



## **The Efforts of Parents in Choosing Suitable Toys for Children Aged 3-4 Years**

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### **Abstract**

Playing is a fun activity for children and is an easy way for a child's brain to form new memories. Playing is related to toys. Children's toys selection is dominated by the parents' will or vice versa that is based on the wishes of children without any attempt by parents in directing the appropriate tools for the child. This study aims to find out the efforts made by parents. The next objective is to find out the parents' understanding of the purpose of toys that are suitable for children aged 3-4 years. Knowing the considerations made by parents as an effort to choose toys that are suitable for children aged 3-4 years in Kebumen Village, is the third goal of this study. The research method is qualitative research with the research subject is parents of 3-4 years old children, their children, and educators in Kebumen Village. Data collection techniques in this study are observation, interviews, and documentation. Data analysis methods are through the process of data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and verification of data and conclusion. Based on the research, the results show that the parents' understanding about the purpose of the toys is as stimulation of child development. Parents' efforts consist of children's desires/interests and discussions with children. Those efforts are carried out mostly by parents. Considerations made by parents as part of the effort to choose children's toys are more inclined to the price of toys than the function and purpose of education that is suitable for children aged 3-4 years. In addition, the colors and materials and labels of children's toys by most parents are not much considered.

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## INTRODUCTION

Children growth and development can be influenced by many factors. Parents are the first agents who play an important role in family education. Besides parents, an environment is a place where children explore and learn a lot and are closely related to media or play tools as a stimulation tool for child growth and development. Times are changing and in this increasingly modern era and technological literacy children toys are also growing and there are many innovations to attract buyers or consumers. With these conditions, of course, the right effort or way is needed for parents as educators and facilitators for children, especially regarding children's toys. The parents' effort is made to make toys as stimulators of children's growth not only follow the times but also have conformity with the age of the child.

Children are closely related to playing as their world to learn and obtain information. In the age of 3-4 years is a golden period for children starting from the age of 0 to 5 years. In this golden age, the growth and development of children have increased rapidly (Chamidah, 2009). One appropriate way is to play and choose the right and useful game (Purwanti, 2012).

Through playing, children can get many benefits. In addition to playing it, children also get learning, either through playing tools that are used or through interaction with other people and their environment when playing. The usual benefits obtained by children can be seen from the development of various aspects of skills, such as physical, motoric, social, emotional, personality, cognition, sharpness, sensing, sports and dance skills (Tedjasaputra, 2001).

Things that are previously applied and obtained by parents at the age of childhood are not the same as when taking care of children, which is currently done mainly dealing with children's toys. In this increasingly modern age, many children's toys are issued or made from factories. Factory-made children's toys that are currently rife with many types and functions. With various types and functions of use, of course for parents, a more selective effort is needed in choosing toys that are on the market to suit the age and growth of children.

The types of toy circulating in the market are very diverse in type. Categories of toys ranging from toys for children to toys for adults that tend to be used as collections. Children's toys generally have an educational element as a concrete medium of recognition. In addition, children's toys also have an element of entertainment. Ho-

wever, children sometimes scream and avoid toys because of the elements that they do not like or frightening. In contrast to children's toys which are used as a playground tool, adult toys are generally used as collection objects. Regarding toys based on the age of the user, usually in the toy packaging there are rules regarding what age is recommended to use the tool. This needs to be considered because remembering the needs of children with adults is different.

Colorless children's toys don't seem interesting, considering the children like the use of bright colors that attract children to play them, or at least touch toys because of the bright colors that attract their attention. Toys with bright colors can be used to introduce colors to children, especially primary colors (red, yellow, blue). So, the brightly colored toys besides to entertain children also provide education for children. The influence of color is not only the mechanism of vision but also a sensation or feeling that directly activates our minds and cognitive mechanisms (Kusumawardhani, 2010) Labels on children's toys help parents as a reference for parents in choosing toys. One way is by seeing the label to check the content's safety of toy products according to the regulations issued regarding the ingredients and contents in a toy product. This is what parents do not always pay attention to and not all toys have a label.

The SNI (National Standard of Indonesia) label printed on the toy in addition to providing a product mark that conforms to the standard (material) also provides a mark or age limit for the use of the toy itself. This is related to not all toys intended for children because there are miniature toys that are intended as displays/decorations and collections for adults. This is reinforced by the situation in the field that can be found that parents in the middle to lower economy found their children playing objects that are not toys and are less child-friendly.

