

**CHILDREN FOR FUTURE:
Gaining Our Children Success Through Smart School Of Early Childhood
Education**

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Abstract: Coming to school for early childhood is not merely come to study, write and read but moreover to develop all aspects of child's development. In this age, children can be boosted to learn everything from their colorful surroundings and they always get success in their learning. Early childhood need more spaces to learn because they are active children and most of their time are used outside exploring their universe. This article tries to offer some alternative methods to select smart schools which suit with the early childhood best. The alternative methods offered in this paper was from Hastings' s analysis and correspond to the existence of our smart schools in Indonesia. This paper discussed twenty things that are happening in schools which can be considered to make our child a success. In conclusion, There have been many offerings of smart school in Indonesia today. Making the right choice in choosing a good school which accepts children with their unique and characteristic is being one of consideration of parents. Knowing the system about the different types of school and how they work also must be considered. Parents should consider the best school for their children based on their child's capability. Getting up to date which are happening in schools today is also a must in order parents can be aware to every risks will be faced by their child and wise parents will always focus on their child's development than on their own need and prestige.

Keywords: early childhood, smart school, education.

INTRODUCTION

Early childhood refers to those whose ages are under 7 years old. They are always well known by the golden age. In this age, children can be boosted to learn everything from their colorful surroundings and they always get success in their learning. It is because their brains develop optimally, their neuron will link each other and more strength if they are given stimulation properly. The right place to get a proper stimulation is by sending them to school.

School is defined as place to educate children which educating about how to be a great man who are able to modernize their nation to the world. School is also defined as an institution which is planned and arranged to teach children under educators' control. From the types of school, it can be classified into five they are:



1. Conventional school, it is a school with complete infrastructural, pupils go to class regularly, the schedule arrange neatly, and sometimes pupils stay in local boarding house. The school is facilitated by a library, school economic enterprise, school canteen, worship place, and parking lot. Class is off in the weekend.
2. Open school, it is a school which the meetings are not held everyday, it is likely formal courses but under government's supervision, the pupils are also more independent in learning the lesson.
3. Group learning school, it is a non-formal school which is facilitated by government to whom do not study in formal education, or whom study outside local government curriculum. This is flexible learning and divided into two classes, the first class is a class for adults which are not possible to come to formal class. The second class is a class for early childhood which are possible to come to formal class but they are in terrible poverty.
4. Home-schooling, it is a school for courses of certain lessons. The passing pupils will get certificate issued by the local course.
5. E-school, it is a school based IT, pupils do not need to come to class as like conventional class, they register themselves via internet and do the class in the same way, they can access the lesson anytime through the centered server. But these pupils also can be members of certain local government facilities such as local library, local economic enterprise or visit local worship places.

The school's facilities also supports the comfortable process of teaching and learning. A school must have minimally learning space for classroom and laboratory, an office for the headmaster and educators, a library, a school yard, and other rooms such as canteen, security room and health facilities. What about school for early childhood seems to be?

SCHOOL FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD

Early childhood need more spaces to learn because they are active children and most of their time are used outside exploring their universe. They need learning experience and the early development is the basic for their next learning and developing process. The balance stimulation toward their right and left brain at school will lead them to be ready to continue their study to the next level. Here, early childhood must study in the school where they can get optimum learning supporting their growth and development.

Based on the government policy of education and cultural minister No. 137 year 2014 SN PAUD chapter VIII verse 31. It is said that the facilities for early childhood are purposed to accomplish and to manage the early childhood learning activity, nurturing and caring. The facilities have to be correspond to the number of children, children' ages, society, local culture and the kind of services provided covering: (a). Secure, good sanitation, healthy, comfortable and interesting. (b). Correspond to child' developmental period. (c). Utilizing the potential and the existed sources in the surroundings which is worth for using and not harm child's healthy.

Those requirements above must be corresponded to the model of early childhood education which is stated in verse 32. The various models of early childhood



education consist of four models they are kindergarten, playgroup, baby daycare, and a kind of early childhood education, but overall applied the similar learning models. There are three kinds of learning models applied in early childhood education of Indonesia, they are corner model, area model and circle times model. Those three models were based on the researchers' research and observation for many years in the field of early childhood education.

