

## RESEARCH ARTICLE

## EXPLORING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF TEACHING AND LEARNING APPROACHES IN VHILDCARE CENTERS (TASKA): EDUCATORS' PRACTICES PARENTS ASPIRATIONS, AND EDUCATORS' CHALLENGES

Nur Aina Nadhirah Deraman<sup>1\*</sup>, Mohd Nazri Abdul Rahman<sup>2</sup>

[<sup>1</sup>](mailto:23003414@siswa.um.edu.my), [<sup>2</sup>](mailto:mohdnazri_ar@um.edu.my)

<sup>[1]\*</sup> University of Malaya, Malaya, Malaysia

<sup>[2]</sup> University of Malaya, Malaya, Malaysia

### ABSTRACT

The teaching and learning approach is the main pillar in shaping quality education for children's development. This study was conducted to examine the implementation of the teaching and learning approach at TASKA, the aspirations of parents, and the challenges faced by educators during the teaching process. This study uses a semi-structured interview method with three educators at a TASKA in Penang. The findings show that the teaching and learning approach used by educators is based on learning through play, a multisensory approach, and also emotional support to support the holistic development of infants and toddlers. In addition, this study also shows the aspirations of parents towards TASKA and the challenges faced by educators when implementing the teaching and learning process. So this study provides a comprehensive overview of the important role of educators in ensuring the implementation of teaching and learning at TASKA is effective, in addition to the importance of support from parents and employers to ensure the quality of early childhood education is guaranteed.

**Keywords:** *early childhood education, learning while playing approach, multisensory approach, parents' aspirations, educators' challenges*

### INTRODUCTION

Early childhood education is getting more attention from all groups of society, especially parents. This is because early childhood education is an important foundation in the formation of children's development from physical, emotional, spiritual, intellectual, and social aspects. In this regard, the roles of parents and educators must go hand in hand in order to ensure that children's developmental needs can be met optimally. In the context of Malaysia, the main purpose of the establishment of Taman Asuhan Kanak-Kanak, known as TASKA, is to provide a conducive environment and support the development of children from infancy to four years of age by providing a learning experience that is suitable for

development (Rahmatullah et al., 2021). The need for TASKA is also increasing as society becomes more aware of the importance of formal early childhood education from an early age. In this regard, the establishment of TASKA has helped parents who have a high commitment to work to manage their young children in a safe and manageable manner.

However, in line with the modern trend, parents no longer see TASKA as a child welfare center only but as an institution that is able to provide full support to the holistic development of children before they step into preschool. Teachers play a big role in ensuring that the learning modules developed are not only suitable according to the age group and development of the children but also in terms of

culture that are able to reflect the local context (Suharni et al., 2025). Therefore, the implementation of the teaching and the learning approach needs to be carefully planned and organized according to the level of development of children by educators in addition to being able to meet the expectations of parents.

## RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

The objectives of the study are as follows:

1. Identifying the teaching and learning approaches used by educators at TASKA for infants and toddlers.
2. Analyze the extent to which the teaching and learning approach at TASKA is in line with parents' expectations.
3. Examining the challenges faced by educators in implementing the teaching and learning approach at TASKA.

## METHOD

This study uses a qualitative design where semi-structured interviews are used to obtain more in-depth and practical data. The selection of this method allows the researcher to obtain more comprehensive and detailed information through the interview method by understanding the experiences directly from TASKA educators that cannot be obtained through quantitative methods alone.

Data was collected through semi-structured interviews conducted with three participants who are educators at TASKA in Penang. The participants were selected using purposive sampling, which allows the researcher to identify individual information, experience, and deeper insight from TASKA educators about the implementation of the teaching and learning approach used at TASKA as well as their perception of the expectations of parents of children at the institution. The criteria for participant selection included having at least three years of experience working in early childhood education, currently being employed as an educator

in a registered TASKA, and also the willingness to participate and share experiences that related to the research topic

## RESULT

The findings include three main themes, which are the implementation of the teaching and learning approach at TASKA, parents' aspirations towards TASKA, and the challenges faced by educators when implementing teaching and learning.

