

BUILDING THE CARE ENVIRONMENT CHARACTER OF YOUNG CHILDREN IN PLAYGROUP CLASSES

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Abstract

The purpose of this research is to find out how the strategies applied in the Early Childhood Education Institution of Play Group-Islamic Kindergarten Al-Azhar Chairo Banda Aceh-Indonesia in developing the character of caring environment. This is qualitative research. Data collection was carried out by direct observation to see how the implementation of caring environment character at Play Group-Islamic Kindergarten Al-Azhar Chairo Banda Aceh-Indonesia and interviewed teachers and education staff to find out how the strategies used in building character of environmental care. The results of the study show that there are strategies applied by the teachers at the school in the cultivation of character values on environmentally caring. This includes providing trash bins in each class so that children are more always dispose of garbage in its place, and habituate the children to dispose of garbage in its place in accordance with groups of organic and inorganic waste. The researchers recommend that this research can be carried out in a broader scope so that the same thing can be applied in the cultivation of the character of environmental care in other early childhood education institutions.

Keywords: Building, Care Environment, Young Children

INTRODUCTION

Early age is the most important and fundamental initial period along the span of growth and development of human life. It is characterized by various fundamental periods of life until the final period of development. One of periods that characterizes early childhood is the golden age or the golden period. Many concepts and facts were found to provide an explanation of the golden period in early childhood, where all potential children are developed fastest. Child growth and development requires various educational supports of family, community and school. The other national commitment is an agreement between countries that are cooperated in the United Nations which agreed on "world fit for children 2002". The agreement obtained are (1) proclaiming a healthy life; (2) providing quality education; (3) provide protection against abuse, exploitation and violence (Trianto, 2011).

In Law No. 23 of 2002 concerning child protection which states that every child has the right to live, grow, develop, participate fairly in accordance with the dignity and human dignity, and receive protection from violence and discrimination. Early childhood education as education held before the level of primary education, has a target group aged 0-6 years. At this age, children are still very vulnerable, which if not handled properly can actually harm the child himself. Therefore, the implementation of early childhood education must pay attention and be in accordance with the stages of child development. The early childhood education program is not intended to steal anything that should be obtained at the level of basic education, but to provide appropriate educational facilities for children. So that children in time have readiness

physically, mentally, and socially/emotionally in order to enter further education and for the sake of his life in the future. In 2006, the Directorate of Early Childhood Education stated that laying the main foundation in early childhood education will determine the future direction of the child appropriately. If one of the parents determines and puts education in early childhood it will be difficult to return to the desired direction after the child becomes an adult (Latif, et al, 2013).

Character education is currently one of the main topics in the preparation and planning of the world of education. Community attitudes and behaviors that increasingly show setbacks to noble values, one of which is the value of caring for the environment. This attitude and behavior is increasingly evident after more people throw litter without feeling guilty. The lack of shaping of character education obtained by children makes apathy towards children when they are adults, one of which is the lack of awareness to dispose of garbage in its place. Therefore, the implementation and building of character education in children must begin early. Character formation in children can be done through habituation so that children can immediately practice character values that are in accordance with children's moral development. In character education in schools it is more dominated by the transfer of knowledge so that it does not touch the social aspects of the teachings of living tolerant in society and the surrounding environment. As parents have to worry about the declining character values that are happening right now. With the fact surrounding the deterioration of character values around us shows that there is a failure in our education in terms of growing human beings with character. Building character is very difficult and takes a long time process.

Character education is understood as an effort to cultivate intelligence in thinking, appreciation in the form of attitudes and experiences in the form of behavior that is in accordance with the noble values that are their identity, manifested in interaction with God, ourselves, among others, and their environment. Therefore, building character education cannot just transfer knowledge or train a certain skill. Character education building requires processes, exemplary, and habituation or civilization in the environment of students in the school, family, and community environment (Zubaedi, 2011).

Character education in Indonesia is based on nine basic character pillars as stated by Heritage Foundation. They are (1) love for God and the universe and its contents, (2) responsibility, discipline, and independence, (3) honest, (4) respect and courtesy, (5) compassion, care and cooperation, (6) confident, creative, hard work and never give up, (7) justice and leadership, and (8) kind and humble; and (9) tolerance, love of peace and unity. Character education is carried out through education of values or virtues that become the basic values of national character. Virtue is the attribute of a basic value of character. The values developed in character education in Indonesia are identified as coming from four sources. They are (1) religion, meaning character education must always be based on religious teachings and beliefs, (2) *Pancasila*, meaning the values contained in the *Pancasila* become values that govern political, legal, economic, social, cultural and artistic life, (3) culture, meaning that cultural values are used as the basis for giving meaning to a concept and meaning in communication between community members, and (4) national education goals,

meaning that in the national education goals contain various human values that must be owned by Indonesian citizens (Zubaedi, 2011).

