

Management of Finger Painting Learning in Fostering and Developing Fine Motor Stimulation in Children Aged 2-4 Years in the Jungle School Nature Play Group

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Abstract

Finger painting is one of the effective sensory-motor stimulation methods in developing fine motor skills in early childhood. This study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of finger painting activities in developing fine motor skills of children aged 2-4 years, with a focus on KB Alam Jungle School in Gunung Pati District, Semarang City. The method used is descriptive qualitative research, with primary and secondary data collection through interviews, observations, and documentation. The validity of the data was obtained through triangulation techniques. The results of the study stated that finger painting activities were effective in stimulating the development of fine motor skills in children aged 2-4 years. With good planning, flexible implementation, and a supportive environment, children can explore and improve hand-eye coordination, as well as develop creativity and confidence. The role of teachers as facilitators is important to create positive interaction and learning comfort. Evaluation is carried out qualitatively through observation and portfolio, allowing teachers to design sustainable learning strategies. This approach also supports the child's overall social and emotional development.

Keywords: KB Alam Jungle School, finger painting, fine motor stimulation

INTRODUCTION

Early childhood is in a golden age in human development. During this period, children have a high sensitivity to various information received from the surrounding environment (Fadhillah, 2019). The environment plays an important role in providing early experiences that can shape children's cognitive, social, and emotional development.

Children's brain development develops rapidly in the Golden Age, especially at the age of 0-6 years, 80% of brain growth occurs. At this age, parental interaction and treatment are the basis for the formation of children's behavior, disposition, and intellectual skills (Richmond et al., 2022). At this stage, education is very important in shaping children's mindset, character and skills. The right education is able to optimize intellectual, emotional and social potential.

Early Childhood Education (PAUD) acts as a forum for children to get fun and meaningful learning experiences. In order for the learning process in PAUD to run optimally, various supporting aspects are needed that are able to support children's development as a whole. One of the important factors in early childhood education is the provision of a play environment that is appropriate and in accordance with the needs of early childhood. In addition, the learning materials used must be safe and adjusted to the child's developmental stage. Positive social interactions also play a role in building their confidence and communication skills. All of these aspects need to be designed in a systematic and measurable learning plan to provide optimal results for children's growth and development. (Susan et al., 2023)

Early Childhood Education (PAUD) is a level of education before basic education intended for children aged 0-6 years, as preparation before continuing to a higher level (Rusman et al., 2020). PAUD provides a learning experience that stimulates children's development through educational activities that help develop social, cognitive, motor, and emotional skills (Susanti et al., 2022).

Stimulation of fine motor skills is an important aspect of child development from an early age. (Ahmadin et al., 2023) Fine motor development plays an important role in determining a child's academic success in primary education (Muarifah & Nurkhasanah, 2019). If these skills are not stimulated properly,

children can experience various difficulties in the learning process. If these skills are not stimulated properly, children can experience various difficulties in the learning process. Lack of fine motor development can cause barriers for early childhood when entering further education. Children may become less interested in learning because they have difficulty writing or doing tasks that require hand-eye coordination. In addition, they can also have difficulty completing their work in class, lack independence, and experience a decrease in confidence. If left unchecked, this can have further impacts, such as the appearance of laziness to go to school. With the right attention, children will be better prepared to face future learning challenges and more confident in doing various activities.

At the age of 2-4 years, children begin to learn to use their hands and fingers more skillfully. They have begun to be able to hold small objects, scribble on paper, and do activities that require coordination between eyes and hands. Fine motor development is the ability to perform activities that require coordination and control of small muscles. This fine motor development is greatly influenced by the environment and the activities given to children. A supportive environment, such as a play group, is essential in providing the right stimulation for fine motor development. (Siskawati & Syarah, 2020).

Activities that have been shown to be effective in stimulating fine motor skills are through art activities, such as finger painting. Finger painting is a finger painting activity, in which children are given the freedom to create artwork by dipping their fingers in paint and applying it to media such as paper. This activity not only trains eye and hand coordination, but also stimulates children's senses through different paint textures, colors, and finger movements. In addition, finger painting also offers freedom of expression, where children can express themselves without formal restrictions, which is important in increasing creativity and building confidence. (Meliyana & Rusmariansa, 2021; Octavianti & Tama, 2023; Haryono & Harlina, 2020)

This activity not only trains eye and hand coordination, but also stimulates children's senses through different paint textures, colors, and finger movements. In addition, finger painting also offers a freedom of expression, where children can express themselves without formal restrictions, which is important in increasing creativity and building confidence.

However, although finger painting offers many benefits, its implementation in a playgroup environment is still not fully optimal. Some play groups may underutilize this activity due to limited resources, time, or an understanding of the importance of art activities in children's development. In addition, the lack of variety in the activities given to the child can cause children to feel bored, so there is not enough stimulation to stimulate their fine motor development optimally. (Chayanti & Setyowati, 2022).

