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The Role of Parents in Improving Early Childhood Literacy Skills

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ABSTRACT: This study aims to determine the role of parents in the development of early childhood literacy at State Kindergarten Pembina Bantul. The study population was parents of students in class A.4 at State Kindergarten Pembina Bantul, totalling 18 people. The sample was taken using total sampling technique. The instrument used was a closed questionnaire. The data analysis technique used percentage descriptive statistics. The results showed that the percentage of the role of parents in the development of early literacy in children aged 4-5 years at State Kindergarten Pembina Bantul was 62.36% (less). The description of each parent's role in early literacy development, Phonological Awareness of 65.83% is in the good category, Vocabulary Skill of 65.18 is in the good category, Print Motivation of 58.07% is in the less category, Print Awareness of 70.83% is in the good category.

KEYWORDS: parents' role, literacy, early childhood

INTRODUCTION

Preparing superior resources to face the challenges of the disruption era requires innovation to develop better changes. In this case, education in Indonesia requires active cooperation to make education massive and useful. Early Childhood Education (ECED) is education provided to children from birth to six years old to ensure physically and mentally healthy growth and development (Harahap, 2021). The most important and fundamental early period throughout the growth and development span of human life is early childhood. In early childhood, all of a child's potential develops rapidly. This is when children experience a golden age, when they become sensitive or sensitised to various stimuli (Uce, 2017).

Ideal human resources are available for the urgency of education if provided early in life. To obtain optimal child development and growth, early childhood learning is essential to be delivered correctly. Reading and writing skills, which are needed during the preschool or basic literacy stage, are critical to a child's life, especially for academic success. Children who start learning to read at an early age and do not experience significant difficulties are more likely to become active readers than children who experience significant difficulties in learning to read. Children who have learnt to read early usually have parents who read to them frequently when they were young.

Every child has literacy skills that are important to have a good future. Literatus is the etymology of the word "literacy", which means "literate" (Silawati et al., 2018). Children's literacy skills are linked to language development. Children's language development consists of four aspects: speaking, reading, writing and listening (Hidayatussoalihah et al., 2022). Literacy is a child's ability to listen, understand spoken language, and communicate both orally and through pictures, all of which are shaped by interactions with their environment (Mardliyah, 2019). Literacy encompasses communication skills, reading, speaking, writing, listening, and critical and logical thinking, in addition to reading and writing skills (Prabowo et al., 2022). The important role of parents, teachers and the community as models is indispensable for literacy activities (Karima & Kurniawati, 2020).

Literacy is part of language development that needs to be stimulated from an early age. Literacy is a form of social collaborative interaction, which not only provides social functions to children, but also combines fun and satisfaction, which can increase children's desire to participate in various literacy activitiesLiteracy is part of language development that needs to be stimulated from an early age. Literacy is a form of social collaborative interaction, which not only provides a social function to the child, but also combines fun and satisfaction, which can increase the child's desire to participate in various literacy activities (Annisa & Eliza, 2021). Before children can read and write, they can have phonological awareness skills, letter knowledge, and master a variety of vocabulary. The introduction of literacy can be done in various ways with creativity and collaboration from educators and parents, such as role-playing, storytelling, painting and the like. However, the expected creativity and collaboration has not been well implemented. The National Institute of Child Health and Human Development explains that children must have six



early literacy skills in order to have good literacy skills (Burchinal, 2018). The six skills are Phonological Awareness, Vocabulary, Print Motivation, Print Awareness, Letter Knowledge, and Narrative Skills (Kurnia et al., 2022).

The phenomenon that exists in today's society where children before the age of five can read and the demands of education on children in formal education (primary school), there is a requirement to enter primary school that requires children to be able to read and write. That is why parents are competing to find their children schools with adequate quality in teaching reading and writing. Meanwhile, at home parents try to teach children to read in different ways. One of them is using storybooks as a medium used to stimulate children's abilities. With the development of technology today, children tend to spend time playing games and watching rather than reading. According to Kominfo, 60 million Indonesians own gadgets and rank fifth in the world in terms of gadget ownership. Ironically, the high number of gadget ownership is not able to be a solution to increase Indonesians' interest in reading, even though Indonesians can stare at gadget screens for about 9 hours a day (Arnita et al., 2022). Based on this data, it can be seen that Indonesian children spend more time in front of television and gadgets, and do activities that are not related to improving literacy skills. This phenomenon shows the importance of literacy for early childhood to develop children's ability to read and other skills from an early age.

