

RESEARCH ARTICLE

SEEDS OF TOMORROW: IMPLEMENTING INTENTIONAL AND RESPONSIVE IN CHILDCARE CENTRES TO REFLECT MODERN PARENTAL ASPIRATIONS

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ABSTRACT

Early childhood education is a critical stage that determines children's life trajectories. In Malaysia, childcare centers, TASKA play a crucial role in establishing disciplined and nurturing learning environments for infants and toddlers. This library research explores how Malaysian TASKA applies teaching and learning approaches aligned with the dreams of modern parents. The study focuses on four essential dimensions: Intentional and Responsive Teaching, Play-Based and Child-Centered Learning, Family Engagement and Socio-Emotional Support, and Professional Development and Systemic Support. Using secondary data from academic journals, government documents, and online databases, this research outlines how these practices are pursued in child care centers and how they affect holistic child development. The study shows that modern parents expect child care centers not only to offer protection and care but to instill quality education that enhances children's mental, social, and emotional capabilities. The report concludes with policy, parental, and teacher recommendations to further enhance Malaysia's early childhood education quality.

Keywords: *Early Childhood Education, TASKA, intentional teaching, play-based learning, family engagement, professional development, Malaysia*

INTRODUCTION

The early years of life are a critical period for human development. Infancy and early childhood are the periods when the brain develops most rapidly and sets the foundation for subsequent learning, relationships, and behavior. With more parents joining the workforce in Malaysia, there is greater reliance on childcare centers or TASKA to look after and educate young children. Parents today are more educated and enlightened about the developmental needs of their children and desire early education settings that foster creativity, emotional intelligence, and autonomy rather than mere custodial care.

The aspirations of today's parents show a search for equilibrium between readiness for education and emotional health. They value responsive, empathetic teachers who

can modify teaching styles to fit particular developmental needs. TASKA must adopt effective pedagogy and learning approaches aligned with national and international quality standards of early childhood education to meet these expectations. This research examines how TASKA implements these measures with thorough attention to four fundamental themes: Intentional and Responsive Teaching, Play-Based and Child-Centered Learning, Family Engagement and Socio-Emotional Support, and Professional Development and Systemic Support.

METHOD

A qualitative research method based on library research was employed in this study, focused on synthesizing and analyzing published institutional and academic literature rather than collecting raw data. Data

were sourced from peer-reviewed academic journals, official reports from the government, and academic online databases such as Google Scholar, ResearchGate, and the Universiti Malaya Library Catalogue. The strategy was aimed at the identification of theories, patterns, and best practice regarding pedagogy in early childhood, namely intentional and responsive teaching, play-based learning, family involvement, and professional development in Malaysian childcare centers.

The strategy allowed thorough comprehension of how current teaching and learning methods in TASKA support the aspirations of modern parents. This research employed library based qualitative research practice, and it used secondary sources of data only to explore the way Malaysian TASKA integrate teaching and learning strategies among infants and toddlers. The aim here is to synthesize literature in place of collecting new empirical data, and therefore it is useful in conceptual research and policy studies. Data were gathered from Three general categories of sources: Academic Journals – Peer-reviewed articles on early childhood teaching, developmental psychology, and curriculum implementation were examined. Copple & Bredekamp (2009), Epstein (2018), and Urban (2008) were highly informative in understanding the theoretical and practical foundations of intended and play-based instruction.

Government and Institutional Reports – National policy guidelines such as the Kurikulum PERMATA Negara (2013), Ministry of Education (MOE) reports, and UNICEF reports provided policy insights on how early childhood education is conceptualized and implemented in Malaysia. Online Repositories and Databases – Academic databases such as Google Scholar, ResearchGate, ERIC, and the Universiti Malaya Library Catalogue were employed for the retrieval of scholarly studies between 2000 and 2024.

After data gathering, thematic analysis

was conducted to determine patterns of effective teaching and parental aspiration. The four major themes Intentional and Responsive Teaching, Play-Based and Child-Centered Learning, Family Engagement and Socio-Emotional Support, and Professional Development and Systemic Support emerged as the central framework of analysis. Moral principles were maintained through proper citation and acknowledgment of all sources, free from plagiarism, and arguments based on publicly available policy and academic documents only.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Early childhood education (ECE) has since evolved from focusing on basic caregiving to being an all-around developmental approach to intellectual, emotional, and social growth. Developmentally appropriate practices emphasize thoughtful planning, responsiveness, and active learning through play. These strands align with Malaysia's Kurikulum PERMATA Negara (2013), the national childcare centre curriculum blueprint, which fosters healthy development through love, play, and discovery.

Current research supports committed and responsive teaching, where teachers actively engage in developing high-quality learning experiences. Epstein highlights that responsive teachers build secure relationships that enhance children's confidence and curiosity. Meanwhile, play-based and child-centered learning allows Children to explore and learn through self-directed activities, developing creativity and problem-solving skills.

Family engagement is the other significant aspect of successful early education. Through Epstein's school family community model, student performance increases through collaboration between teachers and parents. Additionally, socio-emotional support supports the nurturing of the development of resilience and sympathy among young children most appreciated by

parents today.

