

## Strategies for Developing Fine Motor Skills in Early

### Childhood at PAUD Harsya Ceria

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#### ABSTRACT

This study aims to describe the strategies used by teachers in developing fine motor skills of early childhood learners at PAUD Harsya Ceria. The research employed a descriptive qualitative approach with data collection techniques consisting of observation, interviews, and documentation. The research subjects included teachers and early childhood learners who participated in fine motor learning activities.

The results indicate that teachers implemented well-planned strategies through opening activities, core activities, reflection, and closing sessions. During the core activities, teachers employed various tasks such as drawing, coloring, cutting, pasting, threading, as well as life skills activities including opening and closing bottles and buttoning clothes. These strategies were tailored to the individual abilities of children, including children with special needs, ensuring that each child received equal learning opportunities.

Teachers also integrated play-based approaches, demonstrations, direct assistance, and scaffolding to help children

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coordinate finger and hand movements. Evaluation was conducted through observation and assessment of children's work. Overall, the implemented strategies proved effective in improving fine muscle strength, hand-eye coordination, concentration, and children's independence. These findings emphasize the importance of varied and adaptive learning planning in optimizing the development of fine motor skills in early childhood.

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### Introduction

Strategies for developing fine motor skills may include activities such as paper folding, drawing, coloring, and threading. Teachers need to apply strategies that are individualized, engaging, and adaptive to children's abilities. This perspective also emphasizes that learning for children with special needs requires a well-planned, flexible approach that takes into account each child's individual needs (Marwany & Kurniawan, 2020).

The *Merdeka Curriculum* for Early Childhood Education highlights the importance of achieving children's developmental outcomes, including fine motor skills. Within the *Identity* element, children are expected to be able to use movement functions (gross motor, fine motor, and tactile skills) to explore and manipulate objects in their surrounding environment as a form of self-development (Kemdikbudristek, 2022).

Fine motor development is an essential component of early childhood growth. Fine motor skills relate to a child's ability to use small muscles, such as those in the fingers and wrists, to perform daily

activities including writing, cutting, threading, folding, and grasping small objects. These abilities require effective coordination between the nervous system, muscles, and sensory functions, particularly hand-eye coordination (Nofianti, 2021).

For children with special needs, the process of developing fine motor skills often encounters various challenges. Children with intellectual disabilities, autism, or physical impairments tend to experience delays in controlling fine movements due to cognitive and neuromotor limitations. Therefore, the development of fine motor skills in children with special needs requires specific strategies that are aligned with each child's individual needs and characteristics (Khadijah & Amelia, 2020).

Based on preliminary observations conducted on May 1 at PAUD Harsya Ceria, several early childhood learners were found to experience challenges in fine motor activities. For example, some children were not yet able to hold a pencil correctly, cut along lines accurately, or thread objects using straw media. These conditions indicate the need for effective and varied strategies to assist teachers in optimally stimulating children's fine motor development.

This study aims to provide an in-depth description of the approaches used in the learning process, as well as the challenges and solutions encountered by teachers during the implementation of fine motor development activities.

## Methods

This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach, which aims to describe and gain an in-depth understanding of the strategies implemented in developing fine motor skills among early childhood learners at PAUD Harsya Ceria. The qualitative approach produces descriptive data in the form of written and spoken words as well as observed behaviors (Waruwu, 2023).

The data sources in this study consisted of primary data and secondary data, intended to obtain information that aligns with the research objectives and is supported by field data. The collected data were used comprehensively in this study, as described below.

Primary data refer to data obtained directly from research subjects through measurement instruments or direct data collection tools, where the subjects serve as the primary sources of information (Sugiyono, 2020). Accordingly, the researcher conducted observations, interviews with teachers at PAUD Harsya Ceria, and documentation.

The data processing technique used in this study was interactive qualitative data analysis, as proposed by Nafisatur (2024), which consists of several stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing or verification.

Data reduction is the process of selecting, focusing, simplifying, and abstracting raw data obtained from observations, interviews, and documentation at PAUD Harsya Ceria. At this stage, the researcher

sorted data that were relevant to the research focus, particularly those related to strategies for developing fine motor skills in early childhood, and eliminated data that were not directly related to the research objectives.

After data reduction, the next step was data display. The data were presented in the form of narrative descriptions, matrices, or descriptive tables to facilitate understanding and analysis. This stage aimed to assist the researcher in identifying patterns, relationships among data, and trends in the strategies applied by teachers in fine motor development activities.

The final stage involved drawing conclusions, which was conducted gradually and continuously throughout the research process. Initial conclusions were continually verified using field data through rechecking processes, including comparing observation results, interview findings, and documentation. Consequently, the conclusions obtained are credible and accurately reflect the actual conditions at PAUD Harsya Ceria.

## Result and Discussions

### Strategies for Developing Fine Motor Skills in Early Childhood at PAUD Harsya Ceria

Based on the results of observations and interviews conducted at PAUD Harsya Ceria, teachers in developing early childhood fine motor

skills do not merely focus on planning, implementation, and evaluation of learning activities, but also apply various comprehensive, structured, and child-centered strategies (Sujiono, 2021). These strategies are designed to stimulate the coordination of small muscles, enhance focus, and foster children's independence through activities that require manual precision (Hurlock, 2020).

