

# The Role of Teachers in Developing Literacy for Children aged 4-6 Years in Ruteng Inviolata Kindergarten

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**Abstract.** This study aims to dig deeper into what and how the role of teachers in developing Literacy for children aged 4-6 years so that children have the readiness to attend education at the next level, namely education in elementary school. The method used is a qualitative research method with a case study approach. The research subjects were 4 class teachers in group A and group B. The data collection methods used were interviews, observation, and documentation. The data analysis used is a holistic analysis using the following stages, namely categorizing the findings in the field according to the theme and research focus, describing each category in the field so that it can be used to answer existing research questions, interpreting the findings in the field, discussing the results of the study, carried out by comparing the results of interpretations in the field with the relevant literature to support the results of the study. The results showed that there were six roles of teachers in group B of Kindergarten Inviolata Ruteng in developing children's literacy skills. The five roles are facilitator, motivator, demonstrator, inspirator and as a mentor. The teacher guides the child during the introduction of literacy, reading and writing.

**Keywords:** literacy read, write teacher's role

## 1 Introduction

Teachers have an essential role in the learning process. There are various roles of teachers in carrying out their duties. Among them are educators, mentors, coaches, motivators, innovators, models, and many more [1] who emphasize the role of teachers in educational development, including first instilling values and building character (character building) students sustainably and sustainably. Second, as a centre of learning. Third, providing assistance and encouragement (supporters) tasks supervising, coaching (supervisor), and disciplining children. Fourth, being a role model for the environment that needs to be followed and obeyed. Attitudes (affective) and skills (psychomotor) [2], [3].

In organizing and providing early childhood education services, teachers provide educational stimuli to assist physical and spiritual growth and development so that children are prepared to enter further education. Further education in question is education in elementary schools. One aspect that

needs to be stimulated from the six aspects of children's development is the child's literacy/literacy ability. The provision of Literacy from an early age causes children to become learners throughout their lives [4]. This is supported by expert opinions which emphasize the importance of literacy development, including the role of teachers in the teaching process [5].

Mastery of six basic Literacy agreed upon by the World Economic Forum in 2015 becomes very important not only felt by students but also felt by parents and all citizens. The six basic Literacy are Literacy, numeracy, scientific, digital, financial, and cultural and civic Literacy [6]. The development of literacy culture is carried out in three domains of education: family, school, and community. A comprehensive and well-planned strategy is needed to realize the national literacy movement in these three domains [7].

The essential literacy capacity of early readers needs to be improved. Among the six basic Literacy, the most basic is Literacy which refers to language skills, such as listening, speaking, writing, and reading. Observing and drawing. Literacy activities for early readers should be fun. Reading activities should foster pleasure and satisfaction in students [7].

However, higher-order thinking strategies through reading texts have yet to be widely practised in schools. This is shown by mapping the student's literacy skills conducted by the Ministry of Education and Culture's Language Development and Development Agency in 2018, which reported that students in Indonesia have yet to be encouraged to read Literacy. The mapping findings showed that some participants (37.5%) had level three reading skills, namely solving reading problems of moderate complexity, such as finding information, connecting parts of the text, and connecting with familiar everyday knowledge. There are still very few (3.5%) students who have been able to read critically and find detailed information in the text (level 5).

The study also states that students' literacy skills are influenced by students' reading habits, parents' education level, access to reading (both printed and digital) and the frequency with which teachers engage in reading activities at school. This confirms that the habit of reading for pleasure makes children and adolescents have reading skills and academic achievement when compared to those who read little in their spare time [8]. The habit of reading for pleasure at home and at school forms the habit of reading in children. Therefore, the habit of reading for pleasure needs to be introduced to children as early as possible [9].

Cultivating children's interest at the pre-reading level and early readers to text (printed material) is one of the literacy strategies. The introduction of Literacy to children at this level is certainly not interpreted narrowly as reading activities in the sense of spelling letters (decoding). The notion of

Literacy, which includes the introduction of letters and syllables, and fluency in pronouncing reading, spelling, and writing alone, is now starting to be abandoned. Literacy does not begin with introducing the alphabet to children at the pre-reading level and early readers, but even more than that.

