

Implementation of Center Learning Model for Early Childhood in Kemala Bhayangkari 05 Kindergarten, Banten Region

Alfia Batshila^{1*}, Asya Alifa², Felicia Yorenda³, Dian Surya Aprilyanti⁴, Sipa Unnaziah⁵, Luthfiah Robbiyati Shofa⁶, Sumiati⁷, Nanda Shafira Ashadi⁸, Siti Dewi Winengsih⁹, Hanifa Almira Nanda¹⁰

Sultan Ageng Tirtayasa University

Corresponding Author : Alfia Batshila: 2228210064@untirta.ac.id

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ABSTRACT

Early childhood, according to Yuliani Sujiono (2014), is a child aged from birth to 6 years. This period is very crucial in the formation of character, personality, and intellectual abilities of children. Early childhood education can be understood as a learning process that focuses on developing potential including cognitive, emotional, social, physical-motor, language, and moral aspects. The center learning model is an educational approach specifically aimed at early childhood, with an emphasis on development through play activities. This approach combines two main elements, namely circle time and play centers. This research method uses a qualitative descriptive approach. Data collection is carried out through observation, interviews, documentation, and field notes. Learning at Kemala Bhayangkari 05 Kindergarten, Banten Region, shows significant effectiveness in implementing the center learning model.

INTRODUCTION

Early childhood is an individual who is undergoing a rapid and crucial development phase for their future life. They are small figures who hold various potentials that need to be optimized. Early childhood is a complete entity both physically and spiritually, equipped with all the necessary biological and psychological structures and devices. Therefore, every developmental experience they experience has a profound and lasting impact on the child's subsequent development (Apri & Irayana, 2022). Children are a gift that must be guarded, the growth, development, and education of early childhood need to be considered properly.

Early childhood, according to Yuliani Sujiono (2014), is a child aged from birth to 6 years. This period is very crucial in the formation of character, personality, and intellectual abilities of children. Esa (in Mutiah 2015) explains that based on the National Education System Law No. 20 of 2003, early childhood is defined as a group of humans aged 0 to 6 years. However, some experts extend this definition to the age of 8 years. According to Widodo (2019: 3), in Indonesia, early childhood still refers to children aged 0-6 years, which is slightly different from the international definition which includes ages 0-8 years according to the world child convention. Thus, early childhood can be understood as individuals under 6 years of age, including those who are still in the womb, who experience physical, mental, personality, and intellectual growth and development, both those who receive educational services and those who do not.

According to Prof. Dr. M.J Langeveld, education is the process of providing spiritual guidance and support to individuals who still need it. H. Horne defines education as a continuous process that involves higher adjustments for humans who have developed physically and mentally, and have awareness and freedom in their relationship with God, which is reflected in the intellectual, emotional, and humanitarian aspects. Ahmad D. Marimba added that education is guidance carried out consciously by educators, which leads to the physical and spiritual development of students to form superior personalities (Bp et al., 2022). Thus, education can be understood as a learning process that aims to improve the knowledge, skills, and attitudes of individuals. This process includes various forms, including formal education in schools, non-formal education, and informal learning. Education does not only focus on academic aspects, but also on the development of character and social values, which are very important for creating individuals who can make positive contributions to society.

In Law No. 20 of 2003: 6 concerning the National Education System Article 1, point 14, Early Childhood Education is defined as a development effort aimed at children from birth to 6 years of age. This effort is carried out through the provision of educational stimulation that aims to support the growth and physical and mental development of children, so that they are ready to continue their education to a higher level (Arifudin, 2019). Early childhood education can be understood as a learning process that focuses on developing children's potential as a whole, including cognitive, emotional, social, physical-motor, language, and moral aspects. In this phase, children are given the opportunity to learn through enjoyable experiences and stimulation that is appropriate to their

age, so that they can support optimal development in various aspects of life, including motor skills, language, social intelligence, and the basics of good values and attitudes. Early childhood education has a very important role in building a strong foundation for children's growth in the future, as well as preparing them to face challenges in the wider social and educational environment. The learning process in early childhood education should be carried out in a way that is fun, inspiring, interesting, challenging, and motivates children to actively participate in the learning process, as well as providing opportunities for children to be independent and creative according to their developmental stage.