### *Implementation of the teaching and learning approach at TASKA*

The implementation of the teaching and learning approach at the nursery is one of the important aspects in ensuring that all children can develop holistically. The results of interviews with three educators show that various approaches have been used to support children's development as a whole, including the learning-through-play approach, the multisensory approach, and also emotional support to meet the needs of each individual. According to Educator 1, "*the activities of playing with blocks and puzzles, singing, and telling stories are the main medium in learning at the nursery*". This illustrates that play serves both for enjoyment and as an effective medium for learning that aligns with the principle of learning through play in early childhood education. Next, Educator 2 also expressed the same opinion as Educator

Educator 2 also mentioned "*the use of multisensory materials such as sand and music to increase stimulation to the baby's sense of touch and hearing*". This statement shows that educators are aware of how sensory engagement helps strengthen both physical and cognitive development. Educator 2 also stated that "*the use of this approach has supported the movement development of children aged one to three years, especially in fine motor and gross motor skills involving the fingers and toes*." Educator 3 focuses on the emotional development of children, where "*every act and behavior of children will be accompanied by words of praise and encouragement to ensure that children's emotions are well regulated*".

### *Parents' aspirations towards TASKA*

Parents' aspirations are also one of the pillars in

improving the quality of the nursery operations. Based on the interviews, the three educators agreed that parents emphasize safety and cleanliness as the main priorities in the nursery. According to the three educators, parents really emphasize the safety aspects of their children, where parents expect educators to always monitor their children's behavior and movements to avoid danger and unwanted things. Educator 2 stated that as for cleanliness, "*parents expect the nursery to always ensure that all food and the nursery room are clean*". This shows that they are worried that their children will easily get sick due to a dirty and untidy environment. According to Educator 3, "*parents also expect their children to improve in terms of language, emotional, and social development, such as being able to communicate well, socialize with other children, and be able to understand basic things such as recognizing numbers and naming objects*". This reflects that parents are aware of early learning milestones and are very concerned about their child's development. The three educators also regularly send reports on the children's development at the nursery in the form of images and videos to ensure parents are aware of the children's condition and development in order to meet parents' expectations in addition to building trust and good relationships.

#### *Challenges faced by educators when implementing teaching and learning*

Challenges are also one of the main aspects faced by all educators, whether experienced or new in the world of early childhood education. This is said to be so because each child has unique needs and different levels of development, requiring educators to be constantly prepared to face various situations. Based on the interview, Educator 1 and Educator 3 stated that "*the challenge in educating children is due to the difference in the level of development, where some children have the ability to master learning quickly while others need a long time to understand the information delivered by the educator, especially in terms of speech and movement*". This situation requires the educators to modify their teaching strategies that can support children's needs and attention. Meanwhile, Educator 2 faces challenges in managing children's behavior, such as tantrums and throwing toys, and they are

also less interested in getting involved in the activities carried out. In addition, Educator 2 also states that the "*baby's volatile emotions, such as frequent crying and having difficulty separating, are also one of the additional pressures and challenges for educators*". These findings highlight various problems that educators encounter, including emotional behavioral and developmental elements. To ensure that the learning process is beneficial and encouraging for every child, educators must be flexible, persistent and innovative in their teaching strategies.

