

# Preschool children' Emergent Literacy Skill and Home Literacy Program

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**Abstract**— Literacy is a vital competency in solving daily life problems. Early, child needs stimulation of problem-solving competencies, one of the competencies is literacy. Environment highly affects educational success of preschool children. Family is the smallest environment widely playing a role in literacy education for children. Home Literacy Program is literacy program at home that parents/family try to support literacy competency development for children. The research method used is literacy study in order to acquire information regarding to home literacy program and its influence towards preschool children' literacy development. The consistent implementation of home literacy program by parents at home will support the readiness of children in reading and writing.

**Keywords**— *preschool, emergent literacy skill, home literacy program.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

In relation to epoch progress, literacy competency becomes important part of life. Good literacy competency makes one able to identify, select and solve daily life problems well. Therefore, it is necessary to provide preschool children with literacy competency in order to be excellent generation. Indonesia has low literacy competency. Indonesia has average value of 403 in 63rd ranking, the ranking is under Thailand's ranking where Thailand has 55th ranking with average value of [1]. According to UNESCO data in 2012, Indonesians' reading interest index only achieves 0.001. It means that only one of 1000 Indonesians has reading interest. Advanced countries have average reading index ranging from 0.45 to 0.62. It proves that Indonesia's reading rank is far below the advanced countries [2]. Children' Emergent Literacy Skill is skill to be pillar/foundation of reading and writing competency.

The foundation of emergent literacy consist of some skills, knowledge and attitude increasing children' understanding for writing. Available competency widely contributes to children's readiness to read and write such as phonological understanding, knowledge on alphabet and children's understanding on writing [3]. Field fact indicates that emergent literacy of preschool children is taught by formal method and far from kid world [4]. Many kindergartens teach children to read and write using conventional and awkward methods. They ask children to sit down in sitting down position and book they read are textbooks full of writings. Likewise, in introduction to writing, children are

asked to write in lined writing books like primary school children.

School is not only responsible for children' literacy learning, but also parents/families are responsible for role playing in children' literacy success. Home Literacy Program is expected to increase children' emergent literacy competency in kindergarten.

Motivated from aforementioned works, this study presents preschool children' emergent literacy skill and home literacy program.

The rest of this paper is organized as follow: Section II describes the literature review. Section III describes the proposed research method. Section IV presents the obtained result and following by discussion. Finally, Section 5 concludes this work.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### A. Preschool

Preschool is educational level before primary school (kindergarten). Article 28 of Act No.20/2003 [5] states that kindergarten is one preschool children's education coordinated by formal way. Chapter 1, Article 1, Point 14 of Act No.20/2003 on National Education System states that:

Preschool children' education is an effort to develop children from their birth to 6-year age conducted by educational stimulation to help them grow and develop their spiritual and physical to have readiness in entering into further education.

Preschool children' education is education coordinated to facilitate their growth and development to improve potencies they have overall. Children are called as their critical or sensitive age because many potencies available to the children are developing and, if these are not stimulated well, these will result in sufficiently fatal problems in further life of children [6]. In this stage, education is highly determinative for children to acquire language/vocabulary. Therefore, determination of willingness to make preschool children literate must be motivated really. In literacy, children will form ways to think in further school level.

### B. Emergency Literacy Skill

Children' literacy competency starts to develop since very early age, even far before children are taught to read formally in school. This literacy behavior development can be seen from behavior pretending to imitate reading/writing

or reading by seeing pictures and scratching books. The behavior includes skill in emergent literacy. Emergent Literacy Skill is various skills, knowledge and attitudes to support learning to read and write. Experts call the various skills, knowledge and attitudes as foundation of competency to read and write. Children having owned strong foundation of reading and writing behavior formation will feel easier to learn reading and writing. They will be quicker to master of skill to read and write than children without the stimulation. The foundation of literacy emergent consist of some skills, knowledge and attitude to increase children' understanding for writing. Some of skills having big contribution to children' readiness to read and write are phonological awareness, knowledge on alphabet, and children' understanding on writing.