Research related to early childhood literacy has also been carried out [10]. The results showed that the initial foundation of Literacy at home was done by building interest by parents, especially mothers. This is in line with research conducted by [11], who reported that parents, especially mothers, are stakeholders in the development of early childhood literacy.

The development of Literacy in early childhood is also not only supported by the involvement of parents at home but also by the role of teachers in developing children's Literacy at school. Research related to the role of teachers in schools has been carried out [12]. The results of this research indicated that in literacy development, teachers act as facilitators who provide convenience for children in literacy activities at school by using supporting props, one of which is letter cards.

Ruteng Inviolata Kindergarten is one of the providers of early childhood education in Manggarai Regency, Indonesia. One area of development that the teacher stimulates is Literacy. Based on initial observations, it was found that teachers encourage children's literacy/literacy skills at school as one of the preparations for children to attend further education. The literacy activities carried out by teachers at Inviolata Ruteng Kindergarten are letter recognition, spelling letters into syllables, syllables into words, and words into sentences in a fun way. In addition, the teacher also introduces numbers and trains children to count using specific media and, for example, using sticks or stones when practising counting, addition, and subtraction. This finding is the basis for looking at the role of the teacher so that children aged 4-6 years have the ability in the field of Literacy. Research conducted by [12] only described the role of teachers as facilitators in developing children's Literacy in schools. This paper wants to review several teacher roles at once. Among them is the role of the teacher as a facilitator, demonstrator, director, and motivator.

This study aims to dig deeper into what and how the role of teachers in developing Literacy for children aged 4-6 years so that children have the readiness to attend education at the next level, namely education in Elementary School. The findings of this study are useful for teachers to understand their role well in developing Literacy for children aged 4-6 years. To develop the literacy skills of children aged 4-6 years optimally, various roles of teachers are needed. Between one role and another, they support each other in stimulating the literacy skills of children aged 4-6 years.

## **2 Review of Literature**

### *2.1 Coverage of early childhood literacy*

Conventionally, Literacy begins with letter recognition, the ability to spell syllables, fluency in reading, and writing skills. This activity can be introduced when children study in Kindergarten or Play Groups. However, in a broader sense, literacy skills start at home before children learn at formal schools. Literacy skills are grown in an environment rich in interaction with family members through conversing, singing, playing music, and playing [6]. Furthermore, [13] explained the scope of Literacy for children at the pre-reading and early reading levels. Among them are phonological awareness, interest in printed materials, awareness of printed materials, knowledge of letters, vocabulary, background knowledge, and speaking ability.

First phonological awareness. Phonological awareness is the knowledge that words consist of the smallest sound units in the form of letters [14]. Children need to be invited to recognize letter sounds to form words when introduced to letters. Letters are symbols of the smallest unit of sound.

Second, interested in printed materials. Children's interest in printed materials can be seen when children show an interest in books. To develop this interest, children need to get used to seeing and exploring print materials in the form of books, posters and other media. Children who grow up surrounded by books will develop an interest in the material in those books.

Third, awareness of printed materials. Awareness of printed material can be seen in the way children treat reading (tracing the reading with their eyes, from left to right and top to bottom). Children who are surrounded by printed materials and are used to seeing adults around them reading books will understand that reading contains material that conveys specific meanings [15].

Fourth, knowledge of letters. Knowledge of letters includes the ability to identify letters and the awareness that letters represent sounds and have different shapes and sounds. Children's interest in letters can be grown through fun activities, such as singing and playing.

Fifth is vocabulary. The child's vocabulary or vocabulary is shown by the child's mastery of the names of objects, actions, emotions, and simple concepts around them. A child who has a rich vocabulary will easily understand reading material. In line with this, reading habits will introduce children to a variety of new vocabulary.

Sixth, background knowledge. Background knowledge is a child's understanding of the world around him. Children who are often invited to communicate will develop the ability to convey their knowledge through conversation and interaction with the people around them.

