

# Basic Literacy Activities of Early Childhood Learning in Medan City

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**Abstract.** The study aims to map types, methods, and media in literacy activities carried out in Kindergarten for children aged 5-6 years. This type of research is descriptive qualitative research. The data processing method went through several stages, including data analysis carried out by descriptive data analysis with the processing of the results of the questionnaire. The data analysis technique used in qualitative analysis is carried out through stages (1) Data collection, carried out with a focus on aspects of the research topic- (2) Data Reduction- (3) Presentation Data- (4) Conclusion and Verification. Output in the research are- (1) Publication of an article in the form of Scopus indexed proceedings or web science (2) The research registered with copyright (HKI)'

**Keywords:** Basic literacy, activities, early childhood

## 1 Introduction

Gerakan Literasi Nasional (GLN, 2018) states that to face the 21st century, humans are competent in at least six basics of literacy. Literacy is an absorption word that means the ability to read and write. Currently, the meaning is expanding to the ability to write, to read; to know or skills in a particular field of activity; individual ability to process information and knowledge for life skills (Badan Pengembangan dan Pengembangan Bahasa, 2016). It means that it's no longer about reading books. " but about reading the "environment." Another definition, That literacy is the ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate and calculate using printed and written materials related to various contexts. (UNESCO, 2003). Based on the above understanding, it concluded that literacy is the ability to understand the context and use it in solving problems.

Based on the results of research entitled The World's Most Literate Nations, Indonesia ranks 62 out of 70 countries (Program for International Student Assessment released by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in 2019, the low literacy mastery as evidenced by the PISA (Program for International Student) survey. Assessment ) The survey shows that our country, Indonesia, occupies the 60th position out of 61 countries. The government must take the literacy crisis in Indonesia seriously.

Development and improvement must be done through education. Kindergarten is one of the educational institutions that have a role in the development of basic human behavior and abilities. In the early childhood period, they acquire knowledge of reading and writing not

only through teaching but also through simple behavior by observing and participating in literacy-related activities (Justice L & Kaderavek, 2002).

Literacy activities, especially reading and writing literacy, are generally integrated into thematic learning in Kindergarten. However, it is not close to a series of thematic activities, but can also be done through free play outside of thematic activities. In addition, activities such as playing numbers, reading aloud, saving, and social service are also kinds of literacy activities that need development. Many teachers and parents do not know the types of activities, methods, and media that can foster literacy, numeracy, scientific literacy, digital literacy, cultural literacy, and citizenship that suit early childhood. It encourages researchers to conduct research related to activities, methods, and media that can support basic literacy.

Literacy-oriented activities in early childhood aim to provide children's readiness to continue their education to the next level. This activity hands over benefits such as increasing vocabulary, improving children's interpersonal skills, optimizing children's brain performance, gaining new insights and information, improving children's verbal skills, improving children's analytical skills, and building concentration.

Literacy can be built in early childhood through the foreword of literacy through fun play activities. Appropriate education in shaping literacy skills in early childhood is different from adults. Literacy practice begins with observing, asking questions, and seeking information through reading, listening, and writing.

One of the government programs related to efforts to increase literacy is the Gerakan Literasi Nasional (GLN). Gerakan Literasi Nasional is a participatory and collaborative effort or activity with various elements in improving literacy skills.

Literacy activities can start from the simplest ones; reading, listening, and understanding spoke the language to a condition that leads to the achievement of higher literacy skills such as explaining phenomena or solving problems with their knowledge.

The Ministry of Education and Culture defines basic literacy into six categories (GLN, 2017) Reading and Writing Literacy, Numerical Literacy, Science Literacy, Digital Literacy, Cultural and Citizenship Literacy, and Financial Literacy.

## **2 Method**

The research is a qualitative descriptive study that aims to create a systematic, factual, and accurate description of the phenomenon without giving treatment to the subject without changing the condition. The population in this study was TK B in Medan City. The sample of this study consisted of 11 kindergartens in the city of Medan, whose characteristics were heterogeneous. The data was collected through interview forms to see various literacy activities directly. In addition, through documentation in the form of RPPH documents, photos of activities, evaluation results, and others related to data on early childhood literacy activities. Data analysis was done by analyzing descriptive data by processing the questionnaire results. The data analysis technique used in the qualitative has four stages, namely data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and the last step is conclusions and verification.

### 3 Result and Discussion

Literacy activities in this study are interpreted as a form of activity carried out in the context of achieving literacy in early childhood. Literacy activities are adapted to the approach and learning style of early childhood. In this study, documentation and interviews were conducted regarding six activities related to basic literacy, namely; Literacy literacy, numeracy literacy, scientific literacy, digital literacy, financial literacy, cultural literacy, and citizenship.