Empirical data reveal that there are urgent problems related to fine motor development in children aged 2-4 years. A national survey conducted showed that 23.4% of preschool-age children in Indonesia experienced delays in fine motor development. This problem was more specifically identified by the finding that 31.7% of children aged 2-4 years had difficulty in pre-writing skills, 28.3% had difficulty in scissors, and 26.5% had difficulty in eye-hand coordination. The consequences of this delay are multidimensional, impacting not only academic readiness, but also on psychosocial aspects such as self-efficacy and independence (Ministry of Health of the Republic of Indonesia, 2022; Muarifah & Nurkhasanah, 2019; Fredrika et al., 2021). The findings revealed that low fine motor skills at preschool age correlated with a 2.3 times greater risk of learning difficulties at elementary school age. (Lin et al., 2022)

The Jungle School Nature Play Group in Gunungpati is a private school that carries the concept of nature-based education. The school focuses on outdoor learning, especially in natural places such as forests and parks. The goal of this approach is to provide a more exploratory and interactive learning experience, as well as help children develop motor, cognitive, and social skills, while fostering their love for the environment. The activities carried out include games, exploration, gardening, and getting to know various types of plants and animals in the outdoors.

Fine motor development in early childhood is essential to support their cognitive, social, and emotional abilities. Based on data in the field, there are still some students who show limitations in activities that require fine motor coordination. Problems in the field show that there are still some students who have difficulty controlling their finger movements. When participating in learning activities, children tend to be unsteady in holding pencils or brushes, as well as having difficulty in performing grasping and pinching movements. This condition not only impacts academic abilities, such as writing and drawing, but also on daily activities, such as wearing buttons or picking up small objects. (Astuti, 2020)

Based on the urgency and gaps that have been identified, this study aims to see how effective finger painting activities are in helping the development of fine motor skills in children aged 2-4 years. This research can provide various benefits, especially in improving the fine motor skills of children aged 2-4 years. Through finger painting activities, children are expected to be able to develop basic skills such as grasping, pinching, and moving their fingers more skillfully.

METHOD

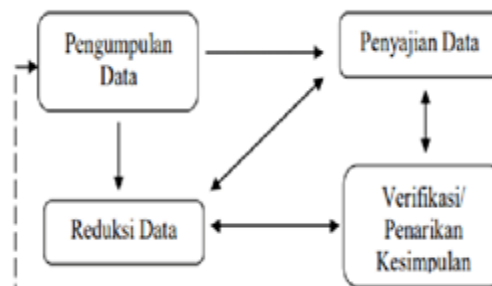
This study uses a type of descriptive qualitative research. This qualitative approach was chosen because qualitative research was chosen in a study because it has many advantages, especially in understanding things that cannot be measured with numbers. The location of this research is at KB Alam Jungle School, Gunung Pati District, Semarang City, Central Java.

KB Alam Jungle School was chosen as the research location because of the learning approach applied in accordance with the needs of early childhood development, especially in fine motor aspects. The facilities and infrastructure provided by this school provide opportunities for children to explore freely and actively, so that they can support the optimization of their fine motor development through various creative activities, including finger painting. In addition, KB Alam Jungle School has a learning program that focuses on sensory experiences and motor skills. With an age range of 2-4 years in accordance with the research objectives, this school is an ideal place to observe the effectiveness of finger painting activities in developing children's fine motor skills.

This study focuses on optimizing finger painting activities in the development of fine motor skills in children aged 2-4 years. This study uses two types of data, namely primary and secondary data. (a) Primary data can be collected using interview, observation, and documentation techniques. (b) Secondary Data is data obtained from other sources relevant to the research topic, such as teachers' daily/monthly records about child development, curriculum or learning programs of KB Alam Jungle School, teaching modules, teaching materials/supporting materials.

The data collection techniques used in this study are interviews, observations, and documentation. The data validity technique in this study uses the triangulation technique. triangulation, which is carried out by comparing data from various sources, methods, or times In this study, the triangulation technique is applied by: (a) Source triangulation: Verifying the data from interviews with teachers, parents, and direct observation of children during finger painting activities. (b) Triangulation method: Comparing findings from observations, interviews, and documentation (photos, videos, children's work) to ensure data consistency (Sugiyono , 2020).(c) Time triangulation: Perform repeated observations on different finger painting sessions to test the stability of the results.