Table 1. Value and description of character education values (Source: Zubaedi, 2011)

No.	Values	Description
1.	Religious	Behavior that is obedient in carrying out the teachings of the religion it adheres to, tolerant of the implementation of worship of other religions, and living in harmony with those of other religions.
2.	Honest	Behavior that is based on efforts to make himself a person who can always be trusted in words, actions, and work.
3.	Tolerance	Attitudes and actions that respect differences in religion, ethnicity, ethnicity, opinions, attitudes, and actions of others are different from his.
4.	Discipline	Actions that show orderly behavior and comply with various rules and regulations.
5.	Hard work	Behavior that shows a sincere effort in overcoming various obstacles to learning and assignments, as well as doing the task as well as possible.
6.	Creative	Think and do something to produce a way or something new from what you already have.
7.	Independent	Attitudes and behaviors that are not easily dependent on others in completing tasks.
8.	Democratic	How to think, behave, and act that assesses the rights and obligations of himself and others.
9.	Curiosity	Attitudes and actions that always strive to know more deeply and extend from something that is learned, seen and heard.
10.	Spirit of nationality	How to think, act and be insightful that places the interests of the nation and the state above the interests of themselves and their groups.
11.	Love the country	How to think, behave, and act that shows loyalty, caring and high appreciation for the language, physical, social, cultural, economic and political environment of the nation.
12.	Appreciating Achievement	Attitudes and actions that encourage themselves to produce something useful for the community, and recognize and respect the success of others.
13.	Friendly / Communicative	Actions that show pleasure in talking, associating, and collaborating with others.
14.	Love peace	Attitudes, words, and actions that cause others to feel happy and safe are the presence of themselves.
15.	Like to read	The habit of providing time to read various passages that provide virtue for him.
16.	Environmental Care	Attitudes and actions that always strive to prevent damage to the surrounding natural environment and develop efforts to repair natural damage that has occurred.
17.	Social Care	Attitudes and actions that always want to provide assistance to others and people in need.
18.	Responsible	The attitude and behavior of a person to carry out their

duties and obligations, which should be done on oneself, society, environment (nature, social and culture), the state and God.

Table 2. Basic characteristics of character education (Source: Zubaedi, 2011)

Basic Characteristics		
Heritage Foundation	Character Counts USA	Ari Ginanjar A
1. Love of God and the universe and its contents,	1. Trustworthy,	1. Honest,
2. Responsibility, discipline and independence,	2. Respect and attention,	2. Responsibility,
3. Honest,	3. Care,	3. Discipline,
4. Respect and courtesy,	4. Honest,	4. Visionary,
5. Affection, care and cooperation,	5. Responsibility,	5. Fair,
6. Confident, creative, hard work and never give up,	6. Citizenship,	6. Care, and
7. Justice and leadership,	7. Sincerity,	7. Cooperation.
8. Good and humble, and	8. Brave,	
9. Tolerance, love of peace and unity.	9. Diligent, and	
	10. Integrity.	

Character development as a continuous process is divided into four stages, including: (1) at an early age referred to as the character formation stage; (2) in adolescence it is referred to as the development stage; (3) in adulthood is referred to as the stabilization stage; and (4) in old age it is referred to as the stage of wisdom. Characters are developed through the stages of knowledge (knowing), acting, towards habits, which means the character is not limited to knowledge. A person who has knowledge of goodness is not necessarily able to act according to that knowledge if he is not trained to do well. Character reaches deeper into the area of emotions and habits. Thus, a good character component is needed, namely moral knowing or knowledge about morals, moral feelings or feelings about morals, and moral acting or moral actions (Zubaedi, 2011).

According to Megawangi (Zubaedi, 2011) there are three basic needs of children that must be met, namely:

1. Maternal bonding is an important basis in the formation of children's character because this aspect plays a role in forming the basis of trust. Stickiness makes children feel cared for and fosters security to foster trust.
2. A sense of security, namely the child's need for a stable and safe environment. This is very important for the character formation of children because the changing environment will endanger the child's emotional development.

3. The need for physical and mental stimulation is a very important aspect in the formation of children's character. This requires great attention from parents or reciprocal reactions between mother and child.

According to Lickona, et al, character education must be based on the following eleven principles:

1. Promoting basic ethical values as a character base.
2. Identify characters comprehensively so that they include thoughts, feelings, and behavior.
3. Using a sharp, proactive and effective approach to character building.
4. Creating a school community that has care.
5. Give opportunities to students to show good behavior.
6. Has a range of meaningful and challenging curricula that value all students building their character and helping them succeed.
7. Strive for self-motivation in students.
8. Functioning all school staff as a moral community that shares responsibility for character education and is loyal to the same basic values.
9. There is a division of moral leadership and broad support in building character education initiatives.
10. Functioning families and community members as partners in building character.
11. Evacuate school characters, function of school staff as character teachers, and manifest positive characters in student life.