#### a) Reading-writing Literacy

Reading and writing literacy means an individual's ability to read, write and understand texts. (GLN, 2017) At the early childhood level, literacy activities must refer to the stage of early childhood development. literacy in children aged 5-6 years. Literacy reading and writing in children aged 5-6 years includes understanding language, expressing language and literacy (Permendikbud 137, 2014). Literacy activities for early childhood in Kindergarten can be carried out in various ways, including playing secret boxes, playing flashcards, hunting for words, reading aloud, visiting tourist attractions/zoo

Observations were made in several Kindergarten class B (aged 5-6 years) in Medan City. The results of the documentation and interviews found several findings, that reading and writing literacy activities were integrated into thematic activities in the classroom such as activities related to the realm of knowledge, attitudes, and skills, such as thickening and writing letters, listening to teacher directions regarding the rules of the game, listening to fairy tales and asking questions. answer about the fairy tale that has been told by the teacher mentions pictures of objects/animals/plants that start with certain letters, writing sentences consisting of 3 words, paying attention to punctuation in story books, spells names of objects around, plays using picture cards (matching the picture card with the name of the animal or object on the picture card), singing the ABC song while showing the letter symbols, writing the name on the worksheet, imitating a pattern

The approach is student-centered with several methods such as demonstration, play, conversation, play, assignment, question and answer, and hands-on practice. The tools and media used are fairy tale books, box notebooks, LKPD, TV, Crayons, Legos, pictures adapted to the theme, concrete objects according to the theme, hand puppets

Activities outside the thematic activities that were launched by one of the respondents (TKB1), namely Let's Read Storybooks! What will be done every day in the classroom in turn, is similar to the activities that have been carried out at TKB 11 which do storytelling every morning outside of thematic activities and review short surahs every Monday.

#### b) Numerical Literacy

Numerical literacy, related to understanding numbers and symbols to solve problems. In early childhood, numeracy literacy skills include the ability to learn and solve simple problems, think logically (recognize various differences, classifications, patterns, take initiative, recognize cause and effect), think symbolic (recognize, mention, and use numbers 1-10). Numerical literacy activities that can be done in early childhood are playing number cards.

The Community Child Care document (2011) explains that numeracy literacy is not just "learning to count" and "writing" but how children use their knowledge to solve life's

problems. Sudarti (2021) asserts that knowledge of mathematics does not make a person have numeracy literacy skills. Numeration includes the skills to apply mathematical concepts and rules in everyday life.

Numerical literacy with indicators of symbolic thinking (numbers), geometry and measurement, operations and calculations, and data processing and analytics (logical thinking). Observations through RPPH interviews and documentation with several kindergartens in Medan City found counting activities while playing hide and seek, singing number-themed songs, lining up while counting, finding empty numbers in a sequence of numbers, playing snakes and ladders, playing lift puzzles, matching the number of pictures with number symbols, blending letters and numbers, bolding numbers, rewriting numbers, arranging geometric blocks to form houses, or other shapes, comparing many-little, large-small, long-short, light-weight, grouping goods according to certain characteristics (grouping toys based on size, grouping buttons by color and shape), counting the number of friends present in class, counting objects around, counting numbers using fingers or other media, recognizing patterns (making fruit skewers, sticking paper according to color patterns), compiling a collection of triangles equilateral to form a square. TK B11 provides special time for numeracy literacy activities that are carried out only on Tuesdays with the same form of activities as other kindergartens such as marching while counting, repeating numbers 1-10, playing number puzzles, playing snakes and ladders using carpet media containing numbers. to get the children to play with snakes and ladders on the carpet

The approach is student-centered with several methods such as assignments, demonstrations, singing, playing, question and answer, and hands-on practice. Tools and media used include box books, notebooks, LKPD, TV, crayons, concrete objects, colored paper (origami), snake and ladder playing board, various loose parts, number cards, counting tree

For the playing method, some of these activities are counting while playing hide and seek, playing with snakes and ladders, and also arranging geometric blocks into building houses. The media used are also dominated by media in the form of LKPD, box books, and game tools that are adapted to the type of activity.

#### c) Science Literacy

Scientific literacy is the ability to understand natural and social events in the surrounding environment. Scientific literacy for early childhood is the child's ability to recognize, realize and care about the surrounding environment (Handayani & Srinahyanti, 2018).

The science dimension consists of three dimensions, namely, science content, scientific process and the context of science application (Astuti in Handayani, 2018). The scientific process is a mental activity such as asking children, exploring ideas, solving problems, seeking information, comparing, making and communicating decisions. In science content, it refers to natural events and changes that occur in human activities. In the context of science, PISA groups in several fields, namely life, health, earth, environment and technology (Suciati, Astuti, in Handayani, 2018)

As has been explained, scientific literacy is not only related to the material (content) and the context of science. but also more emphasis on the scientific process. In the science

process, children will be prepared for a form of science process skills, namely the ability to observe, classify, measure, communicate, interpret, predict and ask questions (Handayani & Srinahyanti, 2018)

Activities or activities in science content and science processes that can be done are outing class activities, playing with loosepart media, cooking class, simulation of volcanic eruptions, color mixing to explain the capillarity process in early childhood, etc.