The purpose of parents providing toys for children is very diverse, which can be found in the community so that their children do not cry. From this also found that the function of toys is as entertainment for children. However, whether parents pay attention to other aspects such as security and whether they are able to stimulate aspects of early childhood development. The security possessed by toys is very important because toddlers or early childhood are very vulnerable to objects around them such as sharp and roughly serrated shapes.

Regarding the purpose of using toys and the shape of children's toys, parents need to be

aware of the circulation of children's toys. This is due to the large circulation of toys that are not national standard or SNI. These toys can come from domestic production as well as foreign production. Not all toys with SNI label have resilience, but with the existence of these labels as evidence, producers follow regulations, namely the production line of children's toys that have been set by the government. Besides that, the resilience of children's toys can also be influenced by the way of use, so that there is a need for assistance from parents when children play.

Parents have great authority over children's toys at home. When children see other children's toys, the child will ask to buy toys that are "booming" and favored by other children. Toys favored by children are not necessarily safe and need to be reviewed from several aspects that become standard toys. In addition to toys chosen by children, parents also need to pay attention to whether the toys chosen are in accordance with the interests of the child and the child's growth needs. The situation that is not always the same requires efforts from parents to invite children for discussion as a way out and lessons for children.

It is important for parents to know about children's toys, considering that there are lots of toy circulations that are sold at low prices so that they are free without knowing the elements of toys or other security such as the selection of shapes that are not sharp and not sharp because of fear of harming the wearer the toy. Sometimes the price problem is often a consideration for parents when buying toys for their children.

Parents' participation in child development is needed and many things need to be addressed by parents who have early childhood. The situation and mindset of a child after adulthood can be influenced by his childhood. That is why parents must provide extra stimulation and attention to their children who are still early age, namely ages 0 to 6 years. Attention here does not mean being a barrier to child development, but by providing media that can provide stimulation in accordance with the needs of the child's growth.

Choosing toys for children is not only fun for children, but also an important part of the child's growth process. In general, parents' knowledge of toys is somewhat lacking, as a result, parents buy toys that do not provide lessons for children, besides children's toys that provide education are often not in accordance with the wishes of the general public because they are considered expensive and not very beneficial (Wilson, 2012). The safety, security and health aspects of toys must be fully understood to provide protec-

tion to children and this should be a top priority for parents.

The first and foremost teacher is actually a parent, that is before the child gets an education in a formal education institution. Parents have the greatest opportunity to influence children's intelligence and teach it in harmony with their own time. Parents know best when and how children can learn as well as possible. The thing to remember is that children have character and desires that are generally different from adults and age.

The choice of toys between children and parents certainly has a difference. Differences that occur between parents and children are common and at that time the role of parents is very necessary with mutually beneficial efforts for both children and parents themselves. Klemenovic (2013) stated in his journal that parents see opportunities for toys to improve children's social skills, not as a form of exile to children. Mareta (2012) in his research showed the behavior of children when neighbors have new toys children want the same thing.

The choice of this problem is because all this time parents as the first educational agent in the family seemed passive to toys for their children. Though giving toys to children there are several things that need to be considered before giving these toys so that the growth and development of children can be stimulated through toys played by children that are appropriate to the age and needs of children because each child has different playing needs. An example is a toy that is used by 1-year-olds with 3-year-olds. 1-year-olds will use more toys that can train sensory motor-bikes such as shape, sound, and texture while for children aged 3 years can already use toys such as puzzles and other small objects.

Toys and play are very closely related and very close to the world of children. Children and play activities cannot be separated because through playing children they recognize the surrounding environment accompanied by toys that are able to provide stimulant effects on children. However, it is very unfortunate when children ask for toys to their parents, even parents refuse to say "no need" with high-pitched without giving a choice of toys as an alternative to children which results in children whining all day long.

The use of other words that are "no need" when rejecting the request for a child, parents also ask the child "for what?" even though the child's world is playing. When children want a toy, in a child's mind concretely the toy is to be played, which by playing children will be able to play their imagination and various aspects of

child development that can be stimulated through play activities and the child will release excess energy in the child's body so that the child feels happy (Tedjasaputra, 2001).

Based on preliminary observations made before embarking on further research, it was found that some of the parents often asked, "for what?" as a response to the child who had just expressed his desire to buy a new item or toy. The response raised by the parents raises questions whether specifically, parents have criteria or understanding of children's toys. In addition, the spontaneous character of children aged 3-4 years such as asking for toys is an effort made by parents so that later there will be harmony between hope and reality in educating and caring for children.