According to the strategy that allows character education to be able to run according to the target, at least three things are included:

1. Using the principles of exemplary from all parties, both parents, teachers, the community, and their leaders.
2. Using the principle of continuity/routine (habituation in all aspects of life).
3. Using the principle of awareness to act in accordance with the values of the character being taught.

There are four factors that influence success in character education, namely:

1. Instinct is a set of behaviors that humans carry from birth that drives the birth of a behavior.
2. Customs / Habits, which are any actions and actions of a person who are done repeatedly in the same form so that it becomes a habit.
3. Descendants, which directly or indirectly will greatly influence the formation of a person's character and attitude.
4. Environment, which means a good environment, will make a person's character good and vice versa if the environment is bad then the bad behavior of the person.

According to Al-Ghazali (Zubaedi, 2011), it is noble or commendable which means "removing all despicable customs that have been outlined in Islamic religion and distancing themselves from these disgraceful deeds, then getting used to good habits, doing them and loving them."

According to Hamka (Zahrudin, 2004), there are several things that encourage someone to do good, including because:

1. Persuasion or threat from other humans.
2. Expect praise or for fear of getting reproach.

3. Her goodness.
4. Expect a reward from heaven.
5. Expect praise and fear from Allah SWT.
6. Hoping for the pleasure of Allah SWT.

Concerning the environment means keeping, improving the damaged nature and using nature wisely. Maintaining the natural environment is one of the noble characters. Concern and attention to the environment is proven by maintaining, developing a healthy, clean, beautiful and beautiful environment and trying to improve a damaged environment. Natural damage is the result of human greed and transgressions by exploiting nature without regard to natural balance. The role of the school is very important to shape the character of students in order to have the character of environmental care and sensitivity to the conserving of the surrounding environment. This can be done through the learning process that is in school, as well as the teacher as an example for students and even society in general takes the same role (Utin, et al. 2018).

The lack of building of character education obtained by children makes apathy towards children when they are adults, one of which is the lack of awareness to dispose of garbage in its place. Therefore, the implementation and building of character education in children must begin early. Embedding character education in children can begin with small things such as getting children to not littering in order to keep the environment clean.

According to the background above, the purpose of this study was to find out how the strategy applied in the Play Group-Islamic Kindergarten Al-Azhar Chairo Banda Aceh-Indonesia in developing environmental care characters to young children.

METHODS

This research was conducted with qualitative methods. According to Sugiarto (2015), qualitative research is a type of research whose findings are not obtained through statistical procedures or other forms of calculation and aim to reveal symptoms holistically-contextually through collecting data from natural backgrounds by utilizing researchers as key instruments. The data collection that the researchers did was by observing directly and interviewing. Collecting data by direct observation is done by looking at the application of environmental care character education in Early Childhood Education institutions, whether it exists and how it is implemented in the Early Childhood Education institution. Collecting data with interviews conducted in schools are by interviewing teachers and education staff to ask how the strategy in applying the character of environmental care at Play Group-Islamic Kindergarten Al-Azhar Chairo Banda Aceh-Indonesia are done.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The research found that the Play Group-Islamic Kindergarten Al-Azhar Chairo Banda Aceh-Indonesia instituted an environmentally caring attitude towards students. Which is where the school teaches an example and habituation to students. The example carried out by the Early Childhood Education institution is to provide an example or model that is carried out by educators and education personnels as a good model by always keeping the school environment clean by not littering. The habituation done at

the Early Childhood Education Institute is by providing trash bins in each class and also in the corners of the school and the school yard to further familiarize children to throw garbage in its place. Even schools also provide trash bins according to the type of waste, such as organic and inorganic waste to introduce to children that garbage has a different type. Thus, children will understand that there is garbage that can decompose into compost and there is untraversable waste that can damage the environment.

CONCLUSION

Embedding character education is not an easy thing. It takes a very long time to make it a habit. Character education is an educational process that takes place continuously and never ends. Character education must be instilled in children early on so that in the future a generation with character will be formed. Building character education does not have to start with big things, but we can also start from a small thing. Building the character of caring for the environment also does not escape the monitoring of education. We must instill a caring attitude towards the environment because remembering that our earth is now very badly damaged due to human responsibility that is not responsible for maintaining the preservation and cleanliness of the surrounding environment. The cultivation of character values caring for the environment at Play Group-Islamic Kindergarten Al-Azhar Chaira Banda Aceh-Indonesia is by habituating to not littering and providing examples of exemplary actions taken by teachers and education personnels to dispose of garbage in its place.

Finally, the researchers recommend that this research be carried out in a wider scope so that it can be applied the same thing in implementing and instilling the character of environmental care in other Early Childhood Education institutions. It can provide references to make small actions in applying the character of caring for the environment or even others in other Early Childhood Education institutions. It is not having to start with big things, but it is starting by teaching something simple but meaningful.

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