(Miles et al., 2014) stated that data analysis techniques can be carried out by means of data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and conclusions. Data collection is the process of obtaining the information needed Data reduction is summarizing or selecting the main things that focus on important things. The following is the flow of data analysis techniques carried out in this study:



Picture 1. Data Analysis Techniques

The first stage in data analysis is data collection, which is collecting information in accordance with the research objectives through interviews, observations, documentation, or literature studies. Second, **data reduction**, which is filtering and summarizing data to make it more focused and easy to understand. Irrelevant information is eliminated, and data is grouped by theme. Third, **data presentation**, which is to systematically display data in the form of narratives, tables, graphs, or diagrams so that patterns and relationships between data are easily recognized. Finally, **drawing conclusions**, which is formulating the core of research findings based on the data that has been analyzed. To ensure accuracy, triangulation or re-checking of the data is carried out.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Planning of Fine Motor Development Activities at the Jungle School Nature Play Group in Gunungpati

Finger painting activities in the context of early childhood education are designed not only as an art

form, but also as a structured and systematic pedagogical to develop various aspects of child development.

The purpose of this activity is emphasized to develop fine motor skills, creativity, and the ability to coordinate children's hands and eyes. This is reflected in the informant's statement that through dipping a finger in a cape and making patterns on paper, children learn to control hand and finger movements, regarding texture and color, and practice pre-writing skills naturally and fun. In line with the findings, fine motor stimulation administered exploratively through direct touch has been shown to be more effective compared to one-way methods.(Honorable -Montesinos et al., 2021)

Teachers also prepare child-friendly learning media. In the data reduction document, it was mentioned that some teachers even made their own paints from a mixture of flour, water, and food coloring to ensure safety. Media such as large and thick paper is provided to provide space for children to express freely without fear of tearing or getting dirty. This shows the teacher's awareness of the importance of tools and materials that are not only safe, but also attractive and support children's sensory activities. states that directly tangible sensory media, especially those with striking colors and soft textures, are very effective in building connectivity between the child's sense of touch and visuals.(Fredrika et al., 2021)

Table 1. Finger Painting Materials and Media at KB Alam Jungle School

Materials/Media	Description	Selection Considerations
Cat Finger Painting	Made from a blend of flour, water, and natural food coloring	Safe, non-toxic, easy to clean, pleasant texture
Painting Media	A3 size thick paper, used cardboard	Wide size, varied texture, eco-friendly
Supporting Tools	Plastic aprons, floorboards, paint containers	Protects clothes, prevents dirt from spreading, makes it easy to use
Alternative Materials	Colored sand, rice flour, pulp	Texture variety, different sensory experiences, utilizing local ingredients

In addition, finger painting activities are designed to blend with daily or weekly themes. The informant mentioned that this activity does not stand alone, but is integrated with thematic approaches and development indicators. Thus, children can associate finger painting activities with other learning experiences. For example, in the theme "universe", children are invited to paint stars and moons; In the theme "Family", they make a picture of the house or the mother's face. This approach also supports the principle of contextual learning that is very important in early childhood .(Agustin et al., 2021).

Table 2. Theme Integration in Finger Painting Planning

Theme	Finger Painting Activities	Stimulated Fine Motor Aspects
Universe	Painting the sky, stars, and moon	Twisting, pressing, point-making movements
My Family	Create a picture of a family member	Moving fingers to create straight and curved lines
Animal	Creating animal shapes and textures	Pinching, pressing, rubbing movements
Plant	Making leaf and flower stamps	Finger coordination to hold, press, and lift

The learning environment is carefully prepared. The floor is covered with plastic, the room is provided with good ventilation, and the child is equipped with an apron to maintain cleanliness. This preparation aims to create a comfortable and safe atmosphere for children, so that they feel free to explore. The room was prepared the day before to avoid panic on the day of the implementation. The spatial and media arrangement also pays attention to the child's movement limits so that they remain in the activity area. As stated by, the comfort of space is one of the important aspects in supporting the freedom of exploration in early childhood (Fatmawati et al., 2022).

Implementation of Fine Motor Development Activities at the Jungle School Nature Play Group in Gunungpati

The results of the study show that the implementation of finger painting learning at KB Alam Jungle School applies a child-centered approach with exploratory and flexible learning characteristics. Observations revealed the sequence of activities as follows:

Table 3. Stages of Finger Painting Activities

Stages	Duration	Teacher Activities	Children's Activities	Stimulated Motor Aspects
Unveiling	5-7 minutes	Greetings, giving an introduction to the theme, telling stories/singing	Listening, participating in singing, responding to questions	Motor readiness through hand movements while singing
Demonstration	3-5 minutes	Shows how to dip a finger, create an archetype	Observing, asking, showing enthusiasm	Visual observation underlying eye-hand coordination
Free Exploration	15-20 minutes	Facilitating, accompanying, and motivating	Finger dipping, mixing colors, creating patterns	Finger strength, bilateral coordination, smooth movement control
Reflection	5-7 minutes	Discussing works, giving appreciation	Explain work, respond to questions	Verbal articulation related to motor experience
Closing	5 minutes	Help clean, conclude activities	Cleaning hands, looking at the work	Hand sanitizing movements, drying hands

The implementation of finger painting is carried out exploratively and flexibly. Based on observation data, this activity began with an opening such as singing together or telling stories about the theme of the day. This approach provides an initial stimulus for the child to be emotionally involved before starting the core activity. In the core activity, the teacher gives a simple example, then the child is given the freedom to mix colors, make patterns, and choose the desired shape. The approach used is a themaculous-exploratory approach, in which children are not limited by strict rules, but are directed to discover their own learning experiences.