Science literacy in children aged five years is shown by several indicators, namely knowledge of science content, mastery of the science process, application of science, and science learning activities. Some of the activities carried out were telling stories about water characteristics, observing the process of flooding, making water embankments from blocks, mixing colors, making clouds in glasses, cooking classes, sprouting growth using mineral water cups, cotton and mung bean seeds, and mountain eruption.

The unique thing about organizing literacy activities at TKB 11 is that literacy activities are determined on certain days. Science activities in kindergarten are only carried out on Thursdays. At TKB 10, apart from those mentioned above, they also practice making music with a glass filled with stones, learning with loose part media. but has never practiced making clouds in a glass before. At TKB 9, children can use various ornamental plants and medicinal plants for learning because the kindergarten has land that is used to practice farming for their science activities.

The learning approach and method used in scientific activities is the scientific method, namely the process of observation, and gathering information through demonstrations, questions, and answers. Media that will adapt to the practice carried out, among others, are baking sheets, water, blocks, food coloring, glass, cooking utensils and materials, concrete plants, cotton, and various loose parts.

d) Digital Literacy

Digital literacy is the ability to manage information and use technology. The Ministry of Education and Culture (Hasbi, et al., 2020) defines digital literacy in early childhood as attitudes, knowledge and skills in using digital media around them to get information, play facilities and get healthy entertainment with the assistance of adults around them.

The ability of early childhood related to digital literacy is that children can use electronic devices, children understand that on electronic/digital media there are meaningful pictures, writing, numbers, videos. Children use devices and media to record their ideas, feelings.

Digital literacy is generally rare because of the limited use of technology in early childhood. In early childhood learning, the introduction of digital literacy includes the introduction of digital products and being smart in using these products. Some digital devices used in children aged

Digital literacy in kindergarten children is shown in the use of digital devices and media as early childhood learning media, seeking information through digital devices, recognizing and using remote communication tools, and expressing ideas through digital media and devices.

The forms of activities that have been carried out are playing pretend using laptop toys, cellphones, listening to video songs/video stories/films related to certain themes, playing games on networks/applications accompanied by adults (teachers/parents), making phone calls with parents, Using the platform for online learning activities during the past pandemic, making self-introduction videos.

At TK B 10, digital literacy is also taught through a special theme, namely Telecommunications. One theme specifically discusses communication tools, their functions, and forms. The most widely used methods are demonstration, storytelling, and play. The media used are laptops, cellphones, Zoom applications, and "Solitekids" playing applications. The media used also varies according to the activities carried out. For example, making a telephone using soap. The media used are soap and a ruler and spoon, in-focus to show the video

e) Financial Literacy

Financial literacy is an individual's ability to manage finances, not only that but also related to the concept of risk and skills in managing finances that aim to prosper in life. In early childhood, the essence of financial and financial literacy includes financial understanding and skills (Suhardi in Sari, 2022). So that the dimensions of financial literacy, especially in early childhood, can be described; 1) The concept and form of money, 2) the function and use of money, 3) identifying needs and wants, 4) the skills to save money to be saved and used daily, 5) the awareness of sharing with others in need (Srinahyanti, 2021; Sari and Sa'ida, 2022)

Financial literacy activities in early childhood can be in the form of saving habits, shopping practices at the market, visiting banks around children, sharing is caring programs, habituation of alms. etc.

Financial literacy activities are classified as the least carried out. The results of interviews with teachers from TK Harapan Ibu are that financial-related learning is not included in daily activities. This is because, so far, they have only developed children's basic abilities based on themes that have been provided in the K13 curriculum. Another thing to consider is that children do not feel the need to know and discuss everything about finances. In the realm of attitude, children are taught to share through infaq activities on Fridays. and implicitly taught to make a decision on two choices.

Some examples of financial literacy activities in one respondent, namely TK B 05 Medan, used the assignment method, namely drawing coins in a picture book and comparing large and small amounts of coins and paper money. And activities that use the playing method are shown by activities in the form of the introduction of various forms of money, as well as the introduction of the definition of money which is carried out through market day playing activities.