First is corner model, it was adopted from Montessori education and development theory. The classroom is designed functionally and accessible for the early childhood. The interior design is divided into five corners and each corner equipped by supporting instruments, they are (a). Practical life corner where they can cope adult' activity everyday through interesting activities, (b). Sensory corner which develops the five senses of children. The lessons given are in the form of recognizing the various thing they see, hear and touch based on their sensory, (c). Pre-math and perception corner which teaches pre-math concept joyfully from the concrete one to the abstract one, (d). Language and vocabulary corner which teaches how to use language properly and effectively in any kind of activities, and (e). Culture and library corner, early childhood are recognized various knowledge related to their world simply, they are also introduced about specific culinary of each province through cooking class (Farida et al, 2015: 2-6).

Second is area model, this model was adopted from Highscope in USA, and in Indonesia it was firstly introduced by Children Resources International. Inc. This model facilitates early childhood by various activities which can be done individually or in group to develop all aspect of child's development. Various areas which are usually provided for early childhood as follows: (a). Beam area, this area facilitates early childhood about pre-math and basic concept of geometry, (b). Role play area, this area provides early children to develop their cognitive aspect of development, (c). Art area, this area facilitates early childhood to develop their art and creativity, expressing what they see, think, imagine and feel through the real material, (d). Literacy area, this area facilitates early childhood basic learning of a word using many kinds of literary equipment, (e). Water and sand area, this area equips early childhood to develop motor sensory from natural material which is familiar with them, (f). Dance and music area, this area introduces early childhood about music instruments and the dance motion to develop their language and cognitive development, the ability to solve conflict, to build their self confidence, to exercise their muscle and to improve their social skill, (g). Science area, this area facilitates early childhood to release their abstract experience of natural phenomenon into interesting experiment, (h). Math area, this area really facilitates early childhood about basic math concept to develop all aspect of child's development such as language, social-emotional, etc, and (i). Imtaq area, this area only provides in Indonesia, this area is purposed to facilitate early childhood about worship activity related to their religion (2015: 8-12).

The last is circle times model, this model was developed by Creative Curriculum and firstly introduced by Dr. Pamela from CCCRT Florida. Here, early childhood are given chance to develop their creativity freely and teacher only facilitates them. This model covers: (a). Beam circle, in this circle early childhood are asked to build something that correlated to the next circle, (b). Micro circle, in this circle early childhood are given chance to correlate what they have learned from the previous



circle to the next new knowledge in the form of miniature, (c). Macro circle, early childhood develop their skill through the real size to develop their language and social emotional development, (d). Imtaq circle, this recognizes religious life and how to appreciate other religion, (e). Art circle, this recognize many kinds of arts, (f). Set up circle, this points out the basic literacy, preparing early childhood to the next level of school, (g). Natural substance circle, this relates to science knowledge, math and art using materials around them, (h). Cooking circle, this facilitates early childhood to learn cooking supporting their cognitive, social-emotional, language, psycho motor, art and religion value.

SMART SCHOOLING

Hastings (2007:95-117) noted several things that are usually happening in schools based on his interview results with some education experts around the world. There are twenty things that are happening in schools according to him, they are as follows: **open all hours**, Hastings explained that school must be opened for local people too, teaching and learning process is done in the workdays and in the weekend it should be opened to local community surroundings. This is purposed to reduce the number of school breaking from unknown person. This also can boost early childhood spirit and belonging toward their school. Not only for early childhood but also for local people will have belonging toward the school in their environment. Local community can do parenting or have some courses in that school in the weekend. At night or after school ends, local people can use the facilities provided by the school to have sport activity to have recreational activity positively. And school owner can make money to develop its facilities.

Making time, teacher must organize group work or practical activities much more than study the subjects. This has been happening to our school today, many schools in Indonesia has applied this making time term. As discussed above, Indonesia schools for early childhood education facilitates their early childhood by various learning models. Project based tasks, combining various subjects, mixing with different people, seeing school in different sight, and learning new skills actively have been covered in that learning model. **Super educators**, when a school has several educators who are able to inspire others and always share their skills to other schools, the school can be a going place to study. Being super educators can be done in many ways, beside through coming to university, it can be done through discussion forum. Forum PAUD Nusantara (FPN) which was built on March 2, 2016 has been running discussion online related to improving the teaching and learning quality of early childhood educators all over Indonesia province. This forum has helped many educators who can not pursue their study in university can get new knowledge everyday¹.

