
FUN LEARNING THROUGH THEMED OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES TO BUILD 2-5 YEAR-OLD CHILDREN'S SOCIAL SKILLS IN JEJAK KECIL

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Abstract

To children, life is about playing. Their development and growth can be stimulated by playing activities. Sometimes, they need an open and spacious space to play in order to meet their motion needs. In addition to the needs of motion, an outdoor playground can create a fun learning atmosphere through themed activities appropriate to the age of children development. The aim of this research is to analyze the role of themed outdoor activities to build children's social skills. This research employs qualitative, which used an approach of case studies, and the data collection used were observations, interviews and data documentations. The result shows that themed outdoor activities can build children's social skills that consist of communication, cooperation, sharing, participation, and adaptation. Furthermore, fun learning through themed outdoor activities can also build children's motoric and sensory abilities.

Keywords: children, fun learning, themed outdoor activities, social skills.

INTRODUCTION

Jejak Kecil

To children, life is about playing. Their development and growth can be stimulated by playing activities. Ki Hajar Dewantara (1977: 243) stated that play is a daily activity of every child. The same thing is expressed by Tedjasaputra (2001: xvi) where play is the workplace of preschoolers and is the right of every child to play, without being age-restricted. They can play by themselves, but sometimes they need to be accompanied by their parents, friends or teachers. Playing activities can be conducted at indoor or outdoor space, but sometimes, they need an open and spacious space to play in order to meet their motion needs. In addition to the needs of motion, an outdoor playground can create a fun learning atmosphere through themed activities appropriate to the age of children development.

Unfortunately, nowadays the numbers of children playground in urban areas are decreasing. Therefore, Jejak Kecil that is located at Jalan Bukit Dago Utara I no 13, Bandung, West Java, is trying to facilitate outdoor playground for children, age 2-5 years. Jejak Kecil aims to introduce, explore surroundings and the nature to the children. Other than that, Jejak Kecil encourages children to express themselves confident, to develop children's motoric and to improve their communication. In order to reach those goals, there is one of playing programs in Jejak Kecil named Regular program.

Regular program is one of alternatives playing program for 2-5 year old children that conduct themed outdoor activities by presenting different theme in every week. In this program, children are invited to

play, explore and learn through fun and interesting stories. Activities in themed outdoor activities are divided into several parts: circle time, introductions, praying, prologue, rough motor activities, station activities, final review, praying and singing before going home.

According to the preliminary observation, a researcher found some problems related to children's social skills during playing through themed outdoor activities. Those are such as some children who did not want to interact with other friends, they tended to be selfish while playing. Another problems encountered were some children did not want to share toys to other friends and they interfered others during the activities, and some children preferred to play alone than play in a group during playing activities. Thus, based on that preliminary observations indicate the lack of children's social skills and this research aims of to analyze the role of themed outdoor activities to build children's social skills.

Children's characteristics

Each level of age has its own characteristics. Characteristics found in early childhood will not be the same as the characteristics of adolescents, and adults. Therefore, the provision of stimulus for early childhood should be tailored to their characteristics. According to Hartati (2005, 8-11), there are seven characteristics of early childhood;

1. Children have great curiosity.

Children have great sense of curiosity, both to the surrounding environment and people who have just met. Great curiosity is usually indicated by questions when children find

something new for them. The questions that usually arise are what, who, where, why and how.

2. Children are unique.
Every child has their own uniqueness, so it is not good for parents to compare one child to another.
3. Children are commonly rich with fantasy.
Early childhood generally has a fantasy or high imagination. Thus the role of adults, parents and adults are required to lead the child to distinguish between reality and fantasy.
4. Children are the most potential learning period.
Children if early age are in a golden age phase where their growth and development is growing rapidly in various aspects. Therefore, children in this phase should always be given good stimuli with appropriate approach according to the characteristics of the child. Thus, children can pass through the golden age phase without avail.
5. Children are egocentric
Children of early age tend to be self-centered or egocentric. This can be minimized by inviting children to engage in playing activities with other children, so they will learn to overcome each other.
6. Children have a short concentration.
Children of early age have a short concentration, so they will not stay for long in the same conditions. It takes interesting ideas to get kids involved in an activity
7. Children are social beings.
Children of early age begin to interact with the surrounding environment. They learn to interact socially and this is where they begin to act as social beings.
The social development of children is influenced by three factors (Winda Gunarti, Lilis Suryani and Azizah Muis, 2008: 4.15 in 'Ainiyah, 2014), namely:
 - a. Family environment
 - b. Factors from outside the home
 - c. Influence of early social experience.