To achieve success in education, it is essential to involve various forms of preparation in the learning process, including methods, strategies, approaches, and learning models. The application and implementation of these aspects in educational institutions are essential so that the delivery of material remains based on theories and principles that are relevant to early childhood education. The learning characteristics of early childhood are different from other levels of education, so their learning styles must be adjusted to their needs, age, and existing learning principles. By understanding the learning characteristics of each child, teachers can design a series of learning that is appropriate for the child. Teachers must be able to encourage changes in children's behavior. The goal of the learning process is to change the child's personality both in the short and long term. We need creative and competent teachers to develop innovative, qualified, and competitive students.

One of the skills that must be possessed by a teacher is pedagogical competence. According to Susilo (2011), pedagogical competence includes the teacher's ability to manage the child's learning process, which includes preparation of learning resources, implementation of learning, and assessment of learning outcomes. In 2008, the National Education Standards Agency (BSNP) formulated ten core pedagogical competencies, consisting of seven core competencies to facilitate assessment by the Ministry of Education and Culture (2013). These competencies include: a) understanding child characteristics, b) mastery of learning theories and pedagogical principles, c) curriculum development, d) implementation of learning activities, e) development of child potential, f) communication, and g) assessment and evaluation. This emphasizes how crucial pedagogical competence is for a teacher.

Learning models that emphasize the meaning of life and can be applied to children from an early age have caused various problems in Indonesia. Disagreements on issues that arise related to diverse learning approaches often lead to prolonged conflict, without any clear solution to the problems of the learning model (Engel, 2014). A plan or pattern that explains the process of developing and creating an environment that allows children to interact in learning to achieve change or development is known as a learning model (Nasution, 2019).

The center learning model developed by the Creative Center For Childhood Research And Training (CCCRT) in Florida, United States, was pioneered by Dr. Pamela Phelps. This model was first adapted by drg. Wismiarti, who has a vision to create spiritually intelligent children without ignoring other intelligences

(Hanafi, 2014). To overcome this problem, a learning approach is needed that teaches children about the meaning of learning and fosters a sense of joy in learning from an early age. Meaningful learning is integrated into the field of science to facilitate children's understanding, because it contains elements that are meaningful in their lives. The purpose of this study is to find a center-based integrated learning model that can improve the quality of children's education (Qori'ah et al., 2019).

Learning models have a very important role in the implementation of education so that it can run effectively and efficiently. Various types of learning models can be applied in Early Childhood Education (PAUD), such as the Frobel model, Montessori, among system, Reggio Emilia, High Scope, BCCT/Sentra, and others. However, the essence of early childhood learning lies in the learning system that includes the process and objectives of implementing the education (Fitri, A. N., Steffani, C., & Afifah, S. (2022). The center model is a learning model developed by Drs. Helen Parkhurst who came to America to study the Dalton School System in 1904. The Dalton class system is different from regular schools that use the classical system. Dalton School utilizes empty rooms or spaces, with special rooms for History, Earth Science, and Natural Sciences, where each empty room has its own room (Watini, 2019). The center and circle-based learning model/BCCT is an early childhood learning concept that has been officially adopted by the Ministry of National Education of the Republic of Indonesia since 2004. The inventor of BCCT is Dr. Pameela Phelps, an education figure in the United States who has contributed more than 40 years to the world of PAUD. Learning that focuses on centers is carried out entirely from the beginning to the end of the activity and is oriented towards the PAUD age group that is at the center of the activity. Each center supports child development through three types of play: sensorimotor or functional play, role-play, and constructive play that encourages children's thinking (Lailan, 2017). The center and circle model is an approach to implementing Early Childhood Education (PAUD) that emphasizes children as the center of learning. In this model, children interact in play centers and in circles, using four types of scaffolding to support their development, namely: (1) play environment scaffolding, (2) scaffolding before playing, (3) scaffolding during playing, and (4) scaffolding after playing. The application of the center and circle time concept aims to form positive attitudes that can help children develop good morals and multiple intelligences, so that they can balance and optimize the functions of the left and right brain (Aulia Rahman et al., 2022). All of these activities are arranged in an integrated manner through play activities in seven centers. Therefore, this study aims to analyze in more depth the implementation of the PAUD learning model based on centers and circles, and explore the advantages of this model in improving various aspects of child development. The title of this research is "Implementation of the PAUD Learning Model Based on Centers and Circle Time in Improving Various Aspects of Child Development." (Wilis Werdiningsih, 2022).

