

STRENGTHENING EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION THROUGH ENVIRONMENTAL CARE AND UTILIZATION OF SCHOOL TOYS IN GREEN SCHOOL PROGRAMS

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ABSTRAK

Pengabdian masyarakat ini dilakukan melalui pendekatan Participatory Action Research (PAR) untuk meningkatkan kualitas pendidikan anak usia dini di TK Islam Harapan Ibu. Melalui keterlibatan aktif dari pihak sekolah, orang tua, dan masyarakat, program pengabdian masyarakat ini bertujuan untuk mengidentifikasi, merencanakan, melaksanakan, dan mengevaluasi kegiatan yang fokus pada gerakan merawat lingkup mainan sekolah dan integrasi program Green School. Dalam penelitian ini, ditemukan peningkatan yang signifikan dalam keterlibatan dan kreativitas anak-anak selama kegiatan pembelajaran dengan menggunakan mainan. Dukungan yang besar dari tenaga pendidik dan orang tua memainkan peran penting dalam keberhasilan program ini. Keberlanjutan gerakan merawat lingkup mainan sekolah dan integrasi program Green School diharapkan dapat terus berkembang dan memberikan kontribusi yang signifikan dalam meningkatkan kualitas pendidikan anak usia dini di masyarakat.

Kata Kunci: *Perawatan Lingkungan, Mainan Sekolah, Program Green School, Anak Usia Dini*

ABSTRACT

This community service was conducted through the Participatory Action Research (PAR) approach to enhance the quality of early childhood education at TK Islam Harapan Ibu. Through active involvement from the school, parents, and community, this community service program aims to identify, plan, implement, and evaluate activities focused on the movement to care for the school's toy scope and integrate the Green School program. In this study, a significant improvement in children's engagement and creativity during learning activities using toys was found. Strong support from educators and parents played a crucial role in the success of this program. The sustainability of the movement to care for the school's toy scope and integration of the Green School program are expected to continue to develop and make a significant contribution to improving the quality of early childhood education in the community.

Keywords: *Environmental Care, School Toys, Green School Programs, Early Childhood*

INTRODUCTION

Early childhood education is not only the responsibility of schools and the government but also requires support and active participation from the community [1]–[3]. One crucial form of community service is the movement to care for the school's toy scope [4]. Early childhood education is a crucial stage in child development [5]–[8]. The brain of young children develops rapidly, and learning during this time has a continuous influence on their cognitive, social, and emotional growth [9]–[11]. Preschool learning is greatly influenced by the toys present in the

classroom learning environment [12], [13]. In the context of early childhood education, on the other hand, toys have tremendous potential as learning tools that play a significant role in shaping the quality of early childhood education [14]–[16].

The role of the school's toy scope is not only to provide entertainment but also to open the door for enjoyable and effective learning processes. A carefully designed learning environment, including the selection of appropriate toys, can stimulate children's curiosity, creativity, and critical thinking skills [17]–[19]. Therefore, the movement to care for the school's toy scope is essential in creating a solid foundation for children's development [20]–[22].

Furthermore, the integration of green school initiatives within this context emphasizes sustainability and environmental consciousness in early childhood education. Green school initiatives involve promoting practices that reduce environmental impact and encourage eco-friendly behaviors among students, teachers, and the wider community [23]–[26]. By incorporating green practices into the maintenance and selection of toys, such as utilizing recycled materials for toy construction or implementing toy rotation systems to minimize waste, schools can instill environmental values in young children from an early age [27], [28]. Additionally, fostering connections with nature through outdoor play and incorporating lessons on environmental stewardship further enhances the educational experience and contributes to holistic child development.

Toys help children learn important lessons in fostering creativity and building social skills, and they serve as a fun way to spend time playing [29]–[31]. A movement focused on the maintenance and improvement of toy quality in early childhood education environments not only benefits individual children but also significantly impacts the overall quality of early childhood education in an institution [32]–[36]. However, unfortunately, in many schools, toys are often forgotten, damaged, or not well maintained. This can be due to a lack of understanding of the educational potential of these toys or a lack of resources to maintain and utilize them effectively.

One of the main goals of this community service is to raise awareness among teachers, parents, and school communities about the importance of toy maintenance in the context of early childhood education. By highlighting the educational value inherent in toys and their role in child development, this goal aims to promote the movement to care for the school's toy scope, thus changing the paradigm in early childhood education, ensuring that every child has access to meaningful learning experiences, and promoting the use of toys as effective learning tools.