¹ The round table of Forum PAUD Nusantara are as follows: sharing songs, claps, and videos are on Monday and Tuesday, sharing APE, creativity and learning media are on Wednesday and Thursday, sharing important information and motivation tags are on Friday, on Saturday is used to discuss topics related to early childhood education world, and on Sunday is free day or market day. This group has strict rule for its member who is not actively involved to that round table. During its establishment, this



Going global, this has to be happening today because good schools always try to broaden their early childhood¹ knowledge in many ways outside the fixed curriculum. The following up of FPN has made some educators able to share projects and lesson, build a link among school in the same province and some of them had visited each other². Through online social media, they can easily exchange information about their culture or their early childhood characteristic. This has positive impact toward their school progress. For the educators, this can raise their awareness toward their school weaknesses and strength, and for early childhood, this can make them more responsible and less self centered because they have met new friend from other schools³. **Terms and conditions**, a good school has to define its week off in order their pupils do not forget what they have learned before week off. Educating early childhood needs more patients because their social emotional is unstable. Early childhood need to control themselves and it should be learned at school. Too long week off will lead them take backwards as like before coming to school and when the class begin, they have to adapt anymore with the rule at school, for educators this will spend time and the targeted curriculum can be reached maximally.

Blog, blog and blog, as discussed above about the types of school, Indonesia nowadays has applied E-school in which all classes do online and accessed in the internet. Many final tests for high school are also computer based. Early childhood has been smart enough to operate android mobile phone which is connected to the internet. If this phenomenon can not be changed into positive activity, early childhood will get negative impact of the internet use. Educators can wisely ask early childhood to write their activities whole days in a blog, upload their pictures or important events in it and also upload their works too because with the development of technology, educators can not avoid children from the use of internet. Nothing they love rather seeing their creativity in the “www”. **Pupil powers**, those three learning models of early childhood education above give early childhood freedom to choose their activity. smart schools always listen and respect their pupils, smart schools are also democratic places to deliver opinion for better future.

Smart school, this school has movable wall and interesting design so early childhood can enjoy their learning process. A school of universe⁴ matches with this concept. The teaching and learning process is run in open classroom/*saung*. Early childhood learn outside from the universe, they can breath refreshingly and get enough oxygen from the universe. **Getting connected**, visiting some places related to the topics given, inviting people with various profession and working together with them for a moment will build self confidence and give aspiration toward early childhood. This will help them to define their profession later when they will have been adult. The interactive learning which can be applied to get connected with others is by RAFT term (Buehl,2001: 114). RAFT is an acronym for Role of the writer, Audience for the writer, Format of the writer and Topic to be addressed in the writing. Role of the writer means

group has run sixteen discussion online which was handled by various educators from different schools in Indonesia. This FPN is led by Yemmy Nuryanti, a TKIT Insan Kamil teacher of Karanganyar, Central Java.

² The members of this FPN has reached 245 members of 256 a Whatsup can load.

³ Online interview result from Yemy Nuryanti and Endy on Friday, 18th of Nopember, 2016 at 19.42 PM.

⁴ The school of universe was firstly established by Lendo Novo in 1998 which was created to give cheaper cost but have a very high quality



early childhood are asked to write or talk what they will be in the future after they have visited many places and see various profession. Then audience for the writer, early childhood are asked to whom they will work for based on their profession they have chosen. The next is format of the writer. This means early childhood are asked to write or to tell what kind of activity they will do related to the profession chosen. The last is topics to be addressed in the writing. It can be defined as the worthy thing they will do when they were in that profession. This activity will benefit for early childhood as they begin to optimize their imagination thinking their future. Optimizing their imagination means optimizing the work of their brain. Smart school usually arranges this activity once a month.

Data tracking, Hastings (2007) wrote that “every grade for every piece of work in every subject can be logged centrally onto a computer”. This means educators have to always asses their pupils and meet among them to discuss the latest data they got during the process of teaching and learning. By doing the data tracking, schools can set up the realistic target toward their pupils and their staffs. There are two kind of assessment for early childhood, they are performance assessments and portfolio assessment (Gronlund, 2009:143-178). Performance assessment is needed concerned with all aspects of child’s development. It is because child’s development covers three components such as knowledge components, skills components and affective component. Those three components can not be measured through paper n pencil test on the final test, those components must be taken during the teaching and learning process. Meanwhile, when a student collects his/her work after it has been selected and organized as his/her learning progress report, it is called portfolio assessment. This kind of assessment is used to improve learners’ learning over time because educator can compare their works after and before they were given a material, whether their learners has reached the targeted level or not. For early childhood, both of the assessment are suitable for their complex development because those assessment can become effective way to communicate with their parents. Moreover, by doing these assessment, parents could know what kind of activity has been practiced by their child.

