

## RESEARCH ARTICLE

**APPROACHES TO EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION IN MALAYSIAN CHILD CARE CENTRES (TASKA): SUPPORTING INFANT AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT IN ACCORDANCE WITH PARENTAL ASPIRATION****Nurin Jazlina Binti Khairul Azmee<sup>1</sup>, Mohd Nazri Abdul Rahman<sup>2</sup>****\*[23003485@siswa.um.edu.my](mailto:23003485@siswa.um.edu.my)<sup>1</sup>, [mohdnazri\\_ar@um.edu.my](mailto:mohdnazri_ar@um.edu.my)<sup>2</sup>**<sup>1</sup> Department of Psychology and Counselling, University Malaya, Malaysia<sup>2</sup> Department of Psychology and Counselling, University Malaya, Malaysia**ABSTRACT**

The teaching and learning strategies used in TASKA are examined in this study, with a focus on how they support kids' cognitive, emotional, social, and physical development. Important theoretical stances that inform successful teaching methods in early childhood education, such as behaviourism theory and Piaget's play-based learning theory, are incorporated into the conversation. However, there are a number of implementation-related issues, such as inadequate training for teachers, a lack of instructional resources, budgetary limitations, and excessive workloads. Because they place a high value on teacher quality, safety, cleanliness, and open communication between the home and the school, parents' expectations also have an impact on educational practices. Improvements including ongoing professional development for teachers, the supply of innovative and secure educational resources, reduced teacher-to-child ratios, and improved parent collaboration are suggested as ways to improve the quality of teaching and learning at TASKA.

**Keywords:** TASKA, Teacher Training, Parental Expectations, Child Development

**INTRODUCTION**

TASKA (Child Care Center) is a care and early education institution for babies and children in Malaysia. The study of the teaching and learning approach at TASKA for infants and toddlers is increasingly important because it is the basis for the early development of children throughout life (Blewitt et al., 2021). In the beginning, this field emphasized the aspect of care, but now it is developing teaching strategies that involve cognitive, emotional and social. This shows the awareness that teacher-child interaction and the use of diverse teaching methods can help children's overall development (Joseph et al., 2022). Parents also expect an active and fun teaching approach at TASKA, such as playing while learning, which will help babies and children learn naturally. In Malaysia, religious and cultural values are also considered important for parents to apply from an early age for the early development of education.

**METHOD****Piaget's theory of play learning**

Play-based learning encourages creativity and

divergent thinking skills to communicate and solve problems (Ignacio 2021). According to Piaget's theory of cognitive development, children build knowledge through active interaction with their world. Play provides children with a natural context for building knowledge. The age of children in Nursery is affected by several stages. The sensory-motor stage, which lasts from two years to two years, allows children to develop sensory coordination, motor, and understanding of permanent objects. For example, giving six-month-old babies a bell or rattle to hold and shake helps them understand the concept of permanent objects and making sounds. In the pre-operational stage, which lasts between two and seven years, children learn to use imaginative symbols, although not yet fully logical, such as language, pictures, numbers, objects and movements. In the Building Blocks game, you can improve your thinking skills by developing a strategy to build a tower with your friends so that it does not collapse and is stable. Children improve language, imagination, and social skills through these activities.

Behaviorism theory promotes reward and punishment in learning. One of the main educational theories is behaviorism learning theory, which focuses on behavior change. Behaviorism theory is very useful in child education because it helps teachers control their students' behavior. Teachers can use reward systems to encourage students to focus, complete assignments or work together in groups. Children may want to clean up their toys after playing with token system activities. Children will receive one star on their merit chart each time they arrange toys neatly. They can choose a small gift from the "reward box" when they get five stars. This could include stickers, colored pencils, or the chance to be the leader of the line. By doing these activities, children have a higher possibility of performing positive behaviors in the future.

Additionally, negative behaviors, such as interrupting friends or neglecting schoolwork, can be corrected using mild punishment. For example, the teacher can ask students to sit in a special corner for a while to calm themselves as a time-out punishment. Students may also be asked to complete school work during breaks. They gain a better understanding of the consequences of actions committed through this simple punishment.