Seventh is the ability to speak. The ability to use spoken language is the foundation that shapes children's literacy skills at the pre-reading and early reading levels. Children need to develop the ability to communicate in spoken language.

### *2.2 Principles of literacy activities for early childhood*

When involving children in literacy activities at home and at school, parents and teachers need to fulfil the following principles so that children's literacy skills can be achieved optimally. According to [6], there are several principles that parents need to pay attention to when involving children in literacy activities.

First, communicate with spoken language. Talking with children is an activity that can be done naturally to increase the richness of their vocabulary. This rich vocabulary will help children understand the material in books, songs, and any information presented around them. Children who are skilled at speaking will be able to communicate well and will grow into good readers. Adults around children need to be partners and listeners who are able to respond to their curiosity.

Second, literacy activities need to be contextual and integrated with children's daily activities. Literacy activities need to be part of children's daily activities. For example, when walking with teachers or parents, children can be invited to identify letters or words they recognize. Likewise, children can be invited to role-play while writing activities, such as when pretending to be a restaurant waitperson, children pretending to write a menu.

Third, literacy activities must involve adults or other figures in the child's immediate environment. Children usually like to imitate the actions of adults. Adults or other figures in the child's social environment become role models in communicating, reading, or writing. Adults can pass this good habit on to children.

Fourth, literacy activities need to be fun and without coercion. Early childhood literacy activities need to take place naturally and integrate.

## **3. Method**

This study uses a qualitative research method with a case study approach. The research subjects were four classroom teachers at Inviolata Ruteng Kindergarten. The reason for choosing four teachers is because the number of study groups available is four groups with details of 2 groups/study groups for

group A and two groups/study groups for group B. The data collection methods used were interviews, observation and documentation. The data research analysis uses holistic analysis with the following stages (1) categorizing the findings in the field according to the theme and research focus, (2) describing each category in the field so that it can be used to answer existing research questions, (3) interpreting the findings -findings in the field, (4) discussing the results of the study, carried out by comparing the results of interpretations in the field with the relevant literature to support the results of the study from [16].

To check the validity of the data, the writer used the triangulation technique. Triangulation is a data collection technique combining various data collection techniques. In this research, source triangulation is used. Source triangulation means obtaining research data from different sources using the same technique. The choice of source triangulation was based on the reason that in this study, researchers only sought to find out the role of parents in developing literacy skills for children aged 4-6 years at Inviolata Ruteng Kindergarten.

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#### **4. Result and Discussion**

In accordance with the problems studied, below will be presented data on the teacher's role in developing Literacy in group B children at Inviolata Ruteng Kindergarten obtained through interviews and questionnaires. Literacy coverage for children at the pre-reading and early-reading levels is phonological awareness, interest in printed materials, awareness of printed materials, knowledge of letters, vocabulary, background knowledge, and speaking skills. There are six roles that I want to be described, namely the role of a facilitator, the role of a motivator, the role of a demonstrator, the role of an inspirer, and the role of a guide.

##### *Role as facilitator*

The role of the teacher as a facilitator in developing early childhood literacy is reflected in a fun form of learning so that it can attract children's activeness in literacy learning. The study results show that, as a facilitator, the teacher provides books, letter posters, and letter cards to support children's literacy skills. To help literacy skills, educators provide story books, letter recognition books, and fluent reading books. In addition to books, educators provide letter posters, letter cards, and picture media; under the picture, there is a word that describes the concept. Based on observations, the teacher uses image media to practice spelling words according to the picture—for example, a picture of a house. The child spells the word house and then asks the child to write the word house. When practising spelling, the teacher is patient and creative when accompanying children to support their reading and writing skills. The teacher's role as a facilitator is reflected in literacy learning by using the technique of singing with the teacher. This technique is able to attract children's attention to memorizing letters. This is in accordance with Walton's research [17], which claimed that with singing techniques, teachers could be more effective in teaching phonemics to children, understanding and pronouncing letters in early Literacy.