Socrates for six years old, this teaches pupils to think beyond so that they can be better conflict solvers and better listeners. Lickona (2012: 408-424) explained how to teach pupils to be able to solve their conflicts anywhere they are. He mentioned five elements to teach an appropriate conflict resolution as follows: first is arranging planned curriculum based on what has been happening in the class. This curriculum provides pupils to answer some questions based one the quarreling story. They were asked to fill the consequences and gave opinion whether it was good or bad after that they were explained the effectiveness of compromise. Second is training the structured ability. In this methods educator asked pupils to create something from the material given in front of them and then each pupil is given a chance to comment on their friend’s work. Educator’ task was as facilitator by showing the best way in giving comments. This could be done individually or in group depend on their pupils’ situation. Third is meeting management for the previous conflict. Here, educator managed a meeting to discuss the conflict without calling the troublemakers’ name. In the meeting, educator described the conflict and asked each pupils to share their feelings toward the conflict being discussed, then educator connected it to the real world and asked them to



explain how it would work if it occurred in the reality. Fourth is educators' intervention. This is needed to boost their inter-personal in solving the newest conflict. Educators could not neglect each conflict appears in the class, they have to apply the previous methods whenever it occurred. The last is increasing pupils' responsibility to solve their conflict with adult's help. To solve the conflicts among pupils, adults' help or experts' help are very needed in serious condition. For early childhood, it can be trained through role play.

Talent spotting, smart schools have to be able to identify which is gifted children and which is talented children. These special ability can not be identified simply. Schools need continues supervision to distinguish who may have hidden skill and who may need to give more challenge to boost the skill. To support it, schools should provide an extra lesson and touch their parents to the outside organization to develop their children talents. This can be done since early childhood because all aspects of child's development are in process of developing. Furthermore by identifying their skills and abilities early, parents can determine in which organization they will send their children. **Prizes and punishment**, smart schools have a clear system of sanction, awards is in the form of points, cards, stamps, smiley faces, or pebbles in the jar. The punishment is not in the form of physical punishment but in the form of performing task which is useful for them and constructive. The awards and the punishments given above will lead early childhood to have positive discipline so that early childhood will not be insulted by other friends. Moreover they will get better in behaving and showing good attitudes anywhere and anytime without supervision from both their parents and their educators.

Own work not homework, the term homework is usually defined as unfinished task that have to be finished at home, or doing some exercises in the certain book at home. Home work should be defined as an creative project that has been chosen by pupils to do happily at home. This project has to develop their arts and creativeness. For early childhood, creating APE as they wish and asking them to present it in front their educators is the best homework will be. The more imaginative early childhood, the happier they will be at school. **Getting personal**, it is personalized learning where pupils can choose their area of learning as explained in the learning models above. No children has the same speed in learning. There are three types of children which need more attention in their learning, they are learning disabilities children, slow learners and under achievers. Educators need to get personal in order those children can have right to learn appropriately. Educators have to understand how to facilitate them so that those children can find their learning methods that suit them best. If educators have successfully personalize all of their pupils, their pupils will behave better and show good attitudes especially for early childhood. Early childhood are in the coping period and need much control and supervision from both their parents at home and their educators at school. Getting personal is one of the controlling system which can be applied both at home and at school.

It's good to talk, this means after getting personal, educators can discuss the conflict with pupils' parents in order pupils can be facilitated as well. Talk does not merely meet directly with their parents, educators can write it through talking book provided by their schools. The other way, educators also should be held annual meeting with pupils' parents so that pupils can get quick therapy when they seems get terrible



difficulty during following the learning process. Talking to psychologist or consulting with the early childhood education experts also help to reduce the dizziness faced by either educators or parents. **Qualified for life**, qualified life can be obtained from a creativity because creativity will give someone a power to survive even when he/she was in the hardest life.