Lastly, systemic support and professional development are also important in fostering quality. Reflective practice and continuous training enable teachers to implement effective teaching practices. Government policies, standards at the institution level, and accreditation also increase the quality of early childhood programs so that TASKA have consistent standards throughout Malaysia.

FINDINGS AND RESULTS

The review of materials submitted disclosed that the current trends in Malaysian childcare centers emphasize a movement towards more explicit and intentional teaching approaches while remaining warm and nurturing for babies and toddlers. Intentional and Responsive Teaching: intentional teaching involves teachers taking active steps to create learning experiences that harmonize with children's interests, skills, and developmental levels.

Responsive teaching extends this by emphasizing emotional attunement teachers tune into children's signals and adapt accordingly. For instance, when an interested young toddler plays with colours, a responsive teacher zeroes in on the moment and makes it hands-on colour mixing. This approach fosters cognitive and emotional growth as well as parents' hopes for personally attentive care, Play-Based and Child-Centered.

Learning Play is an unstructured way of young children to discover and learn. Play-based approaches allow children to make sense of the world by actively experimenting. The PERMATA curriculum emphasizes play as the cornerstone of learning, with support for sensory play, pretend play, and outdoor discovery. Child-centered learning introduces the added guarantee that teaching responds to children's interests rather than pre-set lesson plans. Parents are increasingly enjoying such approaches because they build independence,

creativity, and social skills abilities that will assure future success. 3. Socio-Emotional Support and Family Engagement

Positive family relationships increase the stability of learning opportunities between childcare centres and home. Regularly updated TASKA via reports, websites, and conversation build trust and empathy. Emotional care also matters because trusting relations between care workers and children develop empathy, resilience, and confidence. This reflects parents' growing concern with the emotional growth of their children, rather than solely with their academic performance.

Professional Development and Systemic Support High quality teaching is reliant on ongoing training and institutional aid. Professional development in early childhood pedagogy and child psychology is undergone by most TASKA teachers today. Governmental policies, such as accreditation systems and quality assurance schemes, provide other system support. Parents are more likely to trust centres that exhibit professionalism and compliance with national standards and identify these with educational excellence as well as with safety.

DISCUSSION

The four methods as described come together to form an integrated model for quality early childhood learning. Intentional and Responsive Teaching ensures that the learning experience of every child is developmentally meaningful and applicable. Teachers serve as facilitators who balance structure with flexibility since learning opportunities arise naturally from everyday interactions. Play-Based and Child Centered Learning remains a best practice worldwide to which Malaysian approaches must conform.

Children build their logical thinking, self-control, and social interaction through playing. This aligns with parents' aspirations for their children to be self-assured, independent learners who enjoy discovering.

Family Involvement bridges home and school environments. Modern parents expect teachers to communicate openly, be transparent, and work together. Through families as positive stakeholders, TASKA can gain a better understanding of each child's background and adjust strategies from time to time. In addition, Socio-Emotional Support offers a secure base to explore, reinforcing the belief that emotional well-being enhances intellectual growth.

Finally, Professional Development and Systemic Support highlight the empowerment of teachers. Educators must continually update their expertise to suit evolving educational demands. Institutional support through policy, funding, and regulation assures a consistent overall quality in the childcare system. Each of these ensures that meeting parents' expectations requires cooperation between educators, parents, and policymakers.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

As a whole, the use of teaching and learning approaches in Malaysian childcare centers (TASKA) is a demonstration of growing quality, intentionality, and responsiveness in early childhood education. Modern parents no longer want learning environments that are nothing but care environments that promote intellectual curiosity, emotional security, and social development.

The strategies identified in this research Intentional and Responsive Teaching, Play-Based and Child-Centered Learning, Family Engagement and Socio-Emotional Support, and Professional Development and Systemic Support are reflections of this shift to integrated, child-centered approaches. Focusing on these four domains, TASKA are better placed to respond to children's developmental needs as well as parents' aspirations, giving each child balanced. The researcher would also like to offer deepest gratitude to the Universiti Malaya

attention to intellectual, emotional, and moral growth.

However, even though these strategies are theoretically sound, their implementation varies across different childcare centres. Some TASKA face operational issues such as limited teacher training, haphazard curriculum enforcement, and the lack of systematic evaluation.

To address this, professional development must be continuously stressed, where all teachers possess up-to-date pedagogical knowledge as well as emotional empathy. In the same vein, child-led and play-based learning must remain at the heart of early childhood, supported by responsive curriculum planning prioritizing children's interests and voices. Support from families must be augmented by ongoing communication, parent-teacher meetings, and open reporting of progress, which build trust and create continuity of learning between home and centre.

Institutional and systemic support also play a crucial role in ensuring quality. Policy makers need to keep refining national frameworks such as the Kurikulum PERMATA Negara so that they are inclusive, pragmatic, and sensitive to current parental aspirations. Funds, regular monitoring, and quality assurance programs are required to assure continued standards in both urban and rural TASKA. Lastly, pre-school education not only needs to prepare children for school but should instill empathy, confidence, and lifelong curiosity.

By establishing collaboration between policymakers, educators, and parents, Malaysian childcare centres can turn into loving institutions where the desires of today's parents are truly valued, children who not only know how to think and create but are also balanced in their emotions and compassionate citizens.

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