One of the efforts in developing literacy in early childhood education is to provide activities related to literacy. The activity related to literacy is reading storybooks to children. As previous research has discussed a lot related to early childhood literacy development activities. The results of previous research illustrate that reading books to children can develop early childhood literacy. Reading books or telling stories is the provision of learning for children through reading books delivered by parents or adults to children orally (Rohman, 2017). A US Ministry of Education survey shows that children who are read to early in life learn quickly about books (Zati, 2018). Reading books is an activity that can be done by teachers at school and by parents at home. However, previous research states that parents' awareness in carrying out activities at home is still minimal. Early childhood literacy skills are only the responsibility of schools not for schools (Meliyanti et al., 2021), Therefore, there is a need for socialisation or assistance to parents in developing early childhood literacy.

Referring to previous research, the author feels the need to conduct research on literacy development carried out by parents to early childhood, so that children's literacy skills do not deteriorate due to the current state of technological development, knowledge about the importance of literacy is also not fully known by parents. The role of parents is very important in developing literacy skills from an early age. Based on this, the researcher intends to find out the role of parents in improving early childhood literacy at State Kindergarten Pembina Bantul.

METHOD

The type of research used is descriptive quantitative with a survey method that describes the ability of parents to introduce early literacy to children. Quantitative descriptive research is research that describes variables as they are supported by data in the form of numbers generated from actual circumstances. The research was conducted in class A.4 of State Kindergarten Pembina Bantul. The population of this study were parents of students in class A.4 State Kindergarten Pembina Bantul, totalling 18 people. The sample was taken using total sampling technique.

The instrument used was a closed questionnaire. The questionnaire was developed based on early literacy theory and refers to previous studies. The questionnaire was developed based on the instrument grid, consisting of 35 statements with a score of 1-4. Reliability was tested with the Cronbach Alpha coefficient formula on SPSS 22 for windows software with a coefficient of 0.912. Early literacy indicators consisted of Phonological Awareness (awareness of sounds) (5 items), Vocabulary Skill (mastery of vocabulary) (7 items), Print Motivation (interest in print) (8 items), Print Awareness (sensitivity to writing) (5 items), Letter Knowledge (letter recognition skills) (5 items), and Narrative Skills (storytelling ability) (5 items) (Annisa & Eliza, 2021).

The data analysis technique uses percentage descriptive statistics. The results obtained are interpreted in the category, namely "very less" if 25-43%, "less" if 44-62%, "good" if 63-81%, and "very good" if 82-100%.

RESULTS

The results of the analysis of parents' roles in early childhood literacy development at State Kindergarten Pembina Bantul are presented in Table 1.

No	Indicator	Percentage (%)	Category
1	Phonological Awareness	65,83	Good
2	Vocabulary Skill	68,15	Good
3	Print Motivation	58,07	Less

4	Print Awareness	70,83	Good
5	Letter Knowledge	56,25	Less
6	Narative Skills	55,00	Less
Average		62,36	Less

Table 1 above, the percentage of parents' role in early childhood literacy development at State Kindergarten Pembina Bantul if presented in the form of a graph as follows:

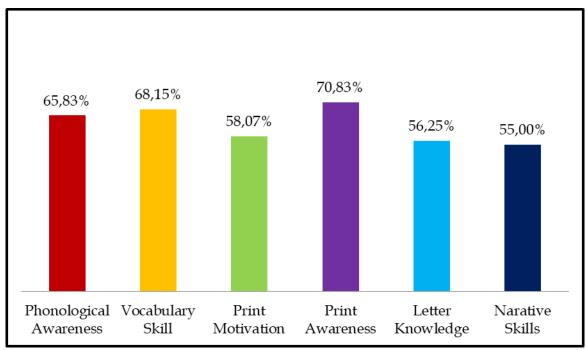


Figure 1: The Role of Parents in Improving Early Childhood Literacy Skills at State Kindergarten Pembina Bantul

Based on Table 1 and Figure 1, the percentage of parents' role in improving early childhood literacy at State Kindergarten Pembina Bantul is:

Based on the results of the overall analysis, it shows that the role of parents in developing early childhood literacy at State Kindergarten Pembina Bantul is 62.36% in the category of less. The formation of basic literacy skills in early childhood cannot occur in a short time, but the ability is also influenced by family role factors, especially mothers in developing these abilities to their children. Opinion (Widodo & Ruhaena, 2018) that children who receive good support and assistance from their parents will be able to learn and achieve better progress than children who do not receive support and assistance from their parents. The family is the main place for the formation and education of children. Families that realise the importance of literacy will provide stimulation to children through things such as providing various kinds of play media, such as storybooks, letter and number cards, inviting children to read stories together, and visiting the library.

Parents, especially mothers, are the primary madrassa for a child and parents play a significant role in every child's development, from character building to academic achievement. Parental involvement will stimulate children's development, as well as early literacy development. This is in line with the study (Ong'ayi et al., 2020) In Kenya, mothers reading books was associated with children's ability to read words, fathers reading books and playing together was associated with children's ability to identify letters and read words, and involvement of other household members in reading books was associated with children as they will open the gates for children to the next level of education.

