, we hope that children will grow up having abundant "zest for living" and also the ability to think independently, to which we will continue to contribute through the manufacture of SUBARU automobiles.

\*1 Group R4: Rally car category set by the Federation International de l'Automobile (FIA). Introduced to increase competitiveness in the Group N category, in which the alteration of cars sold in the market is strictly prohibited.

V O I C E

We give children lessons on different ways of life, encouraging them to think about their own lives through a range of experiences and by learning about a wide spectrum of fields. I think we are very lucky to have the special lessons held on SUBARU automobiles, which certainly also provide the teachers with opportunities to think from a broader perspective view and help us improve our educational quality.



Osamu Tsuchiya  
Principal, Ikushina  
Elementary School, Ota City

Initially I wasn't sure whether it was good for children to watch me driving a rally car around the school grounds. However, the children were truly delighted to see it. My talk provides children with an opportunity to have a direct experience of motorsports and I think it is my mission to show children how it is wonderful to make efforts to become a world No. 1.



Mr. Toshihiro Arai  
Independent rally driver

V O I C E