##### *Role as a motivator*

The role as a motivator is carried out by the teacher by encouraging his students to always have high motivation and be active in learning. The results of the study show that motivating children is by knowing in advance what the child likes most. Children in Ruteng Inviolata Kindergarten like pictures, so the teacher provides picture books that children most enjoy and then gives praise when the child can say the letters or words pointed out by the teacher both on the blackboard and in books during the literacy learning process. This idea is supported by the research from [18], who said that the motivation given

by teachers at school could influence the success of children's Literacy at school.

#### *Role as a demonstrator*

The teacher, in several functions, shows the role of a demonstrator. Among them is the teacher using letter cards to introduce letters, introducing letters with A-Z cards. The teacher writes on the blackboard the letters A-Z; after that, the teacher calls the letter and asks the child to repeat the letter designation. Sometimes the teacher points the letters on the blackboard out of sequence so that the child understands the alphabet better. This is done because there are still children who can say the alphabet A-Z, but if the letters are designated randomly, the children sometimes need to learn the letters. The teacher does this to train concentration and the extent to which the child's ability to understand the letters that have been studied. The teacher introduces children to letters form words by looking at the letters in the pictures, calling these letters, and combining letters to form certain syllables and words—for example, flower, tree, and house. Then ask the child to write back the words that have been said. This notion is supported by the research proposed by [19], who disclosed that the use of demonstration techniques in children's literacy development includes comprehension, understanding of words, sentence structure, and sentence form.

#### *Role as inspirator*

The teacher shows the role of inspiration by inspiring students about suitable learning methods and how to develop good literacy skills. The study results show that as an inspiration, teachers continue to try to foster interest in children to read and write by providing books, letter posters, letter cards and writing tools. Teachers get used to reading books in front of children so that children want to read books, get used to children seeing and exploring printed material in the form of books, posters and picture books, and get used to children communicating by greeting/greeting teachers, friends, parents and any found person. However, during learning, the teacher has not implemented child-centred learning. The teacher dominates the child when communicating.

#### *Role as a guide*

The teacher carries out the role of a mentor by guiding their students in facing challenges and difficulties in reading and writing. During reading activities, the teacher teaches children to recognize letters and trains children to write. The teacher writes certain words on the blackboard according to the theme or sub-theme, then asks the child to name the letters, combines the notes into certain words and then asks the child to rewrite the letters he has mentioned. Accompanying children when writing certain words contributes to

supporting students' learning [15]. The result of this research affirmed that it is essential that teacher guidance be given during literacy learning, and guidance can also be in the form of interpretation to train children to be ready for further literacy learning.

Teachers have an important role in the learning process. The role of the teacher is the key to learning in schools that are able to create an environment that can influence children's learning development. In the implementation and services of early childhood education, the teacher has the role of providing educational stimulation to help physical and spiritual growth and development so that children are ready to enter further education. One aspect that needs to be stimulated from the six aspects of child development is the child's literacy/literacy ability. Literacy needs to be developed because Literacy or Literacy is the basic capital for children to learn and acquire knowledge, especially when children start entering school age. The provision of Literacy from an early age will cause the child to become a learner throughout his life.

## **5. Conclusion**

Teachers have an important role in learning in schools in supporting the development of early childhood literacy. There are five roles for group B teachers of Inviolata Ruteng Kindergarten in developing children's literacy skills. The five roles are (1) facilitator; the teacher provides picture books, letter posters, and letter cards to support literacy skills. Furthermore (2), as a motivator, the teacher motivates the child by asking for things that the child likes and giving praise as a form of appreciation when the child succeeds in mentioning/writing/singing certain letters or numbers. Based on this, the teacher provides tools and materials for the introduction of Literacy to children. Besides, (3) demonstrator that the teacher gives direct examples to children when they recognize letters by writing on the blackboard, mentioning the meaning of letters and giving sense to certain words. Then, (4) as an inspiration, which means that the teacher fosters interest in children to read and write by providing books, letter posters, letter cards, and writing utensils and reading books in front of the children, and (5) as a mentor that teacher focuses on guiding the child during the introduction of Literacy, reading and writing.

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