

Teachers' Strategies in Building Early Childhood Confidence in PAUD Panca Lestari Padang Lawas

Fitri Sani, Ismaraidha

Abstract

This study aims to describe teachers' strategies in building early childhood confidence in PAUD Panca Lestari Padang Lawas. Self-confidence is an important aspect of children's social and emotional development, especially at an early age. This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive method. Data collection techniques are carried out through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. The results of the study showed that teachers at PAUD Panca Lestari applied various strategies in building children's confidence, such as giving praise and positive reinforcement, adjusting tasks to children's abilities, giving children opportunities to express opinions and choices, role-playing activities and storytelling, and a warm and supportive personal approach. These strategies have a positive influence on the development of children's confidence which is characterized by the courage to perform, express themselves, and try new things. A safe and fun learning environment is the main supporting factor for the success of teachers' strategies in building children's confidence.

Keywords: *Teacher Strategy, Self-Confidence, Early Childhood, Early Childhood*

Fitri Sani

Early Childhood Islamic Education Study Program, Universitas Pembangunan Panca Budi, Indonesia
e-mail: fitrisani478@gmail.com

Ismaraidha

Early Childhood Islamic Education Study Program, Universitas Pembangunan Panca Budi, Indonesia
e-mail: ismaraidha@dosen.pancabudi.ac.id

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Introduction

The early age period is an important stage in the formation of the foundation of a child's personality. In this phase, children experience rapid growth and development both physically, cognitively, socially, and emotionally. One aspect of development that has a long-term influence on children's success in social and academic life is self-confidence. Confidence is the main indicator of children's mental and emotional health, and plays a big role in encouraging children to dare to try new things, express opinions, solve problems, and socialize positively.

Children who have confidence tend to appear active, independent, and not afraid to face challenges. On the other hand, children who lack confidence will tend to be passive, indecisive, dependent on others, and easily subject to social pressure. Therefore, the formation of confidence from an early age is very crucial and cannot be ignored in the process of children's education. Early Childhood Education (PAUD) as the first formal institution in the world of children's education, plays an important role in facilitating the growth of this confidence.

Teachers as the main educators in early childhood education institutions have a very big role in building children's confidence. The success of a teacher in forming a child's confidence depends heavily on the strategies used in the learning process and daily interactions. These strategies include providing motivation, an individualized approach, giving praise and rewards, creating a positive classroom atmosphere, and providing opportunities for children to express themselves and participate actively. With the right strategy, teachers can create a safe and comfortable learning environment for children to develop their potential.

At PAUD Panca Lestari Padang Lawas, teachers are committed to creating a fun learning process and developing children's character. However, the reality on the ground shows that not all children have the same level of confidence. Some children show the courage to appear in front of the class, actively ask questions, and answer questions, while others tend to be silent, reluctant to participate, and afraid of making mistakes. This condition indicates that a more specific, effective, and sustainable strategy is needed from teachers in build children's confidence according to the characteristics and needs of each individual.

The factors that affect children's confidence are very complex and involve various aspects, both from the family environment, peers, and the school environment. However, in the context of early childhood education institutions, teachers are the main figures who interact the most with children. Therefore, teachers' strategies in building children's confidence need to be studied in depth in order to gain a comprehensive understanding of effective and applicable approaches.

Based on this background, this research is important to reveal the strategies used by teachers in building early childhood confidence in PAUD Panca Lestari Padang Lawas. This study also aims to identify supporting and inhibiting factors in the process of building children's confidence in the school environment. With the results of this research, it is hoped that it can be a reference for teachers, institutional managers, and parents in creating a learning environment that supports children's psychosocial growth and development optimally, especially in the aspect of self-confidence.

Theoretical Studies

Self-confidence is an important aspect of early childhood social-emotional development. According to Hurlock (2003), self-confidence is a person's positive attitude towards himself which is reflected in the ability to face challenges optimistically. In early childhood, confidence is seen in the courage to try new things, the ability to express oneself, and not give up easily.

Erikson (1963) through his theory of psychosocial development states that the stage of early childhood development (3-6 years) is in the *initiative vs guilt* phase, where children learn to take initiative. Positive environmental support, especially from teachers, is very important so that children do not feel guilty when they fail to try something. This is the basis for growing confidence.

Children's confidence can be seen from several indicators, including: (1) Dare to appear in front of their friends, (2) Able to express opinions or desires, (3) Believe in their abilities, (4) Not afraid of making mistakes in try new things.

Teachers in PAUD are not only educators, but also facilitators, motivators, and guides in the process of child development. Teachers have a central role in creating a safe, supportive, and fun environment for children to feel accepted and appreciated.

According to Santrock (2007), a warm and responsive relationship between teacher and child can increase children's self-esteem and confidence. The attitude of teachers who give praise, support children's efforts, and avoid excessive punishment greatly affect the development of children's confidence.

Teachers also play a role in helping children recognize their strengths and provide meaningful learning experiences so that children feel capable and successful. Teachers' strategies in building early childhood confidence can include both individual and group approaches. Some commonly used strategies include:

1. Giving Praise and Positive Reinforcement. Sincere praise for a child's efforts—not just the results—can motivate the child to try again and increase his or her confidence (Slavin, 2005).
2. Creating a Safe and Supportive Learning Environment. Children will feel comfortable and dare to explore if their environment is free from ridicule, pressure, and fear. Teachers can create an inclusive and fun classroom atmosphere.
3. Giving Children the Opportunity to Have an Opinion and Choose. This strategy encourages children to feel valued and have control over their choices, which strengthens feelings of confidence (Ministry of National Education, 2007).
4. Engaging Children in Structured and Meaningful Play Activities. Activities such as role-playing, storytelling, and small presentations can increase children's confidence in their social and communication skills.
5. Providing Tasks in Accordance with Children's Abilities. Teachers need to recognize the abilities and development of children individually. Tasks that are too easy or too difficult can lower confidence. On the other hand, tasks that are challenging but still within the range of abilities will increase the child's self-efficacy.

