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THE IMPORTANCE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND THE ROLE OF INFRASTRUCTURE FACILITIES IN SUPPORTING LEARNING IN ORCHID PLAY GROUPS (KOBER) IN KEDUNGGJAYA VILLAGE, CIREBON

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Abstract

Background. Early childhood education (PAUD) is an essential foundation in child development. We compiled this study titled The Importance of Early Childhood Education and the Role of Infrastructure Facilities in Supporting Learning in Orchid Play Groups (Kober) in Kedungjaya Village, Cirebon.

Aims. This study explores early childhood education's importance and infrastructure's role in supporting learning in the Orchid Play Group (Kober), Kedungjaya Village, Cirebon.

Methods. The method used is qualitative research with a literature approach. The study results show that good education at an early age can improve children's cognitive, social, and emotional abilities.

Conclusion. Adequate infrastructure also contributes significantly to learning effectiveness and children's growth and development.

Implementation. Kober Orchid in Kedungjaya Village has shown that with the proper support, children can develop well. Therefore, all parties need to pay more attention to improving the quality of early childhood education. In addition, training for educators also needs to be improved so that they can provide quality education.

Keywords: PAUD, Infrastructure, Play Group (Kober).

INTRODUCTION

Early childhood education (PAUD) is an important stage of education in shaping children's character and abilities. In Indonesia, early childhood education is one of the main focuses in the development of national education. The Orchid Play Group (Kober) in Kedungjaya Village, Cirebon, is one of the institutions that provides early childhood education. This study aims to analyze the importance of early childhood education and how existing infrastructure can support the learning process in Kober Anggrek.

Early childhood education (PAUD) is a crucial stage of development in forming children's character, cognitive, social-emotional, and physical abilities. This period is the *golden age* of brain development, where proper stimulation will significantly impact further development (Santrock, 2021). According to Sujiono (2023), early childhood education is an effort to provide a fun and meaningful learning experience for children aged 0-6. In this process, children are taught to optimally develop their potential through various activities

appropriate to their developmental stage. This aligns with the view of Isjoni (2021), who states that early childhood education is a learning process in a safe and supportive environment where children can learn through play. This education aims to develop children's cognitive, linguistic, motor, and social aspects. Cirebon Mayor Regulation Number 57 of 2022 concerning the Implementation of Early Childhood Development also emphasizes the importance of access and quality of early childhood education to support the growth and development of children in the Cirebon area.

The success of early childhood education depends not only on the quality of educators but also on the availability and quality of learning support facilities and infrastructure. Based on the Regulation of the Minister of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia Number 22 of 2023, it is explained that Facilities are everything that can be used as tools and equipment in achieving learning goals, while Infrastructure is an essential facility needed to carry out the function of an educational unit. Adequate facilities and infrastructure create a conducive learning environment, stimulate creativity, and facilitate an effective learning process. The Early Childhood Education Infrastructure Guidelines (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2023) emphasize the importance of the availability of facilities and infrastructure under national education standards to support the success of early childhood education. For example, research by Supriyadi (2021) in Kedongdong Village, Cirebon shows challenges in access and quality of early childhood education in rural areas. Meanwhile, research on strengthening PAUD management in Majalengka (2024) highlights the importance of effective management in optimizing the use of facilities and infrastructure. Especially in Kober Anggrek, Kedungjaya Village, and Cirebon, this study will analyze how the available facilities and infrastructure contribute to achieving children's learning and development goals. This study explores the importance of early childhood education and how existing infrastructure can support the learning process in Kober Anggrek. The government's investment in early childhood education, as stated in Book II of the Financial Memorandum of the FY 2024 State Budget, also shows a commitment to improving the quality of early childhood education in Indonesia.

METHOD

This research uses a qualitative method with a literature approach. Data was collected through literature studies from various sources, including journals, books, and articles relevant

to the research theme. The main focus of this study is to identify and analyze the role of early childhood education and infrastructure facilities in supporting learning in Kober Anggrek.

DISCUSSION

Research shows that early childhood education (PAUD) or Play Groups (KOBBER) not only focuses on academic development but also on social and emotional development. Children who get a good education at an early age tend to have better interpersonal skills, higher adaptability, and better preparation to face challenges at the next level of education.

The issuance of Government Regulation No. 19 of 2005 concerning the standardization of National Education provides opportunities for the community to actively participate in implementing education through self-help education programs. This is intended to anticipate essential education services that are not by the ideals and objectives of the National Education program. Many children at the age of primary education still do not get sufficient education at the previous level of education, so they are not ready to face the subject matter they face. This reality is the background for establishing the Orchid Play (KOBBER) group.

