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## Mat Play Centers as an Innovation in Early Childhood Education

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### Abstract

Mat Play Center ('Gelaran' Play Center) is another innovation and advance in early childhood learning. In line with the purpose of research, first, pre-development the media of Mat Play Center (Gelaran Play Center) would collect data starting with theoretical framework and information based on the class or the field situation; second, the progress of media development in Mat play centers based on multiple intelligence is conceptual model development, design and products; while the third phase is the stage of the application form of testing the models which running in the field. The results showed in the form of design and media product of Mat play centers based on multiple intelligence that was developed based on the classification of creative play, specifically: the creation of objects; serialize games; creative questions games; creative movement games; as well as creative drama games.

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## INTRODUCTION

Mat Play Center ('Gelaran' Play Center) is a term that intentionally created by author formed as another term of a center of learning and playing, which is known as the CENTER among educators in preschool and AREA among teachers of kindergarten and Raudhatul Athfal or Islamic Environment and there is also who still use the term CORNER activities.

### The Definition of Mat Play Center (Gelaran Play Center)

Mat Play Center (Gelaran Play Center) as the definition and meaning of this term is identified as an aid or media or place where children play or show other activities. Subsequently, Mat play center (Gelaran Play Center) is the center of learning activities that can be tools or a place that can adapt to different styles of children learning, level of children maturity and development, and to anticipate the differences from children's different backgrounds.

Learning principles which are applied in Mat Play Center (Gelaran Play Center) are the same with the principle of learning centers or areas, such as the individualization of learning experience, where every child is allowed to choose the activity and learning material in Mat Play Center (Gelaran Play Center) which will be used to explore and play.

Ideologies based on Mat Play Center (Gelaran Play Center) are: (1) it would be an alternative to the center learning model as if it is hard to do because of limitations of space or the tightness of the land available in early childhood institutions maintained by playgroup, kindergarten or other form of early childhood institutions; (2) It can inspire teachers to create a variety of cycles for children to learn in line with the children situations and conditions (contextual learning); (3) the simply method in making and the application of materials that can be recycled used the Mat play center (Gelaran Play Center) resulting the possibility to apply the Mat play center (Gelaran Play Center) -just like words in "coca cola" commercial- anywhere, anytime, and by anyone as the principle of using Mat Play Center (Gelaran Play Center); (4) it is easily transferrable from the inside or from the outside into the room, based on the type of centers are opened.

## METHOD

This study used Research and Development method which consists of three stages, the

are pre-development phase, development phase and the implementation phase. Based on the purpose of development, the first, media of Mat play center (Gelaran Play Center) pre-development done in the form of a literature study and information gathering in the field; Second, the development stage of multiple intelligence-based Mat play center (Gelaran Play Center) media in the form of conceptual model development, design and products; while the third stage, the stage of the application form in testing the models in the field.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Stages of Development of Event Centers

The following will describe the stages of development of the Mat play center (Gelaran Play Center).

#### Phase 1

#### Organizing In-door and Out-door Class Environment

Consideration needs to be made and agreed over: (1) whether the early childhood institution has a indoor classroom? How many square meters of it? ; (2) Whether the institution has a field outside the classroom that can be used to design center? If there is small field or even no land that can be used, whether there is a public place or badminton court or vacant land owned by residents (social facilities and public facilities) that can be used, of course with the agreement of its owner.

Here are several examples of Mat play center (Gelaran Play Center) alternative forms of geometry figure. The teacher is acceptable to use other forms customized with the theme of learning, such as various center mat-shaped variety of fruit because of the theme used is a plant with a sub theme of fruit, or rendering to other themes such as the theme of animals, vehicles or anything.

#### Example: Indoor Mat Play Center





we have to discover is about the type of centers that would be opened, whether the role play, art, music, naturalistic, block, or preparation (reading, writing and counting) centers. The type of centers that will be opened must be: (1) refers to the learning plan which has been prepared, from monthly, weekly or daily planning and scheduled, (2) reflect also the theme that has been made and the type of activity or the game which is expected to be done by children, (3) look at the ration of the number of educational tools game available with the number of children.