In this process, we hope to strengthen the foundation of early childhood education and create a solid foundation for a brighter future for the younger generation.

METHODS

Using the participatory action research (PAR) methodology, our goal is to enhance early childhood education at TK Islam Harapan Ibu, located in the Tanah Datar Regency, by integrating environmental care and the utilization of school toys within the Green School Program. Through PAR, we will actively involve students, teachers, parents, and the local community in identifying environmental needs and devising solutions. Together, we will assess the effectiveness of integrating environmental themes into the curriculum and the impact of eco-friendly school toys on children's learning and environmental awareness. This collaborative approach empowers stakeholders to contribute their insights, co-create strategies, and collectively advocate for sustainable practices. Through PAR, our aim is not only to enrich early childhood education but also to foster a sense of ownership and dedication to environmental stewardship among all participants at TK Islam Harapan Ibu in the Tanah Datar Regency. Here are the systematic steps of Participatory Action Research (PAR) follow:

1. Needs Identification: Identify environmental needs around TK Islam Harapan Ibu, located in the Tanah Datar Regency, with active participation from students, teachers, parents, and the community.
2. Program Planning: Design a program that integrates environmental care and the utilization of eco-friendly school toys within the Green School Programs curriculum.
3. Implementation: Implement the program involving all stakeholders, including students, teachers, parents, and the local community around TK Islam Harapan Ibu.
4. Observation and Evaluation: Observe and evaluate the effectiveness of the program, including its impact on children's learning and environmental awareness.
5. Reflection and Improvement: Reflect on the observation and evaluation results, and make improvements or adjustments to the program to better meet the established needs and goals.
6. Dissemination and Diffusion: Disseminate best practices and findings to other schools in the broader community to expand the positive impact of the program.



Fig 1. Participation Action Research Model

In this community engagement initiative, we're enhancing early childhood education by integrating environmental care and utilizing eco-friendly school toys in Green School Programs. We'll start by identifying local environmental needs and involving students and the community in care and restoration efforts. Then, we'll develop a curriculum that integrates environmental issues, ensuring children learn while contributing to nature conservation. Additionally, we'll provide teacher training to effectively integrate environmental aspects into daily activities. Regular monitoring and evaluation will ensure program sustainability and impact. This approach promises significant benefits for early childhood education and environmental conservation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Activity Results

The conducted activities ran optimally. The activities carried out at TK Islam Harapan Ibu received a very positive response. This was evident from the high enthusiasm shown by both the school and the participating parents. The movement to care for the school's toy scope greatly assisted educators in enhancing the quality of early childhood education. Thus, it created a more dynamic and memorable learning environment. By involving educators and parents, we can create an understanding that education is not just about academics but also involves the social, emotional, and physical aspects of children. Toys serve as tools that facilitate this holistic development, and with the participation of educators and parents, we can collectively create an educational environment that supports comprehensive early childhood development. Through these service efforts, we not only nurture the potential of children but also cultivate their future by providing a strong and holistic educational foundation.

The implementation of the school's toy scope maintenance movement learning took place as expected. This is evidenced by:

1. Teachers and educators actively participating in activities related to the movement to care for the school's toy scope.
2. Toys being used as aids to clarify concepts, stimulate creativity, and increase student participation in learning activities.
3. Uninterrupted support from educators and parents.

The facilities and infrastructure provided by the school in terms of space and time were among the factors contributing to the success of this routine activity. The success of this Community Service activity is measured through direct observation of how toys are integrated into daily learning processes, indicating whether there have been changes in toy management at the school.

Documentation of Activities



Fig 2. Arrival of the Community Service Team at TK Islam Harapan Ibu



Fig 3. Discussion with school representatives in preparing the movement to care for the school's toy scope activity



Fig 4. Facilitation of the school's toy scope maintenance movement activity with school representatives.

CONCLUSION

The Community Service activity at TK Islam Harapan Ibu took place over approximately 3 months. The success of this activity was achieved due to the significant support from educators and parents involved in its implementation. One of the key factors contributing to the success of this Community Service activity is the increase in children's engagement and creativity during learning activities using toys. They became more active, innovative, and enthusiastic in the learning process. The sustainability of this activity is expected to ensure that the movement to care for the school's toy scope continues to evolve and make a significant contribution to improving the quality of early childhood education in the community.

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