The average percentage of parents' role in developing phonological awareness was 65.83%. This figure means that parents at State Kindergarten Pembina Bantul play a good role in developing children's phonological awareness. With this percentage, it can be seen that the children of State Kindergarten Pembina Bantul have a good ability to pronounce letters, spell, and recognise sounds, which will help children's academic achievement because it can be a determining factor in children's reading ability. Phonological awareness skill is the child's ability to recognise, distinguish, and manipulate sounds in language, voice, and one's speech. Phonological awareness skill is characterised by children's ability to hear, pronounce, play with sounds, and distinguish sounds. This ability is also a predictor of early reading ability in children (Barton-Hulsey et al., 2018). Based on the

theory and the results of the research, it is known that parents of children at State Kindergarten Pembina Bantul have been very instrumental in developing children's early literacy skills, especially phonological awareness. It can be predicted that children at State Kindergarten Pembina Bantul have phonological skills that will have a good impact on children's ability to read. Parents most often do singing and reciting the letters "a-z" with their children, while the least frequent activity done by parents is playing with sounds and voices.

The average percentage of the role of parents in developing children's vocabulary reached 68.15%, which means that parents at State Kindergarten Pembina Bantul have played a good role in developing children's vocabulary skills overall. From this figure, it can be seen that the early literacy skills of children at State Kindergarten Pembina Bantul in terms of vocabulary skills are well developed. Vocabulary skills are important in predicting children's reading development over time, because children's ability to master vocabulary is related to various aspects of reading (Hjetland et al., 2017). The most common role parents play is talking to their children. The least common role was reading books to the child. The clear growth of children's vocabulary is due to parents who have a lot of time to talk to their children. According to the theory and the results of the study, the researcher concluded that parents have done a good job of fulfilling their role as the main educational access in developing children's literacy, especially vocabulary skills. It is predicted that children at State Kindergarten Pembina Bantul have a good ability to understand and master vocabulary so that later it will be easier in the process of learning to read.

The average percentage of parents' role in developing children's interest in printed symbols/text reached 58.07%. This means that the parents of children at State Kindergarten Pembina Bantul play a lesser role and do not stimulate print motivation skills (children's interest in printed symbols/texts). Print motivation skill means that children have an interest in enjoying books. This skill will be well stimulated if it is supported by reading activities with children, providing time to tell stories, showing children the reading habits that parents have, and allowing children to choose books that they like. Children who are often given the stimulus to increase their interest in printed symbols or writing become more motivated to learn to read and have good academic achievement. Based on theory and research results, it can be seen that parents play a lesser role in developing children's print motivation skills. Therefore, the researcher argues that parents have not fully implemented their role as the main educational access in children's literacy development, especially print motivation skills. It can be concluded that children at State Kindergarten Pembina Bantul need to be given more stimulus in order to have motivation in learning to read, so that later the child does not find difficulties that cause the child to easily complain and give up when learning.

The average percentage of the role of parents in the development of print awareness skills reached 70.83%, this means that the parents of children at State Kindergarten Pembina Bantul play a good role in the development of skills to recognise printed symbols/text. With the percentage obtained, it can be predicted that the children of State Kindergarten Pembina Bantul have the ability to recognise, mark, and pay attention to the forms of symbols / writing in the environment. This figure shows that parents have played a role in developing children's print awareness skills. The most frequent role performed by parents is to invite children to write their names and the names of family members, and to interpret pictures. The least common role is to introduce letters and their shapes that can be written differently. Print awareness skill is a child's ability to recognise symbols such as letters, punctuation marks, logos, warning signs, and others (Bayraktar, 2018). This is consistent with the study (Brown et al., 2019) showed very positive results as evidenced by parent-child interactions. The findings also reveal that it is difficult to improve family literacy activities with busy parents, especially those who do not believe that reading aloud can improve children's reading. This means that family involvement, especially parents, in children's literacy development has a good impact on children's future literacy skills. Another definition of print awareness skill is the child's ability to point out words on the pages of a book, this awareness can be marked when the child is able to read words that exist anywhere, such as on shop labels, billboards, signboards, and includes learning to write. According to the theory and research results, it can be concluded that parents at State Kindergarten Pembina Bantul have carried out their role as the main educational access for children and play an important role in developing children's literacy, especially print awareness skills.

The average role of parents in developing children's letter knowledge is 56.25%. This figure means that parents at State Kindergarten Pembina Bantul are still less involved in developing letter knowledge. The most frequent role of parents is to write lowercase and uppercase letters from a-z. Meanwhile, the least frequent role of parents is to play letter games, such as stacking words and guessing letters. Letter knowledge is knowing that there are differences in each letter, some look similar, each has a name, and is associated with certain sounds. Learning to recognise letters is the first stage for children to achieve reading skills. Research results from (Chandra, 2017) shows that letter play activities can improve children's letter recognition skills. Based on the theory and the results of the study, it can be concluded that parents in the kindergarten of Pembina Bantul have not fulfilled their role as the main educational access for children in terms of literacy development, especially letter knowledge. So, it can be predicted that children in Bantul State Kindergarten do not have good enough skills to recognise or identify letters, and need to be given more stimulation to prepare them for reading.