Example: Educational Tool Games in Mat Play Center



Role Playing Mat Center



Arts Mat Center



Preparation Mat Center

Example: Outdoor Mat Play Center



**Suggestions for Development / Teacher:**

1. The total of mat play centers that will be opened in one day should be adjusted by the area which available at the early childhood institution, could be 2 or 3 centers or even more.

2. The number of teachers in the early childhood institutions for every places of mat play centers must be, at least a teacher as facilitator who will guide and supervise children during their activities.

**Phase 2:  
Designing the Play Activities and Preparing Educational Tool Games.**

Next after playing the mat play center has been prepared and orgnized, the other thing that



Family Mat Center: Fun Cooking

### Suggestions for Developers / Teacher

1. Pay attention to the three main types of play activities, namely sensory motor play, children playing with objects to build perception, symbolic or role play, children playing with objects to help bring the concept, and the constructive play, children playing with an object to realize the idea constructed in his mind into something in tangible form.

2. Recollection the various types of creative play activities that can be reference in designing the play activities, specifically the creation of the object, continuing story, creative question, creative movement and the creative dramatic play.

3. Set some requirements for environmental arrangement and placement educational tools for play educational games that allows children to be independent, disciplined, responsible and able to support children to make their own decisions, develop ideas, develop ideas into real work, develop social capabilities such in playing and cooperate with friends

### Phase 3

#### Creating Multi Directions Educational Interaction

Interaction should be shown by teachers and children as well as people who are in the early childhood institutions. Consistent with characteristic of learning centers, then interaction that occurs between children and teachers, children with other children and children with learning resources prepared should be able to facilitate the activities: learning by doing, where learning is being done directly by the child, where the five senses of children involved directly, so that children obtain the knowledge from the interaction between children and the environment directly; learning by stimulating, learning that focuses on the stimulation of children's development in every stages, therefore education is conducted in harmony with the stages of child development; learning by modeling, learning centers also involve adults and children to progress more advanced.

Example: The interaction that occurs in the mat play center

#### Interaction on the Indoor Mat Play Center



Preamble: Morning Journal



Role PlayMat Center: My Mom Style



Closure: Lunch Journal

#### Interaction on the Outdoor Mat Play Center



Motion: Pinch clothesline



Mat CenterNature Materials



Experiment Flood

### CONCLUSION

First, the development of a conceptual model of the multiple intelligence-based mat play centers in early childhood which has corresponding with the main focus, which is the develop-

ment of media in the mat play centers. It means, the mat play center media which has developed resulting a number of creative play activities characteristics based on multiple intelligences and it can be implemented according to the procedures of curriculum development for early childhood education.

Second, the development of mat play center media design based on intelligence could be for early childhood, which is the implementation and development of the conceptual media model of mat play center concretely that has been developed with the phases of the program development of learning activities in the mat play center, explicitly: project development theme, developing integration of theme and creative play classification, the development of themes project, the development of themes and indicators, development of learning materials design and product development assessment and evaluation and the development of learning strategies.

Third, the development of a set of media for mat play center based on multiple intelligence that was developed based on the classification of creative play, explicitly: the creation of objects; game of serialize; creative questions games ; creative movement games; as well as creative drama games. Development of media for mat play centers has also been developed based on the foundation of the program development which appropriate for early childhood, explicitly: (1) the theory of early childhood development, developmental aspects and developmental characteristics; (2) The child-centered approach; (3) a constructivist approach; (4) children learn from concrete objects, real and can be modified; and (5) curriculum approach for creative play in early childhood education.

### **Suggestions for Developers / Teacher-Educator**

1. The role of the teacher is no longer as the one who always gives instructions or orders as long as this occurs that the teacher is the one who always had to comprehend and imitate, but the teacher's role is as a facilitator, motivator and evaluator who assist their children during their performance and daily activities.

2. Interaction in children play activities should be a learning activity that is capable of activated the child's physical and psychological (thinking and emotional), can encourage children to be creative, and should be safe, comfortable and enjoyable.

3. It can build a democratic attitude, mutual care, respect the opinion, trust and empathy, such as want to share with friends, teachers and other people in the early childhood institution. It can build multidirectional interaction that is constructive for child development.

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