The results of interviews with teachers at TK 07 Medan are that financial literacy activities using the assignment method can be seen from activities in the form of differentiating the texture and shape of coins and banknotes. As well as the activity of grouping coins based on large and small sizes as an example of applying the playing method to financial literacy. At TK B 11, the application of digital literacy in their kindergarten can be seen in the introduction of money, its function, and its form. The next respondent is TK B 10, the implementation of financial literacy activities in this kindergarten can be seen through

saving activities at school every day, the introduction of the definition of money, forms of money, and the function of money, the implementation of market days which are usually carried out in each class and the shortcomings of market implementation. This day in kindergarten is not always done regularly every year. There are also seller and buyer role playing activities.

In this kindergarten there is also an infaq activity every Friday. The dominant method used is the conversational and assignment method. The assignment method is used, such as grouping money based on large and small sizes, and drawing coins. The methods used in direct activities are assignments, conversations, demonstrations, role playing. The media used are pictures of various forms of money and concrete objects. Market day play tools, LKPD, stationery.

f) Cultural Literacy and Citizenship

Cultural literacy and citizenship in kindergarten children are shown in the form of civic knowledge and attitudes. Each kindergarten facilitates learning activities to improve cultural literacy and citizenship in the form of learning activities for self-identity and national identity in the theme of myself, my family, and my school. On the theme My Country, children are introduced to the diversity of cultures and religions that exist in Indonesia. Habituation activities are carried out by praying activities according to their respective religions and participating in celebrations of religious holidays by participating in competitions such as Hajj rituals, and the Muharram fair. Other civic literacy implementation activities, such as ceremonies were carried out in several schools except for TK B 2 , TK B 11 because they did not have a schoolyard so the children never carried out Monday ceremonies or national holidays.

Every day the children line up before entering class and are accustomed to waiting in line. Citizenship literacy is also manifested in gotong royong and Good Friday activities. Good Friday is one of the TK B 2 programs, where every Friday, each child brings at least a handful of rice to be collected and given to people around in need.

The most widely used methods in teaching in kindergarten related to civic literacy are demonstrations, storytelling, and hands-on practice. The media used are electronic devices to display learning videos and story books.

The results of interviews at B11, it was also found that the implementation of cultural literacy and citizenship activities in their kindergarten can be seen in the introduction of various ethnic groups and cultures in Indonesia, the introduction of self and national identity, mutual cooperation, and participation in cultural festivals. To take part in the cultural festival, whenever there is an opportunity, they always follow it. Like when they held a traditional dress competition on August 17 in kindergarten. So here the children are dressed as beautifully as possible and use traditional clothes from their area. Then the children will walk like on a catwalk. This kindergarten does not have a schoolyard so the children never carry out Monday ceremonies or big day ceremonies in this kindergarten

The next respondent is TK B 10. The application of cultural literacy and citizenship in kindergarten can be seen through flag ceremony activities which are carried out every Monday and big day ceremonies such as the Indonesian independence day ceremony. Due to the fact that the schoolyard of TK B 10 is quite wide, so for the implementation of the ceremony, it is very possible to This activity of implementing cultural literacy and

citizenship in kindergarten can also be seen through activities introducing various ethnic groups and national cultures, and participating in cultural festivals at PRSU. Every time there are cultural competitions such as traditional clothes competitions, regional dances, etc., if there is an opportunity, TK B 10 always follows him.

In TK B 09 , cultural literacy and citizenship activities can be seen from activities to introduce self and national identity, activities to recognize various ethnic groups and national culture by watching films together using laptop and focus media, participating in religious ceremonies and activities and also participating in cultural festivals. For social skills such as helping people who need help, children at Karunia Kindergarten visit the orphanage to see firsthand the condition of the children in the orphanage. In Karunia Kindergarten, on the front wall of their school there are posters about Pancasila, the State Emblem and the State motto. Indonesia. So every Monday, after the ceremony, before entering class, the children will read Pancasila.

#### 4 Conclusion

Basic literacy is one of the skills needed in the future. Educators have a contribution to providing literacy education in kindergarten. Literacy education begins with the introduction of literacy accomplished in stages according to the abilities of early childhood. Learning that leads to literacy skills is divided into several dimensions. These dimensions are knowledge, attitudes, and skills adapted to the contexts (reading and writing, numeracy, science, finance, digital, culture, and citizenship).

Various literacy activities are interrelated from one type to another because learning in PAUD is thematic. The media used varied, ranging from conventional and digital media such as letter cards, printed and digital images, puzzles, story books, letter and number blocks, letter cards, loose parts, videos, tools, and science practice materials.

Most of the basic literacy activities are integrated into thematic learning, but teachers need to be strengthened and trained in presenting financial, digital, and scientific literacy activities (scientific process skills).

For schools, it can enrich children's environment in kindergarten by training critical and creative thinking skills and facilitating children to get the problem-solving process in a fun way and based on play activities. In addition, it is necessary to use more diverse media in introducing scientific phenomena to early childhood.

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