In the Orchid Play Group (KOBBER) activity, children are taught Islamic Religious Education, such as reciting Iqro, daily prayers, memorizing short letters, practicing prayer, practicing ablution, moral aqidah, etc.

In addition, to train fine motor skills, Kober Orchid students are taught to color, thicken, stick, and make handicrafts. As for training gross motor skills, Kober Anggrek children are taught activities inside or outside the classroom, such as joint gymnastics, jumping, running, and educational *games/games* individually or in teams. Variations of games are also sought to stimulate children's academics, such as matching geometric shapes, matching colors, clapping colors, introduction to basketball, soccer, track jumping, and so on. In addition, in Kober Anggrek, traditional games such as ankle, slogan, hide and seek, songkok, and so on are introduced.

The Orchid Play Group (KOBBER) is located in the Kebon Kunir RT Block. 06 PC. 02 Kedung Jaya Village, Kedawung District, Cirebon Regency. The teaching and learning process is implemented every Monday to Wednesday from 09.30 to 11.00 WIB.



Source: Live Documentation
Figure 1. Teaching and learning activities

Good infrastructure, such as comfortable classrooms, educational play tools, and a safe environment, are essential to create a positive and conducive learning atmosphere. Research shows that children who learn in a supportive environment tend to be more motivated and engaged in the learning process.

Based on the Regulation of the Minister of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia Number 22 of 2023 concerning the standards of facilities and infrastructure in early childhood education, primary education, and secondary education levels, it explains that the standards of facilities and infrastructure in early childhood education (PAUD)/Play Groups (Kober) are as follows:

Table 1. Facilities Standards

	Means
Learning Materials	all forms and types of materials used in the learning process
Learning tools	All forms and types of objects used in the learning process, including media to convey messages and information
Equipment	all forms and types of objects that function as supports to achieve learning goals in educational units

Source: Ministry of Education and Culture Regulation Number 22 of 2023

The provisions of the facility are as follows:

1. Following the needs of specific paths, levels, and types of education;
2. Accommodating the characteristics and needs of students by paying attention to gender, cultural diversity, language, religion, and beliefs;
3. Paying attention to the need for Proper Accommodation for Students with Disabilities;
4. Use the resources available in the environment around the educational unit;

5. Safety, health, and safety; and
6. Environmentally friendly
7. Following the needs of children, which include education, health, nutrition, care, nurturing, protection, and welfare;
8. Diversity and opportunities to play, developmental stages, and facilitating freedom Students make choices according to their interests and
9. Following child development, the characteristics of students, and the relevant needs for program services in early childhood education units.

Table 2. Infrastructure Standards

Infrastructure	
Land	in the form of a plot of land that is used for the implementation of education in educational units
Building	the physical form of the results of construction work that functions as a place for education
Room	a place used for theoretical learning activities, practices, and other activities to achieve educational goals which can be in the form of open spaces or closed spaces

Source: Ministry of Education and Culture Regulation Number 22 of 2023

The Land Provisions are as follows:

1. The land area can accommodate educational facilities and infrastructure by considering:
 - a. projection of the number of students and study groups;
 - b. the completeness of learning in the paths, levels, and types of education; and
 - c. type and amount of space;
2. Have green open spaces to support the learning process and ecological functions;
3. Be in a comfortable environment, avoid potential hazards that threaten health and safety and have access to rescue in an emergency;
4. The location is in accordance with the designation and receives a land use permit from the local government;
5. Have the status of land rights, not in dispute, and/or have a utilization permit from the land rights holder in accordance with the provisions of laws and regulations; and
6. Have access to roads that are feasible to travel and meet accessibility for Persons with Disabilities

The Building Conditions are as follows:

1. Have a building area taking into account:
 - a. Projected number of students and study groups; and
 - b. Type and amount of space;

2. Building layout which includes the basic coefficient of the building, the coefficient of the floor of the building, the height and clearance of the building in accordance with the provisions of laws and regulations;
3. Safety which includes construction strength and resistance to disasters caused by natural, non-natural, and/or human factors;
4. Health which includes air conditioning, lighting, access to clean water sources, and sanitation;
5. Security in the form of danger warnings, evacuation routes and access that can be easily reached and equipped with clear directions;
6. Comfort which includes the comfort of the space of movement and the relationship between spaces, indoor conditions, views, as well as vibration levels and noise levels;
7. Have an installation of electricity network and/or other energy sources in accordance with the needs and provisions of laws and regulations;
8. Accessibility includes facilities for Persons with Disabilities; and
9. Using building materials that are safe for health and safety for building users and the environment

The Conditions of Space are as follows:

1. The type and amount of space are adjusted to the function of the space according to the path, level, and type of education;
2. Security and safety which includes hazard warnings, easily accessible evacuation routes and access;
3. Health which includes cleanliness, air conditioning, lighting, by prioritizing air conditioning and natural lighting; and
4. Accessibility includes facilities for Persons with Disabilities.