Teachers also apply a holistic approach by integrating fine motor stimulation into center-based activities, such as art centers, block centers, and preparation centers, enabling children to gain more meaningful learning experiences (Putri & Suryana, 2022). Each strategy is adapted to children's initial abilities and interests, thereby providing equitable and directed learning opportunities (Yuliani, 2021). In this regard, a teacher stated:

"Directing children to art center activities, for example, making animal collages using pine seeds, leaves, and twigs. They are free to choose whichever materials they want, and in that process, they experience autonomy in their activities."

All of these strategies are aligned with the principles of early childhood education, which emphasize meaningful learning, active exploration, and continuous stimulation as the foundation for fine motor development (Kemdikbudristek, 2022). Accordingly, teachers strive to create a learning environment that is conducive, enjoyable, and

supportive of children's optimal development (Ramadhani, 2022).

### **Initial Stage of Activities (Opening Activities)**

In the morning, teachers welcome children at the school entrance with greetings, friendly interactions, and warm interpersonal communication. Children are guided into the classroom and encouraged to play together with their peers. Inside the classroom, children sit down and are provided with Lego blocks to play with. After playing, the opening activities begin with praying to start the session, followed by ice-breaking activities.

These opening activities aim not only to create a comfortable atmosphere but also to prepare children emotionally and cognitively to engage in fine motor activities that require focus and hand coordination.

Teachers then explain the activities to be carried out, such as drawing, threading, paper folding, or cutting simple patterns, and introduce the tools and materials to be used. This stage helps children understand the concepts before initiating fine motor activities.

### **Core Activities Stage**

During the core stage, teachers provide guidance and concrete demonstrations related to the fine motor activities to be performed. The core activities at PAUD Harsya Ceria are highly varied and include the following:

## Drawing and Coloring Activities

Teachers prepare paper, crayons, and colored pencils. Children are guided to draw simple shapes such as circles, curved lines, or thematic patterns. These activities help strengthen finger control, improve hand-eye coordination, and develop proper writing tool grip.

## Threading Activities

In threading activities, teachers provide colorful straws that have been cut into small pieces. Children are asked to choose their preferred colors and insert the straw pieces into a string. During the threading process, children demonstrate focus while coordinating hand and eye movements. Teachers provide assistance when children experience difficulty holding the string steady. This activity has been shown to strengthen finger muscles and enhance children's concentration and independence.

## Cutting and Pasting Activities

Teachers prepare simple patterns such as straight lines, wavy lines, or zig-zag lines. Children practice cutting along the lines and then pasting the cut pieces onto prepared media. These activities train grip strength, hand stability, and the ability to follow visual instructions.

## Life Skills Activities

Activities such as opening and closing bottles, inserting pine seeds

into small containers, clipping balls using clothespins, or buttoning clothes are also routinely conducted. Life skills activities provide dual benefits: improving fine motor skills while simultaneously fostering independence.

**Figure 1.** Teacher monitoring students' activities



Throughout the activities, teachers move around to provide scaffolding, conduct observations, and facilitate children who require additional assistance. Teachers also ensure that children engage in activities without pressure, maintaining a joyful learning process in accordance with early childhood education principles.

### **Reflection Stage (Review and Evaluation)**

After the core activities are completed, teachers invite children to tidy up the learning tools and clean the play area. Children are then encouraged to share their experiences during the fine motor activities.

Teachers provide positive reinforcement for children's efforts, assess their work, and offer motivation for subsequent activities.

Informal evaluation is conducted through casual conversations, observations, and documentation of children's work.

### **Closing Stage**

At the closing stage, children are guided to wash their hands in an orderly manner, line up in front of the bathroom, and eat together. Afterward, they tidy up the items they brought from home and pray after eating. Children then return to the classroom. For children who stay until the afternoon, a scheduled midday bathing routine is conducted.

### **Strategies for Developing Fine Motor Skills in Children with Special Needs (CWSN)**

Fine motor development refers to movement abilities involving small muscles, particularly hand and finger coordination, which require concentration, precision, and hand-eye coordination. These skills form the foundation for children's daily activities such as writing, cutting, threading, folding, buttoning clothes, and other functional tasks. In children with special needs, fine motor development is often hindered by neurological, sensory, and cognitive factors; therefore, specific strategies tailored to individual needs are required (Nofianti, 2021).

According to Farida et al., fine motor development that aligns with average developmental achievement standards includes the ability to

color, draw, cut according to patterns, and create objects using various materials (Padila et al., 2023). Delays in fine motor development among children with special needs may result from insufficient stimulation provided during early childhood.

Children with special needs possess diverse characteristics and types of disabilities. According to Fitri et al., these characteristics can be categorized as follows (Aristia et al., 2024):

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- Visual impairment
  - Hearing impairment
  - Communication disorders
  - Intellectual disability
  - Physical disability
  - Emotional and behavioral disorders
  - Learning difficulties
  - Multiple disabilities

Children with special needs are those who deviate from the average condition of typically developing children in terms of physical, mental, or behavioral characteristics. During the stages of growth and development, one critical aspect that requires attention is motor ability.

Children with special needs experience various obstacles that affect their motor development (Azifa et al., 2024).

### Conclusion

This study demonstrates that the strategies for developing fine motor skills at PAUD Harsya Ceria are implemented through well-planned, varied, and child-centered activities. Teachers employ activities such as drawing, coloring, threading, cutting, and life skills tasks to stimulate finger strength, hand-eye coordination, and children's independence. The learning process begins with opening activities that prepare children emotionally, continues with teacher-guided core activities, and concludes with evaluation through observation and reflection. These strategies have proven effective in supporting the fine motor development of early childhood learners, including children with special needs, and are aligned with the principles of the *Merdeka Curriculum* in early childhood education.

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