Post (2011: 351-380) wrote six teachings that can emerge someone's creativity, they are:

1. This world is full of creativity. Educators should see that every little thing of their early childhood' work is a part of creativity, it will become bigger when educators give early childhood an appreciation. Educators should also facilitate them in order their hidden creativity can appear. Child's development of cognitive and creativity is one of important aspects that must be focused in the teaching and learning process.
2. Creativity is a part of happiness so do what you would like to do. For early childhood, Art area is the place to develop their art and creativity, expressing what they see, think, imagine and feel through the real material. They will do what they like in this area and try to create what come across in their mind into the reality and they will enjoy to do it.
3. Creativity is varying. Creativity can be expressed through many ways, such as solve a problem, build a theory, create something, create a show, and social activity. Early childhood will also show their creativity in many ways when educators can facilitate them properly.
4. Think up to date. To apply this toward early childhood, they can be offered some simple questions related to their life and let them think based on their experience. They can also be give an equipment and asked them to think what they can do with that equipment when they were in certain situation.
5. Creativity has ability to open someone's life. The other way to boost early childhood' creativity is by asking them to share with others. It is possible for them to offer how to help their friend with their creativity when their friend were in difficult situation. Educators can analyze that some of their pupils are talented and sociable.
6. Become morality geniuses person. Creativity is always connected to ethic. Educators should introduce what might be and what might not be when early childhood play with their creativity. Early childhood must be taught about morality and norms that have been existed in their society. This is purposed in order they can take advantage from their creativity positively.

Saving the planet, smart schools always educate their pupils to keep their environments clean. Some schools for early childhood in Indonesia have practiced it, there is one topic entitled "plant". In the teaching and learning process, educators recognize the plant and its function by planting them in the poly bag using organic fertilizer. They also introduce how to keep it alive and after the plant is ready to crop,



the plant was cooked and served to them to eat together⁵. This makes pupils especially early childhood more aware to save their planet and to appreciate God's gift provided in the universe. Schools of Universe has taught this as it is their vision and their basic belief that universe and experience are the best teacher ever. Schools of universe believes that universe teaches human beings to become tough man and get their successful and also noble in life positively⁶.

Learn to learn, learning is commonly used than teaching because learning means study together between educators and pupils, educators give a hand to listen and understand their conflicts. In learning, the communication is in two directions, because it is focused on more on the learners, educators are just as facilitator not as the main sources to be. Learning new ways of thinking will support child's development aspects of cognitive, language, and social emotional. Hence, the best learning age is the age under 14. The methods which focus on the learners are such as conflict solving, creative thinking and role play. And **learn to be happy**, this relates to the positive psychology. Educators do not only teach the targeted topic but also invite pupils to think beyond their usual topic. Pupils especially early childhood will be happy when they can build a warm communication with their educators. They will be happy too when they can get understanding about the importance of their daily routines, when they learn how to cope their sadness and when they understand the benefits of sharing and making friends. This condition can develop child's social emotional into more positive development.

CONCLUSION

Those twenty things are usually happening at schools that parents need to know because school is not everything for early childhood education. The first and the foremost education are happened at home among their family members. Making the right choice in choosing a good school which accepts children with their unique and characteristic is being one of consideration of parents. Parents have to chat with the head master and also all of the staff to know the school's vision for the future. Knowing the system about the different types of school and how they work also must be considered. Parents should consider the best school for their children based on their child's capability. Getting up to date which are happening in schools today is also a must in order parents can be aware to every risks will be faced by their child (Hastings, 2007:iii).

Gaining children's success especially early childhood takes long process. Parents have to be selected in determining the smart school. In selecting it, parents should consider their child's capability because parents can not see their child's potential only from academic aspect but also from non academic aspects. Early childhood are developing and processing. In order they can grow and develop magnificently, parents had better use Hastings's analysis before sending their child to school. There have been many offerings of smart school in Indonesia today, wise parents will always focus on

⁵ Online interview result from Yemy Nuryanti and Endy on Friday, 18th of November, 2016 at 19.42 PM.

⁶ The definition of universe in accordance school of universe has two meanings, nature as natural experience and nature as the universe. It is integrating Intelligence Quotient, Power Quotient, Emotional Intelligence, and Spiritual Intelligence.



their child's development than on their own need and prestige.

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