LITERATURE REVIEW

The center learning model is an approach that utilizes various units to make play activities a learning tool for children. The characteristic of this model is the emphasis on the importance of providing scaffolding to help children build concepts, rules, ideas, and knowledge. According to Latif, the center and circle approach is a method in organizing Early Childhood Education that emphasizes children's experiences, where the learning process takes place in the play area and when children are in the circle. This method implements four types of scaffolding to support child development, namely: (1) play environment scaffolding, (2) scaffolding before playing, (3) scaffolding during playing, and (4) scaffolding after playing (Hayati & Da, 2021). Asmawati (2014) explains that a center is a play zone or area equipped with various play equipment that functions as an essential environmental scaffolding to support children's development in three types of play, namely sensorimotor or functional play, role play, and constructive play. The center and circle learning model, also known as the learning center, is a child-focused approach. Learning is centered on the main center and when the child is in the circle. Play centers are areas where children interact with various play tools. These centers play an important role in children's development through three types of play: sensorimotor (functional) play, role play, and constructive play. In a circle, educators sit with children in a circular formation to provide a foothold before and after the main activity (Ii, 2019).

According to Wykart et al. (Depdiknas, 2004: 1), there are three categories of play: 1) Sensory movement (functional play), 2) Role play (micro and macro), and 3) Large development (fluid properties/materials and natural structures). These types of play are applied in the Beyond Centers and Circle Time (BCCT) learning model. Learning practices at Kemala Bhayangkari Kindergarten are different from general center practices, although learning activities still follow the principles of the Learning Center, including initial conditions and conditions after children play. Designing a child's play environment is an important initial step. This is in line with the opinion of the Depdiknas (2006) which states that preparing a play environment for children is an initial foundation consisting of three stages: pre-play experience (15 minutes), level of experience in play (60 minutes), and level of post-play experience (30 minutes). This activity provides a foothold for children to optimize their development towards the next skill. Welcoming children warmly and asking how they are helps prepare them for school. This is in line with Mulyasa's (2017) view that teacher greeting activities can help neutralize children's sadness through transitional activities such as games, stories, and puzzles. Knowing, feeling, and providing appropriate feedback can have a positive impact on children's activities throughout the day at school. Introducing children by involving them in praying, reciting the Koran, and memorizing.

Learning in centers is focused on children by creating an environment that supports exploration. This provides an opportunity for each child to be active, creative, and brave in making decisions. The role of teachers as facilitators, motivators, and evaluators is very important in this process. Children's activities take place in centers that interest them, expected to develop all aspects of child

growth optimally. The center method has many benefits in early childhood development, allowing them to explore experiences through play, create according to their imagination, and gain real experiences.

Therefore, it is very important to build a strong foundation in core learning from the beginning to optimize child development. Each child is treated individually by the teacher. These activities include walking, doing various activities, and helping children achieve higher levels of skill. In the process, the teacher provides instructions and examples, but if the child is able to play independently, the teacher will observe and motivate them to try better. This approach is adjusted to the child's developmental stage so that all children have a solid foundation in early childhood education. This is in line with the view of Smith and Dziurgot (2010) who stated that the adult approach must be adjusted to the child's play needs. Some children may need more help and support, while others can play alone. When a child asks for help, the teacher needs to pay attention for a moment. In addition, the teacher must understand the level of need of each child. Documentation of the results of the child's play will be carried out by the teacher after the play session or when the children go home. The teacher provides opportunities and time for children to expand their experiences, as well as providing appropriate and effective communication models, and support from peers that allow children to interact. All developments and progress in the child's play will be recorded by the teacher through photos and portfolios. (Ningsih et al., 2021).

METHODOLOGY

This research method uses a qualitative descriptive approach. This research was conducted by applying the center learning model to early childhood in Kemala Bhayangkari 05 Kindergarten, located at Jl. Ahmad Yani No. 8, Cipare Village, Serang District, Serang City, Banten Province. Data collection was carried out through observation, interviews, documentation, and field notes. Observation aims to understand the situation of the center learning process in class or group of Kindergarten A which consists of 7 people. Interviews were conducted as the main technique with teachers at the school to obtain information about the effectiveness of the center learning model applied. Documentation functions as a secondary technique to complete existing data. Field notes were used to collect data from observations, reflections, and other information obtained during the study.

