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## Kodomo

By Kulkin, Susan

Putnam Juvenile, 1995. Hardcover. Book Condition: New. New unread book, may have light shelf wear. Grade 3-6-Kodomo, meaning child or children, describes the everyday lives of 6 girls and 1 boy, ranging in age from 8 to 14, in contemporary Japan. The first section, "A Way of Life," focuses on daily activities in Hiroshima; the second, "Traditional Activities," on sports and the arts in the ancient capital of Kyoto. Each part opens with evocations of nature and closes with a brief description of the city involved. In between, the children introduce themselves. Those from Hiroshima describe shopping, school life, the complexities of donning a kimono, and setting up for the Doll Festival. The Kyoto section features youngsters working at kendo and judo, mastering calligraphy, and studying the tea ceremony and traditional dance. Though supposedly first-person narratives, the presentations are fairly uniform—only one child seems to have a distinct voice and personality of her own. The full-color photographs are excellent, lively, and sometimes humorous, capturing the variety and individuality of these young people far better than the text. The typeface chosen to introduce each subsection is not distinct enough, making for some momentary confusion. Judith Elkin's *A Family in Japan* (Lerner, 1987) presents...



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