

# A Family-School Partnership Based Learning: An Effort to Organize Early Childhood Education During Pandemic

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**Abstract.** Organizing the teaching and learning process during the Covid-19 pandemic is a challenge for educational stakeholders, including teachers and parents, especially at the early childhood education level, which is thick with play and the inherent supervision of teachers and parents. The kindergarten students' learning becomes hampered due to the need for traditional face-to-face learning. The online learning model is proven to be challenging for students, even with parents' guidance. The obstacles can be in the form of digital literacy skills or supporting facilities. Dealing with the challenges, family-school partnership-based learning is proposed as one of the learning models to gain the expected learning outcomes. The learning model involves parents actively taking the role of tutors for their children at home, while the school prepares learning materials with detailed processes and a structured schedule. Even though it is still beyond perfect, learning outcomes can be achieved in accordance with the curriculum.

**Keywords:** *learning, family, early age, learning outcomes*

## INTRODUCTION

A formal early childhood learning starts from the kindergarten level. The learning focuses on developing the social, emotional, literacy, and motor skills of children in which they must optimize for their lifetime. During this period, students grow by involving their senses of hearing, sight, smell, and touch. For instance, through the sense of touch, a child learns how to differentiate shapes and sizes of particular objects; through listening, a child develops the art of better listening and understanding about the world around them; while through the sense of sight, a child learns to recognize objects, patterns, and words [1]–[3]. In kindergarten, children also learn from various activities such as dancing, listening to music, playing art and games,

recognizing objects and language, and expressing themselves.

Quality kindergarten education has to be aligned with primary and secondary education in laying a solid foundation for sustainable children's learning and growth. Besides, kindergarten education is also expected to encourage balanced development in the areas of ethics, intelligence, physical, social skills, and aesthetics of children to achieve the goals of human education intact [4], [5]. Choosing the right kindergarten school may enrich the children's learning experience. An excellent kindergarten program could offer children a variety of learning experiences that are fun and oriented to achieve the expected goals at the same time. Children's interest in learning and curiosity about their environment will be increased through exposure to the outside world.

Kindergarten introduces children to new ideas, concepts, and problem-solving skills development. Developed children's skills include [6], [7] learning to coordinate and cooperate with fellow students, becoming more aware of their environment, learning to respect others and understanding the feelings of others, developing language skills, counting and reading stories, making friends, accepting new concepts and ideas, building self-confidence, improving communication skills, and expressing their creativity through art, drawing and dance.

The Covid-19 pandemic requires everyone to maintain social distance, reduce the duration of face-to-face meetings with many people, stay away from crowds, etc. The condition makes learning in kindergarten not carried out as it should. Parents, teachers, and students are afraid of going to school to avoid meeting with other people; however, learning must be conducted as mandated by the national curriculum [8], [9].

Furthermore, parents' involvement in learning is necessary to produce better learning outcomes for students of all ages. Parents play an important role as the first educators for their children at home. The active involvement of parents, families, and communities also significantly impacts children's success in school. Teachers and schools can support

parents' involvement in learning by building partnerships to link learning at home and school. Evidence shows that parents' involvement significantly influences the relationship between family, teachers, and students to learning outcomes. This form of relationship builds a vivid understanding of the role of parents and teachers in learning, the role of conducive family behavior to learning, and a consistent positive relationship between school and parents [10].

The Family-School Partnership Framework focuses on parents' involvement in learning, rather than parents' involvement in schools. Parents' involvement in the school includes attending events held by the school, volunteering in classes or other activities, and serving on school boards and parent committees. Parents' involvement in learning includes parents' participation in school as well as a broader range of activities, including parents' support for children's learning at home, at school, and in a community context, namely recognizing the cultural and social diversity of families and communities [11], [12]. By building relationships and partnerships, schools can encourage and inspire parents to be confidently involved in their children's education. The beliefs and attitudes of the school community about the role of parents, and their engagement strategies, have a significant influence on parental involvement. Teachers' attitudes, relationships, and communications, and the way schools show their support for students and families, influence the involvement of parents both at home and at school.

## METHOD

The study began with compiling a learning module with kindergarten learning content. The module is in the form of a printed book of practical learning guides and audio-visuals used as a reference for parents to carry out learning at home. In addition, the parents are also guided online by the teacher, while the children's learning results are sent to the teacher through online applications. At the end of the timeframe, a learning evaluation is carried out by the teacher based on the students' work, student learning videos, and online-offline observations. This activity starts from April to June 2020, involving 16 students aged 4-5 years and parents with various demographic backgrounds in Lowokwaru, Malang, East Java, Indonesia.

## RESULT & DISCUSSION

Learning carried out by parents at home was supervised and monitored by the teacher through online modes. However, several obstacles existed, such as limited online communication facilities, parents caring for other children, or two working parents. Because mothers carried out most home

activities, the learning became the second priority and was carried out during their free time. Thus, each parent was required to carry out learning and provide assistance to students at home. As a result, parents are also expected to master the material being taught, spending time with their children during the learning process, recording the children's activities, and then sending the children's learning outcomes in the forms of videos and working papers. It is a real educational challenge for teachers, parents, and policymakers during the pandemic.



Figure 1. Home learning with parental guidance

Learning outcomes that can be carried out during the limited conditions include: (1) learning religious and moral norms; the activities were guided by parents, namely teaching children to read prayers, to learn *wudhlu*, or to read and to memorize short chapters of the *Quran*. (2) language recognition; parents guided their children to tell about the children's identity, to mention ABC-CBA letter patterns, or to learn writing their names on a piece of paper. (3) the development of cognitive aspects; with guidance from parents, children were taught to count or mention numbers 1-10 while singing. (4) development of motoric physical aspects; children were guided to do simple gymnastic movements, sunbathe in the morning, and perform light jumps and jumps. (5) the development of social-emotional aspect; children were trained to help their parents doing various household chores such as washing dishes, sweeping, watering plants, and mopping floors. In addition, they were also taught to share with siblings at home.

The essences of family-school partnership-based learning are (1) supporting and encouraging learning at home. Parents' involvement in daily learning and positive parenting at home are a major contributor to the children's learning, including building the children's self-confidence, motivation, abilities, and competencies as learners; (2) creating and taking advantage of learning opportunities at home. Schools better understand the experiences, abilities, needs, and expectations of parents and families, also accommodate the family aspirations

for their children and build trust with families to share responsibility for education.



Figure 2. Offline learning evaluation

The learning model of BKKS has encountered several challenges, including lacking teaching mastery among the parents or home demographics such as the number of siblings, study area, occupation, and the economic conditions of parents. These factors significantly affect the practice of the learning model. Parents encounter several challenges, such as they had to share their intentions between guiding their children to study and dealing with household chores, or limited facilities (cellular phones, internet networks), which resulted in the children's learning was not the priority at home. The culture also impacts the learning practice in which parents still believe that learning should be conducted at school, not at home.

### CONCLUSION

The family-school partnerships based learning at one kindergarten in Malang during the current pandemic condition has not yielded compelling results. The learning process encountered several internal household obstacles, which resulted in the learning goals had not been achieved. Therefore, the traditional face-to-face learning model is still required to teach students at the kindergarten level.

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