Social Skills

Children's social skills are obtained through the socialization process. One of the occurrence of socialization is social interaction. There are two conditions of social interaction; social contact and communication (Seokanto, 2014: 58). Furthermore, Soekanto explains, "Social contact occurs physically, new contact occurs when there is a physical relationship such as by talking, shaking hands with

the person concerned." Physically new social contact occurs when there is a physical relationship. However, as a social phenomenon does not necessarily mean a corporeal relationship. Because someone can make contact with other parties without touching each other like when greeting each other and talking using sign language. Furthermore, Soekanto (2014: 59) explains that the occurrence of a contact is not solely dependent of the action, but also the response to the action.

After social contact occurs, then communication emerges. Communication has broad intentions compared to contacts, because communication can have and lead to several different interpretations. For example, a smile can be interpreted as a tribute or ridicule against a person. If social contact and communication have occurred then the socialization process is formed, so social skills can grow.

Social skills should be nurtured since early childhood because social activities have occurred at the time. Children's social skills need to be developed so that later they will grow into social well-beings. According to 'Ainiyah (2014, p. 45), social skills in early childhood can be developed through a variety of ways, including: playing, having conversation, doing the project, storytelling, doing experiment and role-playing.

According to Susanto (2011), child's social skills are the ability to react effectively and beneficially to the social environment which is a requirement for a good adaptation, a satisfying and acceptable life of society

Based on Seefeldt and Barbour (1994: 57-59), social skills include: communication skills, sharing, working together, and participating in community groups. Lack of social skills can cause interaction difficultness such as getting difficult to make friend, to control emotions especially getting involved into new environment.

RESEARCH METHOD

The problems appear in this research is social problem. Thus, a researcher uses a qualitative method to find, collect, and analyze the data. Sugiyono (2015:36) explains that point of view of qualitative is holistic. Therefore, a researcher will not determine the research on variables based only, but the overall of social situation that investigated according to the place, actors, and synergistic interactions.

The type of this research method is explanatory case study, because in this study, a researcher explains and describe the possibility of a causal relationship between two variables.

Case study research requires in-depth data, thus a researcher collects various forms of qualitative data through interviews, observations,

documents, and audiovisual materials to develop deep understanding. Therefore, the goal of good case studies can be reached; to show a deep understanding of a case (Creswell, 2013).

The participants in this research are consisted of five students and one instructors. The reason for choosing them as participants is because they are considered as people who know the field of research. The participants are expected to provide some important information about the focus of the study. In further development, all information obtained from participants can be processed, so that it becomes a complete information.

A Researcher uses snowball-sampling technique. This is a technique that collect the data from the less to complete information. Thus, the number of sample data sources will be greater, such as snowball rolling (Sugiyono, 2015: 300).

In qualitative research, the research instrument is the researcher itself (human instrument). Qualitative researchers as human interest has function to establish the focus of research, selecting participants as data sources, collecting data, assessing data quality, analyzing data, interpreting data and making conclusions on research findings.

In qualitative research, data collection is conducted through natural setting (natural condition). Data collection techniques include observations, interviews and documentation.

According to Creswell (2013 in the translation of Blue 2014) explained that in doing observations, there are several steps as follows:

- a. Choose the location to be observed.
- b. At that location, identify who or what to be observed, when, and how long.
- c. Determine the role taken as an observer, from perfect participants to perfect observers.
- d. Design observation protocols as a method to record records in the field.
- e. Record various aspects such as the description of the participants, the physical environment, the particular events and activities and the reactions of the researcher himself.
- f. During the observation, be passive and friendly, and start with limited goals in the early stages of observation.
- g. Thank the participants and inform them of the use of the data and the opportunity for them to access the study.
- h. Prepare a complete record after the observation. Give a rich narrative description of the observations.