This strategy is in line with constructivist theory in early childhood learning, which emphasizes the importance of hands-on experience and active involvement of children in the learning process. Data shows that children show the courage to try new things without fear of making mistakes. They dip their fingers, mix colors, make spiral patterns, and even mention the names of the shapes or objects they paint. This courage is formed because teachers do not act as controllers, but as supportive facilitators. (Afnida & Suparno, 2020).

The interaction between teachers and children during the activity is also a key factor in the success of learning. The teacher actively greets the child, gives praise when the child tries to mix new colors, and responds enthusiastically when the child shows the work. One of the informants stated that the teacher often bends down to be in line with the child's eyes when speaking, creating positive emotional contact. This interaction is in line with the opinion that empathetic two-way communication between teachers and children can increase children's sense of security and enthusiasm for learning. (Samadovna & Islamovna, 2022).

Child involvement is very high. Observations show that the child laughs, talks to friends about his paintings, and actively shows the results to the teacher. Even children who were initially quiet were finally willing to dip their fingers in the paint and start trying. This indicates that finger painting not only develops fine motor skills, but also becomes a medium to foster confidence and courage to express (Imani, 2021).

Time management is also carried out carefully. The execution time of about 40 minutes is divided into three phases: opening, core, and closing. Nevertheless, teachers remain flexible to the needs of children. If the child looks tired, activities can be interspersed with breaks. If the child is still enthusiastic, the teacher allows them to complete their work longer. This shows that finger painting learning does not only emphasize achievement targets, but pays attention to the natural rhythm of early childhood development (Mayar et al., 2023).

Evaluation of Fine Motor Development Activities in the Jungle School Nature Play Group in Gunungpati

KB Alam Jungle School applies a process-based evaluation approach to assess children's fine motor development through finger painting activities. The evaluation does not focus on the final result in the form of a "good" painting, but on the progress of the process and the skills that the child shows during the activity. Teachers make direct observations during the activity. Diaries or anecdotes are used to record the child's responses, participation levels, progress in fine motor skills, as well as social attitudes such as cooperation, perseverance, and independence. This kind of assessment is in accordance with the authentic approach in early childhood assessment, which assesses children holistically (Ulfah, 2019).

Teachers also analyze children's works based on shapes, colors, patterns, and symbols used. When a child mentions that red is "sun" or the round shape is "cat", it indicates that symbolic thinking skills are beginning to develop. According to Ability, giving symbols to visual objects is part of important cognitive and

language development in preschool. (Yildiz & Yildiz, 2022).

Children's works are then collected in portfolios as developmental documentation. Teachers do not judge from the aesthetic side (good or not), but from development indicators such as the courage to try, finger and eye coordination, and the ability to choose colors. The assessment was carried out based on the categories: Not Yet Developed (BB), Starting to Develop (MB), Developing According to Expectations (BSH), and Developing Very Well (BSB) as per the National PAUD standards (Sudjana, 2011).

This evaluation is used by teachers to design the next activity. If the child seems to have difficulty in coordination, then the color exploration activity will be repeated with a different approach. If the child has shown the ability to choose and mix colors with confidence, then the activity can be upgraded to more complex stages such as making a picture story from the results of his finger painting. It reflects the teacher's reflective cycle in the continuous learning process. This study shows that comprehensive, flexible, and child-centered management of finger painting learning can effectively foster fine motor stimulation in children aged 2-4 years, with broad implications for the theory and practice of early childhood education (Afifah & Shofwan, 2023; Avrilianda et al., 2025).

CONCLUSION

This study shows that finger painting learning management that includes thematic planning, child-centered implementation, and process-based evaluation has been proven to be effective in stimulating fine motor development in children aged 2–4 years. The exploratory approach applied at KB Alam Jungle School allows children to experience sensory activities directly in an open and contextual learning environment, thereby supporting the development of eye-hand coordination, finger strength, movement precision, and independence. The role of the teacher as a responsive and interactive facilitator is key in creating a positive learning atmosphere, while the portfolio is used systematically to monitor and evaluate children's progress holistically. The results of the evaluation are also used to design adaptive advanced learning strategies. These findings reinforce the importance of integrating nature-based approaches in the early childhood education curriculum, particularly for activities that stimulate sensorimotor skills. In the future, learning management models like this can be replicated in other PAUD units, including for children with special needs, by adjusting the local context and the availability of resources.

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