The purpose of this study is to find out how the efforts made by parents in choosing toys are suitable for children aged 3-4 years. But before knowing how the efforts made of course are also important to know how parents understand about the purpose of toys that are suitable for children aged 3-4 years. Furthermore, related to the understanding and efforts of parents, this research is also to find out the considerations for parents in choosing children's toys that can be seen from the attributes of children's toys. The benefits of this research are of course also for parents to keep up with the child's development and can be a reference in choosing toys that are suitable for their age and child development so that later the child can grow in accordance with the expectations of both parents and the community.

The research subject is parents and their children as well as several related teachers regarding children's toys answered research questions about toys that are suitable for the age of the child, aged 3-4 years. In addition, this study also discusses considerations that are generally carried out by parents in choosing children's toys. This study also presents how parents understand about children's play specifically for children aged 3-4 years.

## **METHODS**

The research method is qualitative with the subject of research is parents who have children aged 3-4 years and their children and educators in Kebumen Village. Data collection techniques in this study using observation, interviews, and documentation. The data analysis is done through the process of data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and verification of data and conclusion. Interviews are conducted with 3 pa-

rents and each of their children aged 3-4 years and 2 educators in each study group where children learn and parents work at the place.

The type of interview used in this study is structured and in-depth interviews, where interviews are conducted using interview guidelines which are described in the form of descriptions. When interviewing, the researcher is open and records what the informant said. The observation technique was carried out directly on the subjects in this study. Furthermore, documentation is carried out by taking evidence of the relevant events during the research process.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **Parent's Understanding of the Purpose of Toys for Children 3-4 Years**

The explanation given by parents about understanding the purpose of children's toys is as a medium for stimulating child growth. However, in practice, most parents do not always apply their understanding of the purpose of toys that are theoretically suitable for children aged 3-4 years. In addition, parents follow the current conditions and take advantage of the opportunity to carry out activities at home while monitoring children while the child is playing with toys.

Based on data found in the field, parents cannot always apply so that toys can be used as a tool that is really the purpose of stimulation of the growth and development of children. Such things are found by parents who provide toys because they feel the need to give but not because of the purpose of stimulation. Providing toys so that children do not cry and whine is one example that is done by parents.

The difference in understanding the purpose of giving toys to children is relatively found in parents because in production it also varies, as expressed by McLaren et al (2013) that the production and distribution of toys is a common consumption even though there are several objectives specifically in production and distribution toys such as toys that are produced and distributed for the purpose of developing education.

Pre-school age children have a high curiosity about something that they see, after seeing children will use another motoric sensory like touching it in order to explore. In addition to drawing, parents also revealed the existence of manipulative toys such as those carried out by Bima, that is assembling pairs into objects according to the child's imagination. The existence of playing media, children will explore a lot by creating creativity in accordance with their growth and deve-

lopment.

The data above obtained from the field is in accordance with the opinion expressed by Riyadi & Sukarmin (2009) which states that the purpose of toys is to develop children's creativity. A similar opinion is expressed by Goldstein (2012) which states that when babies are busy playing freely with toys, they learn to solve problems, think creatively, and develop reasoning and motor skills in children (American Academy of Pediatricians, 2011).

Based on the things mentioned above, information can be obtained if children's toys given by parents can be intended as a means of improving children's creativity. Children create creative ideas and imagination, children's creative minds through various media/tools used by children directly. Keep in mind also if children's creativity is influenced by children's play patterns at that age.

### **Efforts of Parents in Choosing Toys in Accordance with Children 3-4 Years**

#### ***Adjusting the age of the child***

Most parents reveal that the child's age is not an attempt to choose toys. However, based on observations, children's toys are found to have characteristics according to the age of the child. In this context, based on what is expressed by parents, they know some toys and activities that are appropriate for the child's age. In addition, parents also follow about toys that are appropriate for the age of the child even though they do not provide the toy because the child is not interested.

#### ***Request/Children Interest***

Efforts to choose toys by looking at children's requests are carried out by most parents. Many parents provide toys in accordance with the demands of children even though there are toys that parents think are more appropriate for their age but unfortunately children don't want toys that are offered by their parents. Among the available children's toys are chosen because the request of the child and child wants to play them so that according to parents there is no need to buy toys that are not requested by the child.