RESEARCH RESULT

Based on the results of the study conducted through observations at Kemala Bhayangkari 05 Kindergarten in Banten Region, there are similarities with the previous definition. In implementing learning using the center model, the process including planning, implementation, and evaluation has been carried out in accordance with the plan prepared by the teacher. The plan is stated in a different teaching module every day, where the teacher provides a basis for the play environment, a basis before playing, a basis while playing, and a basis after playing. According to the Directorate General of Early Childhood Education (2014), RPPH is the smallest planning step used to organize and guide activities

in one day. RPPH is compiled based on RPPM and includes activities selected from the metrics planned for the day according to the specified theme and subtheme.

Learning at Kemala Bhayangkari 05 Kindergarten in Banten Region shows significant effectiveness, especially in supporting early childhood development. The core learning process includes various activities such as creating a play environment, greeting children, starting a play session, making transitions, and activities before, during, and after play, including eating together and closing activities. Teachers are responsible for managing adequate play equipment, providing three playgrounds for each child, and implementing three types of games, namely sensory-motor games, role-playing, and developmental games.

At Kemala Bhayangkari Kindergarten, there are various centers, including a preparation center, an art center, a block center, and a worship center. The worship center is used for Dhuha prayer activities on Friday mornings, where children after morning journals take ablution and prayer equipment such as mukena, sarongs, and prayer mats, then perform Dhuha prayers with teacher guidance in prayer. The art center is used for art activities, including playing drum bands, as well as angklung musical instruments and painting.

Some activities in Kemala Bhayangkari 05 Kindergarten in Banten are grouped by age, but teachers have the flexibility to integrate activities into one general activity. This allows children from Group A to interact with children from Group B. Activities that can be done together include habituation, morning circle, sports, praying, praying together, and playing in the play area during break time. Group A and Group B can be combined into one group. Common practices in some activities give children in Group A the courage to interact and develop their language skills through socialization and the addition of new vocabulary. Each core activity is carried out by determining a starting point that is appropriate to the type of center and learning topic.

DISCUSSION

This study shows that the implementation of the center-based learning model at TK Kemala Bhayangkari is effective in supporting early childhood development. The center-based learning model creates a child-centered learning environment. In this context, teachers play a crucial role as facilitators, motivators, and evaluators, allowing children to actively participate in every learning activity.

The center-based learning model not only enhances children's cognitive skills but also encompasses social, emotional, and language aspects. Children's interactions with peers and teachers are essential in building their confidence and communication skills. Additionally, the diversity within the center-based learning model provides opportunities for children to explore various types of play that support their development.

This study also identified several challenges in implementing the center-based learning model, such as limited facilities and the need for further training for teachers to enhance their pedagogical competence. Therefore, the success of the center-based learning model depends on supporting infrastructure, teacher readiness, and support from educational institutions.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The effectiveness of implementing the center-based learning model in early childhood education is related to how well this model meets the desired learning objectives, particularly in developing various aspects of child development, such as cognitive, social, emotional, and physical growth. The measurement of effectiveness is based on the outcomes of this method in supporting children's development according to their individual potential, as well as how the learning environment, teaching strategies, and the role of teachers contribute to achieving optimal learning results.

From the discussion above, it can be concluded that activities at TK Kemala Bhayangkari 05 in the Banten region are grouped based on age. However, teachers have the flexibility to integrate activities into a general activity. This allows children in Group A to interact with children in Group B. Activities that can be conducted together include routines, morning circle, exercise, praying, congregational prayers, and playing in the playground during recess. Group A and Group B can be merged into a single group. Common routines in several activities provide children in Group A with the confidence to interact and develop their language skills through socialization and the addition of new vocabulary. Each core activity begins with an initial starting point tailored to the type of center and the learning topic. Therefore, it is essential to establish a foundation in core learning at an early stage to optimize children's development.

ADVANCED RESEARCH

This study has limitations that can serve as opportunities for further research. The limitation of the research location, which was conducted in only one early childhood education institution, TK Kemala Bhayangkari 05, opens opportunities to expand the study to various other early childhood education institutions. The relatively short research duration provides only an overview of the implementation of the center-based learning model. A longer duration would allow for a deeper understanding of the long-term impact of the center-based learning model on children's development. Additionally, future research could explore other learning models, such as Montessori or Reggio Emilia, and compare them to identify the strengths and weaknesses of each learning model.

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The researcher acknowledges that this study has certain shortcomings. Therefore, constructive criticism and suggestions are highly welcomed. Hopefully, the findings of this study will be beneficial for the development of early childhood education and serve as a reference for future research.

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