According to Papalia (2008), children's confidence is influenced by several factors, including:

1. Family environment, especially parenting,
2. School environment, especially interaction with teachers and peers,
3. Personal experiences, such as successes and failures in activities,
4. Individual characteristics, such as temperament and basic psychological needs.

Research Methods

The research used in this study is qualitative research that provides descriptive information in written or oral narratives about the people and behaviors observed. In this study, the author examines the phenomenon that occurs in PAUD Panca Lestari Padang Lawas to obtain the truth of information based on the theoretical framework of the questions asked scientifically. The research approach used is a field-based descriptive approach in

natural conditions taken from written or oral narratives and the behavior of the people observed consisting of school principals, teachers and students.

Research and Discussion Results

PAUD Panca Lestari is one of the early childhood education institutions in Padang Lawas Regency, North Sumatra. This institution has a vision to form children who are noble, confident, and intellectually and emotionally intelligent. Currently, PAUD Panca Lestari has 5 educators and 48 students divided into two large classes: play group and group

B. The school environment is relatively conducive with attractive classrooms, safe play areas, and a pleasant learning atmosphere. All teachers in this institution have more than three years of teaching experience and regularly participate in PAUD development training.

Based on the results of interviews, observations, and documentation, researchers found several strategies used by teachers in building early childhood confidence in PAUD Panca Lestari, including:

1. **Praise and Positive Reinforcement**
Teachers routinely give verbal compliments, such as "Great!", "You're so smart!", "You've dared to try," when the child successfully completes an assignment or dares to appear in front of the class. This compliment is also given in the form of a hug or smile.
2. **Assigning Tasks According to Children's Abilities**
Teachers give assignments that are tailored to each child's developmental ability. For example, children who are still shy are asked to come to the front of the class in small groups before being asked to perform on their own.
3. **Giving Opportunities to Have Opinions and Vote**
In learning activities, children are given the opportunity to choose the color of the paper, the song to be sung, or the theme of the play. This makes the child feel valued and able to make decisions.
4. **Role-Playing and Storytelling Activities**
Another strategy that is effectively used is role-playing and storytelling activities. Children are encouraged to imitate roles such as doctors, teachers, or merchants, and are asked to tell stories in front of friends.
5. **Personal and Emotional Approach**
Teachers build personal closeness with children, hug, greet, and calm down when children feel afraid or insecure. This creates a strong sense of security and emotional support.

The results of the study showed that teachers at PAUD Panca Lestari applied various effective strategies in building early childhood confidence. These strategies are aligned with the theory of child development which states that a child's confidence is built from a supportive environment and positive experiences.

The strategy of giving praise and positive reinforcement is in accordance with the opinion of Slavin (2005) who emphasizes the importance of reinforcement in forming confident behavior. When your child gets appreciation for his efforts, he will feel appreciated and motivated to keep trying. The adjustment of tasks to the child's abilities also supports Vygotsky's theory of the zone of proximal development, where the child can learn optimally with appropriate help from the teacher. This strategy helps children not feel failed or depressed.

Providing opportunities to vote and express opinions in accordance with the principles of children's education that respects children's autonomy. This reflects that teachers not only educate but also empower children to take an active role in learning.

Role-playing and storytelling are a means of social and communication exercises,

which are very important for children to feel comfortable performing in front of common. This is also in line with the approach to play as the core of learning in PAUD.

Overall, the strategies used by teachers reflect a good understanding of the emotional and psychosocial needs of early childhood. The warm, safe, and fun environment created by teachers has proven to be very effective in building children's confidence.

Conclusions and Suggestions

Based on the results of the research that has been conducted, it can be concluded that teachers have a very important role in shaping and building early childhood confidence. At PAUD Panca Lestari Padang Lawas, teachers not only play the role of delivering learning materials, but also as emotional companions and guides in developing children's character, especially in terms of courage and confidence.

Some of the strategies used by teachers in the process include giving praise and positive reinforcement, adjusting tasks to children's abilities, providing opportunities to choose and express opinions, and implementing role-playing and storytelling activities. In addition, teachers also build a personal approach that is warm and compassionate, thereby creating a safe, fun learning atmosphere, and encouraging children to appear confident.

These strategies have proven to be effective in building children's confidence, which can be seen from the attitude of children who are more daring to speak in front of the class, able to express opinions, and show pride in their work. An inclusive, supportive, and communicative learning environment greatly supports the success of the process.

As a suggestion, PAUD teachers are expected to continue to develop a learning approach that is oriented to children's emotional needs, especially in building confidence. Early childhood education institutions are also advised to support the process through the provision of facilities and activity programs that allow children to perform and express themselves positively. In addition, parental involvement in supporting children at home is also very necessary so that the process of building children's confidence runs in harmony between the school environment and home. For future researchers, it is recommended to develop a research with a broader scope and consider aspects of the others that also affect children's confidence, such as parenting, social environment, and local culture.

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