## DISCUSSION

The findings of the study show that the implementation of the teaching and learning approach used by educators at the nursery is based on the learning through play approach, the multisensory approach, and also emotional support to support the development of infants and toddlers. This has been proven by the increase in progress in the skills of toddlers from physical, emotional, spiritual, intellectual, and social aspects. This result is in line with the study by Nhase et al. (2025), who stated that the play approach needs to be integrated with teaching practices to foster involvement, holistic development, and active participation of children. This study also emphasizes that educators in the field of early childhood education need to use play pedagogy with guidance from teachers to develop children's social, emotional, cognitive, and physical skills. Apart from that, research findings from Sakinah and Suziyani (2023) also support this by stating that a structured and organized play approach can increase children's skills, such as cognitive and social, as well as generate creativity, and emphasizes that the implementation of the play approach in the early stages needs to be intensified in order to produce children with healthy competitiveness. Children need many opportunities for creative play and creative thinking (Janius et al., 2023). Therefore, there is no denying that a play-based, multisensory, and emotional support approach indeed has a significant impact on the development of children, which in turn can help them prepare for preschool.

From the point of view of parents' aspirations, the

results of the interview show that parents are very concerned about the aspects of safety, cleanliness, and children's development. This is supported by a study by Mat Seri et al. (2020), which shows that the majority of parents agree that the safety aspect is an important foundation in the quality of TASKA operations, where caregivers, employers, and government agencies need to cooperate together to ensure the well-being of children. In the study, it was also stated that there are many reported incidents that occur as a result of TASKA's environment, which is not conducive. As such, employers and educators play an important role in ensuring that the space, tools used, and environment occupied by infants and toddlers are always tidy and free from dangerous equipment to ensure comfort for them to move freely and explore the environment safely. In addition, parents' aspirations for children's development, especially language, cognitive, and social, are also in line with previous studies by Rozaimie et al. (2025). Educators also stated that the transmission of information on children's development in the form of pictures and videos has been done to meet the aspirations of parents. The study by Rozaimie et al. (2025) states that enrichment, especially at an early age, is a very valuable thing because it can help children before starting formal education at the age of four. This matter has become a benchmark for educators to devise more creative and fun teaching strategies, such as independent reading activities, singing, acting, and free play, to attract children's interest and involve them while helping to improve their cognitive, social, and language skills.

As for the challenges, the results of the study stated that educators have challenges from the emotional and behavioral aspects of children as well as different levels of mastery of understanding during the teaching and learning process. This has caused disruption to educators' teaching and children's learning. In this regard, educators should be wise in arranging an appropriate and creative approach in managing children's emotions and behavior by diversifying the approach according to the needs of each individual. In addition, a study by Kamba and Amiruddin (2025) also asserted that among other challenges faced by educators in nursery when implementing teaching and learning in the context

of using digital applications are poor internet access, class control issues, and device malfunctions. A study by Aniyah Manja et al. (2024) also states that the challenge for educators is the lack of materials and the incompatibility of materials that become obstacles in implementing a multisensory approach during the teaching and learning process, thus making it difficult for educators to plan lessons effectively. Although the challenges faced by all educators are different from each other, the basis of the matter remains on the readiness and skills of educators in dealing with the situation. In conclusion, the results of this study contribute to a deeper understanding of the practices and aspirations of parents and the real challenges of educators at TASKA, where the aspect of skills, use of materials, and knowledge is the main basis for educators in addition to the high level of patience and self-adjustment that is also necessary to meet the unique needs of each child.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the implementation of approaches and learning at TASKA plays a very important role in supporting the development of infants and toddlers in both the short and long term. The approach of learning while playing and multisensory and emotional support not only supports cognitive, social, and emotional development but also provides opportunities for children to have meaningful and fun experiences. Parents' aspirations have also helped entrepreneurs and educators to ensure that all forms of service, whether from the aspects of safety, hygiene, or education, are of high quality and able to meet the unique needs of each child. Although educators face various challenges in meeting the needs of each child, this can be handled well through creative approach strategies and continuous support from parents and employers. As such, employers should help educators by providing support and professional training to ensure that the lessons carried out continue to be relevant and effective according to current needs.

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### DECLARATION OF POTENTIAL CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Nur Aina Nadhirah Deraman does not work for, consult, own shares in, or receive funding from any company or organization that would benefit from this manuscript and has disclosed no affiliations other than those noted above.

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