According to Nasution (2006: 72) in Ningrum, (2012: 58), in general the interview is divided into two

kinds; structured interviews (structur interviews) and unstructured interviews. Structured interviews are conducted through questions that have been prepared in accordance with the issues to be researched, while unstructured interviews are interviews conducted when there is an answer that develops outside the structured questions but cannot be separated from the research problem.

Documentation is a data collection technique that complements information obtained from interviews and observation.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Children's early Social Skills in Jejak Kecil

Based on the preliminary observation, it was found that children's social skills when they first joined in themed outdoor activities in Jejak Kecil lack of ability to interact, communicate, cooperate, share and participate in playing activities.

Children's early interactions that occur in themed outdoor activities is that they are difficult to communicate or make social contact, which is the first condition of social interaction occurrence. This is in accordance with Soekanto(2014:55) which mentions that there are two main requirements of social interaction; social contact and communication.

Social contact is the first requirement of an interaction before communication. Social contacts that occur in children who are newly joined in themed outdoor activities in Small Traces are not yet seen. This is because the children who just joined in themed activities outdoor activities still have not known each other. They still have to adapt to the environment and the people who are in that location. Not a few children who have not been able to show good social contact, such as when the children greeted by older siblings in the Small Trail with a smile, a wave and even a good morning greeting, the children just stand still. The absence of social contacts resulting in poor communication.

Without social contacts and communications created between children and other friends including the instructors, there will not be any social interaction automatically during playing activities. The low social interaction caused by the inability of the child to make social contact and communication. Thus, the purpose of themed outdoor, which concern of children's social skill growth cannot be reached.

Other social skills that seem problematic at children who are newly joined in themed outdoor activities is the lack of sharing among children. Children tend to have the goods that already exist in their hands even though the goods does not belong to them. Thus, quarrels among them cannot be avoided.

In addition to the lack of sharing, other social skills issues that arise in children who are newly joined in the activities of themed outdoor activities is the low of children's participation in every playing activities guided by the instructors. Children who are newly joined in themed outdoor activities are not able to participate in every part of the activity. They tend to be quiet, stay and return to their parents.

The low participation of children to participate in any activities in themed outdoor activities leads to low cooperation. How can children be able to cooperate well without good participation? It is impossible.

The low social skills of these children can be caused by several factors such as the factors come along within the children, family and environmental factors, both the environment in which the children live and the environment where the children are playing. It is suitable with 'Ainiyah (45: 2014) who mentions that the three factors that affect the child's social skills are derived from the family, outdoors and early social experience of the child expresses those factors mentioned.

Children's Social Skills after Playing One Semester in Jejak Kecil.

Based on the research during one semester in Jejak Kecil, children who do not have good social skills show significant changes. This time, they are already able to adapt into their environment that is themed outdoor activities in Jejak Kecil. Based on the observation shown that children's early interaction are they have not be able to make social contacts such as waving hands to their friends or their instructors, but now they have courage to wave them back. Children begin to respond to social contacts that occurred during activities and those social contacts include greeting each other, smiling to friends or instructors, shaking hands, and sometimes holding hands among children. The results of the observations indicate conformity with the theory expressed by Soekanto (2014: 58) which explains, "Social contact occurs physically, contact will occur when there is a physical touch such as talking, shaking hands with related person."

In addition to changes in social contacts, communications that occur among children and between children and instructors have changed. Children are able to communicate what is in their minds. Children are able to respond well, so there is a two-way communication. Communication occurs is a form of direct communication because children are active to communicate directly. This is in line with what is expressed by Effendi (2005: 62), "When face-to-face interaction, feedback will be

instantaneous, then the communication that is woven will most likely be well established."

According to the result of observations, children's social interaction are increased because well-established communication and social contacts shown are getting better than children's early interaction, and those things are the key requirements of social interaction.