The average percentage of the role of parents in developing children's storytelling skills reached 55.00%, which means that the role of parents at State Kindergarten Pembina Bantul is generally less involved in developing narrative skills in children. The role that parents do quite often is to be a listener for each child's story. While the least frequent form of role played by parents is role playing with children. Narrative is a universal tool used to inform, socialise, entertain and teach, in early childhood. Narrative skill means children's ability to retell, describe, and understand. Based on the theory and the results of the research, it can be concluded that the parents of children at State Kindergarten Pembina Bantul have not fulfilled their role as the main educational access for children in developing literacy, especially narrative skills. So, it can be concluded that children in Bantul State Kindergarten should get better stimulus so that they do not experience difficulties that will have an impact on children's reading ability later, where with this ability children can understand the reading material.

DISCUSSION

The results above show that the role of parents in improving early literacy in children aged 4-5 years at State Kindergarten Pembina Bantul is still not optimal. Parents in literacy activities can be carried out including reading bedtime stories, giving examples of reading activities, singing, and introducing children's name writing. This is in accordance with the role of parents as literacy sources, literacy facilitators, and also as organizers of the implementation of literacy programs. The provision of early childhood literacy stimulation that is less appropriate needs to be addressed and for those that are appropriate, it needs to be more varied by adding play activities that suit children's needs. Some appropriate play activities for early childhood literacy stimulation are to invite children to talk and play related to letters and words, role play, introduce letters, writing, letter sounds, alphabet names, teach children to write, read storybooks and draw. These activities can be carried out with children at home, so as to provide maximum stimulation results for children.

The role of parents is very important for early childhood development because the learning that has been done at school can produce maximum abilities when parents repeat the learning that has been given at school (Wijayatiningsih et al., 2019). Early literacy education will have a positive impact on a child's academic performance. The practice of introducing early literacy by reading books to children has been proven to make children more successful in the academic field. This is because children who have been introduced to the world of literacy have better learning and communication skills than other children who have not received an introduction to literacy.

The increasingly sophisticated and modern conditions of the times require parents to be extra careful in protecting, guiding and paying attention to children's growth and development, so that they do not fall into the negative impact of the times. Parents must be observant of and follow technological developments in order to guide and direct their children. For this reason, parents should have broad insights in educating children that can be applied in the family. Parents can apply parenting that is wise, positive, effective, constructive, and transformative. There are many theories that explain parenting towards children in the family. In general, parenting in the family is divided into three categories: authoritarian, democratic, and permissive parenting (Indriani & Yemmardotillah, 2021).

Each parent does not have to use one type of parenting, but can combine certain types of parenting in educating and shaping children, so that good interactions occur. If the interaction between parents and children is well established, this can support physical, emotional, social, intellectual, and spiritual development from the time a child is in the womb until adulthood. Therefore, real parenting is an interaction that occurs between parents and their children in terms of fulfilling physical needs (eating, and drinking) and psychological needs (a sense of security, and affection), as well as socialising the norms that apply in society so that children can know and live in harmony, harmony and balance with their environment (Putro et al., 2020).

The role of parents in developing early childhood literacy skills should always provide positive things to children, including always praising children's learning progress, taking the time to accompany children in learning and buying children storybooks not only containing fairy tales but also science so that children can get used to reading. Literacy activities carried out are storytelling or reading stories. Reading storybooks to children can be done by teachers at school or parents at home. The selection of storybooks, namely the content of the story, is the right choice in reading books to children. The content of the story told directs children in receiving the knowledge conveyed by the story. In addition to the content of the book's story, the design of the book with children's pictures also has an appeal to children in listening to the story, which is no less important is the existence of the book itself. Parents can read storybooks to children at bedtime or certain times.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the results of data analysis and discussion, it can be concluded that the percentage of parents' role in improving early literacy in children aged 4-5 years at State Kindergarten Pembina Bantul is 62.36%. This percentage shows that parents in Pembina Bantul State Kindergarten still play a lesser role in developing early literacy in children. The description of each parent's

role in early literacy development, Phonological Awareness of 65.83% is in the good category, Vocabulary Skill of 65.18 is in the good category, Print Motivation of 58.07% is in the less category, Print Awareness of 70.83% is in the good category, Letter Knowledge of 56.25% is in the less category, and Narrative Skills of 55.00% is in the less category. Based on these results, parents are expected to understand the concept and importance of literacy to be stimulated in children, so that in the future parents are able to carry out various literacy activities with children at home. This will greatly help children to have broader literacy skills in the future.

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