## DISCUSSION

**Challenge in Implementation** At TASKA, the teaching and learning approach is considered important to support the overall development of babies and children. However, there are some obstacles that exist in implementing it. First, teacher knowledge and skill constraints are often the most important issue. Norsyafinaz and Faridah (2018) found that two factors that influence the implementation of assessment in the early stages of children are the length of service of educators and academic qualifications. This can affect the effectiveness of learning activities. There is also a lack of teaching aids suitable for babies and toddlers. While some TASKAs only provide the basics, children's cognitive and emotional development requires more innovative, safe, and child-friendly things. TASKA cannot create a good learning environment due to lack of financial allocation. Teachers face additional challenges, selection. Teachers for parents not only impart information but also help their child's social

such as time and workload issues.

Also, teachers not only have to handle learning, but they also have to handle everyday things like feeding, protecting children, and controlling their emotions. Teacher wellbeing is important for the future of education because teachers are the most important contributors to student achievement, success, and satisfaction in the school environment (Mc Callum, 2017). This means that without sufficient teacher support, an interactive and fun learning approach cannot be implemented. Parent's hopes and aspirations well Research shows that parents in Malaysia

Care about similar things when choosing early education for their children, no matter their income or educational background. They want schools and childcare centers that are safe and clean, with teachers who are well-trained and caring. Parents also hope their children are prepared for formal schooling, not only academically but also socially and emotionally. At the same time, they value learning environments that combine language development with play, making education both effective and enjoyable.

### Safety and Wellbeing

Parents prioritize safety and cleanliness when choosing an early childhood education center. This priority is found in various national education programs, indicating that physical and environmental conditions are important for learning. For example, parents are more likely to choose kindergartens that have well-organized classrooms, safe play areas, and security systems that include high-barred fences and closed-circuit television (CCTV) cameras. In addition, things related to cleanliness are also very emphasized. This includes preparing healthy meals, keeping children's toilets clean, and maintaining consistent hygiene habits, such as washing hands before eating. Public health awareness, especially in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, is clearly influencing this attention.

### Teacher Quality and Communication

In addition to the safety aspect, parents highly prioritize the quality of teachers and their communication skills. Studies show that teacher efficiency is greatly influenced by parents' satisfaction and early school emotional, and behavioral development. For example, parents appreciate teachers who are proactive in sharing children's progress reports through

communication books, daily conversations, or digital applications. This is because they have the ability to monitor the child's development continuously. This situation also creates a positive two-way relationship where parents can talk to teachers and help their children develop at home.

### **Suggestions for changes**

Some improvements can be made to make teaching and learning at TASKA more effective. First and foremost, improving the training and professional development of teachers should be given priority. Teachers can improve their pedagogical skills by taking ongoing courses and workshops on child development theory, play-learning strategies and behavior management. Second, it is important to empower the provision of innovative and engaging teaching materials for children. To make toys and activities that are safe and fun, TASKA can use recycled materials or local resources. In addition, TASKA can benefit from government or NGO support in the form of financial allocation and educational resources to create a good learning environment. Third, to create a pleasant and responsive interaction, it is important to increase the ratio of teachers to children. Teachers can give individual attention and encourage child-centered learning when there are fewer children in a group. Fourth, establishing close cooperation with parents is also important. To meet parents' expectations, TASKA can hold parenting workshops, regular communication sessions or family programs. This can create continuity between education at home and in care institutions. Finally, providing systematic support to teachers to handle the daily workload is essential. The pressure on teachers can be reduced by adding nanny assistants, the use of mobile technology to record children's progress, and a more organized distribution of tasks. In addition, this will give them more space to carry out better teaching activities.

### **CONCLUSION**

The teaching and learning approach in TASKA plays a vital role in shaping children's early development and lifelong learning. Effective implementation requires a balance between nurturing care and structured educational

practices based on sound theories such as play-based learning and behaviorism. While challenges such as teacher qualifications, workload, and resource limitations persist, they can be overcome through continuous training, better facilities, and stronger partnerships between educators, parents, and relevant agencies. Parents' expectations for safety, quality teaching, and effective communication further highlight the importance of maintaining high standards in early education centers. By prioritizing teacher support, innovation in teaching materials, and collaboration with families, TASKA can create a holistic, safe, and enjoyable learning environment that supports every child's growth and potential.

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### **DECLARATION OF POTENTIAL CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

Nurin Jazlina declares that there is no conflict of interest in the preparation, conduct, or reporting of this study. All information, data, and interpretations presented are based purely on academic research, credible references, and objective analysis.

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