Phonological awareness is sensitiveness to vocal structure in a language. Phonological sensitiveness directs children to sharp their competency to detect and manipulate vocal structure of writing language. Phonological awareness requires children to concentrate their attention on spoken linguistic sound, and meanwhile to ignore meaning. Phonological understanding includes recognition of syllable rhythm and pause and competency to mix phonemes to make words and isolate phonemes in words. Phonological understanding is important predictor of reading and writing, then it is successfully developed through children' participation in language game, poem, story, and hand applause of words, and other activities associated with games usually used as component of library story [7].

Alphabetic principle is a concept explaining that written word is representation of words spoken through relationship between sounds. Decoding is children's competency to understand the relationship between sounds and letters.

Printing awareness is children' understanding on ways to set printing in various texts, their recognition on how to print environment (for example, signs, labels) and meaning of other print communications, and understanding of other concepts on printing (for example, print directionality, word concept and letter concept). Along with understanding of vocabulary and phonology, understanding of print, especially understanding on letters, is reliable and strong indicator of future success for children with reading [8]. Phonological understanding, knowledge on alphabet and letter sound grow together in children so that these can be used as learning base to read and write.

### C. Home Literacy Program

Informal education for preschool children in family or society is very potential in developing children' literacy if it functions optimally. Parents have longer time and more interactive processes than teacher or other persons in guiding children to master of preschool children's literacy competency [9].

Home Literacy is an effort parents/family make to facilitate acquisition of children' language skill [10]. Home literacy program is a home environment that promotes literacy, which is defined as the frequency of literacy activities or global size of the house (they are, the size which documents the frequency of literacy activities, the length of reading book, the pleasure of parents to read, etc.).

Home literacy activity can be seen from the number of times that the parents read book to their children, tell stories to their children, teaching how to write, teaching how to sing, etc. [11]. The following measurement items can be included in Home Literacy Program: (a) the number of children' books at home, (b) the frequency of family members' shared book reading in a typical week, (c) the frequency of family members' story-telling, and (d) the frequency of family members' singing songs (e.g. how often the parent or any other family member sings songs to the child in a typical week [8]. Therefore, Home Literacy Program is very important to develop to support increasing of parents' knowledge and capability in stimulating children' literacy.

### III. RESEARCH METHODS

The research method used in this research is literacy study. Literacy study is a method used to collect data or sources related to the topic chosen in a research. The data gathering techniques used is documentation, which is to collect various references regarding to the Home Literacy Program and its influence towards preschool children's literacy skills.

### IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Literacy activity of parents and children at home is a predictor of literacy children' development [12]. Hammer, *et al.*, in [11] research about the Head Start Family and Child Experiences Survey (FACES), the research shows that the vocabulary skills of children in Head Start are influenced by mother their mother's education, ethnicity, and frequency of literacy activities in home. Children in which their families are involved in " home literacy environment (HLE)" shows increase in their linguistic competency development, [13]; [10]. Engaging in enriched literacy-related activities at home also facilitates children' learning in decoding skill and expands their literacy knowledge. The way parents communicate with their children has direct influences on their children's emergent oral language development [14]. Results of researches indicate that children deriving from family stimulating preschool children' literacy competency have higher literacy competency [15]. Preschool children' literacy competency can predict further literacy competency at medium to high levels. Results of the latest research shows that Home Literacy Environment enriched since childhood can

### V. CONCLUSION

Preschool children are called as critical or sensitive age. At such age, many potencies of children are developing and, if these are not simulated well, these will result in sufficiently fatal problems in further life of children. Therefore, children need motivation and stimulation to develop their literacy competency, in order that the children are more ready to enter education levels in primary school and have excellent problem-solving skill. Emergent literacy skill is skill to support children' readiness to read and write. Home Literacy Program is expected to be predictor to increase literacy competency of preschool children. In future, the children are expected to have better literacy

competency in order that they can live prosperously in developing future nation.

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