Source: Live Documentation
Figure 2. Orchid Cover Infrastructure

Based on the Ministry of Education and Culture Regulation Number 22 of 2023, Kober Angrek has provided various facilities that support teaching and learning activities, such as safe play areas and attractive teaching aids. However, these facilities and infrastructure still need to be equipped and updated to realize the purpose of Kober Orchid's hadron optimally.

Good infrastructure not only improves the quality of learning but also creates a conducive environment for children to learn and develop, so collaboration between the government, educators, parents, and the community is important in supporting this fulfillment.



Source: Live Documentation
Figure 3. Submission of Learning Facilities

The Benefits of Educational Game Tools (APE) in supporting teaching and learning activities and children's development.



Source: <https://www.tokopedia.com/>
Figure 4. Colored Pencil

Coloring activities with colored pencils help children work the small muscles in their hands and fingers. It is essential for developing fine motor skills, which are necessary for writing skills and other daily activities. Coloring provides an opportunity for children to express their feelings and imagination. Children can show their emotions and creativity through the colors they choose and how they color. This helps them understand and express their feelings. By using colored pencils, children learn to recognize and distinguish different colors. This is a critical first step in their cognitive development.



Source: <https://www.tokopedia.com/>

Figure 5. Cone Ring Throwing

Cone Ring Throwing can be played in groups, encouraging children's social interaction. These games teach children about cooperation, sharing, and healthy competition, which are essential aspects of their social development. This activity can also stimulate children's cognitive development. As children attempt to throw rings at targets, they learn about distances, angles, and strategies, all of which contribute to developing critical thinking and problem-solving skills and improving children's hand-eye coordination. When children successfully throw rings at the target, they feel an achievement that can boost their confidence. Success in this game can provide additional motivation to try new activities and take on challenges.



Source: <https://www.tokopedia.com/>

Figure 6. Puzzle Block

Puzzle blocks help children develop problem-solving and critical-thinking skills. When children try to assemble puzzle pieces, they learn to recognize patterns, shapes, and sizes, which are essential foundations in their cognitive development. Playing with *puzzle blocks* allows children to be creative and express themselves. These activities encourage imagination and innovation, which are essential for developing their creativity.



Source: <https://www.tokopedia.com/>

Figure 7. Car Happy Bus Xylophone Puzzle Music

Playing with a musical instrument like the xylophone involves hand-eye coordination, which is essential for developing fine motor skills. Children learn to hit the instrument precisely, which also helps improve their concentration and focus. This activity also encourages creativity, as children can experiment with sounds and create their melodies.



Source: Live Documentation

Figure 8. Reading Books

Reading books helps children recognize letters, words, and sentences, an essential foundation for further reading skills. Children exposed to various books tend to have a broader vocabulary and better language skills. Reading books, especially those containing stories, can

stimulate children's imaginations. Stories help children understand different perspectives and experiences and encourage them to think creatively. Reading books that include social and emotional themes can help children understand their feelings and those of others. It contributes to the development of empathy and social skills.



Source: Live Documentation

Figure 9. Photo with Sisawa and Guru Kober Orchid

CONCLUSION

The study's results show that early childhood education has a significant impact on child development. Children who get a good education at an early age tend to have better social skills, better communication skills, and higher cognitive abilities. In addition, adequate infrastructure, such as comfortable classrooms, educational play tools, and a safe environment, greatly affects the learning process.

Early childhood education is crucial for child development, and adequate infrastructure plays a significant role in supporting the learning process. Kober Orchid in Kedungjaya Village has shown that with the proper support, children can develop well. Therefore, all parties need to pay more attention to improving the quality of early childhood education.

IMPLICATION

It is hoped that the government and the community can pay more attention and actively participate in developing early childhood education, including providing adequate infrastructure. Good infrastructure, such as comfortable classrooms, educational toys (APEs), and a safe environment, significantly affect learning. Early childhood education is essential for child development, and adequate infrastructure plays a significant role in supporting the

learning process. Kober Orchid in Kedungjaya Village has shown that with the proper support, children can develop well. Therefore, all parties need to pay more attention to improving the quality of early childhood education. In addition, training for educators also needs to be improved so that they can provide quality education.

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