#### ***Parents' Discussion with Children***

Overall, parents make an effort to discuss with children about toys before buying. This is done especially when the child has expressed his desire with a new toy. Discussions that occur are generally the choice of colors and uses so that when toys are deemed inappropriate or parents are not pleased, then parents can provide understanding related to the toy.

According to Al-Kurdi (2017) in the previous study, the results showed there were 6 factors that influence the purchase of toys by parents, these factors include usage factors (resilience, safety, category), emotional factors (likes, attractiveness of toys and events certain factors), factors related to information, price/cost factors, children's demographics (age and sex), and parents' demographic factors (gender, age, income, and level of education of parents). Based on the six factors of the research, the factors that are most needed in choosing toys are usage factors and demographic factors based on the age and sex of the child.

Based on research on efforts made by parents which consist of adjusting the age of the child, requests/interests of the child and discussion, all these things have been tried by parents in an effort to choose toys according to children aged 3-4 years. Every child has a different character and interest in playing activities even with the same age. Parents will not buy toys that are not attractive to children because the toys will be useless if toys are not played by children.

The things above also do not rule out the possibility for children to get activities to play with toys above their age with a note that parents really follow and know the level of achievement of children's development. In this regard, discussions with children carried out by parents also need to be done to reach an agreement and provide understanding to children even though in practice parents must be more patient with children and not infrequently when trying to give understanding to children pity arises.

### **Parents Consideration in Choosing Toys for Children 3-4 Years**

#### ***Toys Label***

Toy label is not considered by most parents in choosing children's toys for the age of 3-4 years. For a small number of parents, age and standard recommendation labels can still be considered by parents, but for brands, it is not important to consider.

#### ***Toys Color***

Based on the explanation of parents, the color of toys as a consideration in choosing children's toys is not fully done by parents. Parents who claim not to make the color as consideration for choosing children's toys also have their own reasons that are more inclined. Among the reasons expressed by parents who do not consider color are considerations of children's desires that are difficult to be directed, as well as the assump-

tion that children's toys have good colors so that he thinks there is no need to consider colors when buying toys desired by children..

#### **Function and Educational Purpose**

The consideration of the function and purpose of educational toys is not all parents apply them. The function and purpose of toy education is not a consideration for choosing toys because of other reasons that are more burdensome for parents. The reason that carries out by most parents tends to buy toys that are desired by children than considering the function and purpose of the toy education itself.

#### **Toys Material**

The material for children's toys is not a matter that is highly considered by parents in choosing toys for children aged 3-4 years. The children's toys available at home are mostly composed of plastic material, but this is not based on consideration of the material of the child's toys.

#### **Toys Price**

The material for children's toys is not a matter that is highly considered by parents in choosing toys for children aged 3-4 years. The children's toys available at home are mostly composed of plastic material, but this is not based on consideration of the material of the child's toys.

According to Moturi & Jayasankaraprasad (2017) in their journal, the results of the research show that color and design, design and attractiveness, information technology and digital-based communication are interesting factors in toys, but parents pay more attention to price, safety, and quality of toy materials.

According to research that has been done before by Dongoran et al (2015) obtain information on factors that influence consumers in making purchasing decisions in a row are brands, prices, new designs (innovation), attractiveness of color brightness, quality, attractiveness of educational elements, variations in design, promotion, and convenience in obtaining toys.

Based on the results described above regarding the consideration of parents in choosing children's toys consisting of 5 things, namely toy labels, toy colors, functions and objectives of toy education, toy material, and toy prices, information is obtained that the considerations made by most parents as part of an effort to choose children's toys tend to the price of toys than the function and purpose of education that is suitable for children aged 3-4 years. In addition, the color and material of children's toys by most parents

is not taken into consideration. In addition, toy labels are also things that are rarely noticed by parents, especially toy brand labels.

## **CONCLUSION**

The understanding of parents about the purpose of children's toys mostly reveals that giving toys to children aged 3-4 years is to provide stimulation to optimize children's growth and development. However, theoretical understanding cannot always be applied by parents in choosing suitable toys for children aged 3-4 years. The efforts of parents choosing suitable toys for children aged 3-4 years consist of the criteria for the age of the child, requests/interests of children and discussions have been tried by parents even though in the application most parents provide toys based on the requests and interests of children.

Consideration taken by parents as part of efforts to choose children's toys tends to the price of toys than the function and purpose of education that is suitable for children aged 3-4 years. In addition, the color and material of children's toys by most parents also revealed that not too much consideration including label toys is something that is rarely noticed by parents, such as toy brand labels.

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