Well-developed children's social interaction improve their social skills. Being selfish, unwilling to share, unwilling to participate and to work in team are gradually diminish and changed. Based on the results of observations indicate that children's social skills begin to emerge after 3 months join themed outdoor activities. The results of the observation is supported by a deep interview conducted on an instructor, Vanny that expressed the same opinion, "children's social skills changing can be seen at the fourth month after joining this program. It is because children are accustomed to the environment and they have been able to adapt.

The growth of children's social skills within three months is due to the right stimulus. Learning activities that is presented through fun learning with different themes of each week can foster children's social skills. Outdoor playground provide children with special stimulation when following all activities of the program.

All activities in themed outdoor activities are designed based on children's characteristics. Starting from the division of stages consisting of circle time, introductions, prayers, prologues, rough motoric activities, station activities, final review, praying and singing before going home. Each stage of activity has certain time allocation, so children will not be in the same situation for long periods. It aims to avoid children's boredom. Application of this system is sample of embodiment children's characteristics of early childhood that tend to have short concentration (Hartati, 2005: 8-11).

Fun learning through themed outdoor activities fosters sharing attitude because in the process of playing always include activities that require mutual sharing. For example, when children will use glue to attach an object and the number of bowls of glue provided is not as much as the number of children in the group. It actually trains children to share things and not be selfish. As time passes, there is no longer a glue grabbing among the members of the group and they tend to be able to share with their friends

Other children's social skills that seem to grow after participating in themed outdoor activities are the willingness of the children to participate in all activities undertaken. Children look interested and eventually participate actively. Not infrequently,

they also look happy and enjoy doing all every playing activities instructed by the companions or the instructors.

Social skills improvement in the form of children's participation in activities themed outdoor activities, affect the attitude of cooperation that appears in children. When the desire to participate arises, the children will be happy to engage in any form of activity involving cooperation among children in a group. For example, at the stage of the station activity, the children are instructed to fill the pond with water to the brim by doing a water bucket relay. Another sample is when children are instructed to connect a water-flared bamboo that boils down to a bucket. All the cohesiveness of children at play shows the children's ability to work together in solving a case. This cooperation may arise because of the feeling of interest in the activity and the desire to complete successfully each mission of the activity instructed by the instructors. .

The results of observation on the occurrence of social skills change in children supported by the results of interviews conducted on nanny, one of the instrutors in themed outdoor activities in the Small Trail. Based on the results of interviews mentioned that changes in social skills in children who come into play in themed outdoor activities can be significantly seen within 3 months. This can happen because the children have started to adapt to the new environment. Furthermore, Vanny explained that one of the biggest success factors in improving children's social skills in themed outdoor activities is the extraordinary spirit of parents. Not infrequently, children are able to adapt to the playing environment in the Small Traces, but not supported by parents, so that the visible development will be insignificant or in other words like back and forth in the same place

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Children's early social skills at themed outdoor activities are low. Children do not want to interact, share, participate and work together, either with friends or with their instructors. Children's social skills are obtained through the process of socialization. If children are able to get involved in process of socialization, then they will success to have good social skills for their life. Socialization can be stimulated by conducting fun learning activities and Jejak Kecil was successfully conducted that activity through themed outdoor activities. The activities offer various topics of each week and the activity is presented through fun activities and conducted in outdoor playground. Thus, children are interested in doing all activities because the themed outdoor

activities is designed for various and short time in order to prevent children's saturation.

Children's social skills improvement indicates that fun learning through themed outdoor activities supported by parents, encourage the ability of children in socialization process which lead to children's social skills growth. This is proven by the changes of children's attitude after routinely follow the activities of fun learning through themed outdoor activities in Jejak Kecil.

Fun learning through themed outdoor activities should be done in any early childhood education. Thus, children aged 2-5 years do not always learn indoors, but they are geared toward learning about the environment and not just sitting in the classroom. Because at this age, it is not right for children to sit down and study at the class, but it is time to play and learn through fun activity in open and spacious space.

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