

RESEARCH ARTICLE

TASKA AS THE FOUNDATION OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION: IMPLEMENTING TEACHING AND LEARNING APPROACHES ALIGNED WITH PARENTS' ASPIRATIONS

Nur Amira Syazwani Arsad^{1*}, Mohd Nazri Abdul Rahman²
*23003502@siswa.um.edu.my¹, mohdnazri_ar@um.edu.my²

^{[1]*} University of Malaya, Malaya, Malaysia

^[2] University of Malaya, Malaya, Malaysia

ABSTRACT

The study examines the implementation of effective teaching and learning (T&L) approaches in taska that align with the expectations of modern families. Through a review of literature and previous studies, it is found that parents emphasize aspects such as safety, quality caregiving, holistic learning approaches, and the use of technology as key priorities. Various T&L approaches have been identified as suitable for infants and toddlers, including play-based learning, child-centred approaches, sensory-motor activities, the strengthening of social interactions, and active parental involvement in children's developmental processes. Nevertheless, several challenges have been identified, including teachers' competency levels, resource constraints, and communication gaps with parents. This article asserts that efforts to enhance educators' professional training, strengthen taska-parent collaboration, and improve early education policies are essential to ensure that family aspirations are met. In conclusion, taska serves as a strong foundation for nurturing a balanced, creative and future-ready early generation prepared to face the challenges of the 21st century.

Keywords: *taska, children's developmental, teaching and learning, family aspiration*

INTRODUCTION

Early childhood education represents a crucial phase in shaping the cognitive, emotional, social, and physical foundations of an individual's development. In urban areas, it has become increasingly common for young children to be placed in childcare centres, or taska, from infancy while both parents are at work. Taska, as an early childcare institution, functions not only as a caregiving centre but also as an educational platform that fulfils the aspirations of today's parents. In terms of teaching methods, taska provide a learning environment that emphasizes a learning through play approach to stimulate children's overall development. In addition, taska aim to nurture children so that they are able to socialize and interact with their peers and the adults around them from an early age. This role

has gained growing attention in line with the aspirations of today's parents, who demand a more holistic, systematic and innovative quality of early education.

However, parents' aspirations for their children's education have evolved in line with the changing times. In the past, taska were viewed merely as places to care for children while parents were at work. Today, they are regarded as early educational institutions that play a vital role in nurturing a generation that is knowledgeable, highly skilled, and possesses good moral character. Modern parents' expectations extend beyond the aspects of safety and well-fare, they also emphasize the quality of the teaching and learning (T&L) approaches implemented by educators in taska. This can be indirectly related to Maslow's Hierarchy of

Needs Theory, which begins with the basic physiological and safety needs, followed by social belonging, self-esteem, and ultimately and self-actualization.

Various initiatives have been implemented by the government through early childhood education policies and curriculum, however, there are still a number of obstacles to overcome. Among these are limitations in facilities, differences in family backgrounds, and varying levels of educator competency, all of which influence parents' perceptions and expectations. Therefore, this article aims to explore various teaching and learning approaches that can be implemented in taska to meet parents' aspirations, as well as to identify the challenges and propose recommendations for improvement.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Many studies have focused on early childhood education because the early years of their lives are very important for long-term development. In Malaysia, there are several studies that emphasize the importance of a holistic teaching and learning (T&L) approach in Taska.

According to a study by Azizah et al. (2022), parents place high expectations on the quality of service, especially the hygiene and professionalism of educators who teach their children. This study shows that parents not only need good care for their children, but also need educational programs that can help their children's cognitive and social development from infancy. In addition, there is also a study by Noor & Hashim (2023) which found that a play-based approach can improve the motor and language development of toddlers, but it often depends on the level of training and creativity of educators to implement it.

However, safety is also an important aspect that not only needs to be taken care of by caregivers but also needs to be monitored by entrepreneurs and relevant government agencies. According to Mashitah Abdul Mutalib et al. (2018), the quality and safety to childcare centers in Malaysia needs to be further improved, such as the number of incidents of abuse and neglect which have led to a certain

level of child mortality. This is said to be the case because various issues or cases that have arisen in the press stem from the environment of children in daycare centers. For example, this year, in the Section Court it was charged to give evidence regarding the death of a seven-month-old baby boy in a daycare center due to negligence (*Berita Harian*, 2025).

Although many studies have emphasized the importance of early childhood education, there is still a gap in the implementation of specific T&L approaches for infants and toddlers in Malaysia. Most studies have focused on preschool (ages 4-6), while the aspects of care and learning for the under-three age group have not received much attention. Therefore, more in-depth studies on the implementation of T&L methods that are appropriate for infant and toddler development are urgently needed. In this way, nurseries will be able to meet the aspirations of today's parents who want quality, safe and effective early childhood education.

Aspirations of Current Parents

Among the main aspirations of parents in choosing a daycare center today is the safety and health of their children. According to a study by Azizah et al. (2022), parents demand a clean, safe and injury-free daycare environment because infants and toddlers are still at a very fragile early stage of development. They also want to ensure that child nutrition care is taken into account, including providing healthy and balanced food that meets the child's growth needs. In addition, regular health checks and compliance with standard operating procedures (SOPs) such as hand hygiene, distancing during activities and close supervision during play are also considered important. This shows that parents no longer see daycare centers solely as places that can provide a good and safe environment for their children and help them develop holistically.

In addition to safety aspects, today's parents also emphasize the aspiration for nurseries to provide a holistic learning experience. This can be linked to the study by Noor and Hashim (2023) which found that parents expect early education that not only focuses on basic academics, but also covers the

emotional, social, physical and cognitive development of the child. Learning through play activities is considered the most effective for infants and toddlers because it stimulates various aspects of development simultaneously. For example, block stacking activities not only train fine motor skills, but also encourage children to learn how to solve problems, share with friends and build self-confidence. Therefore, it is clear that parents want nurseries that are capable of designing a comprehensive and balanced curriculum so that their children are healthy, creative and confident and ready to enter preschool.

Finally, the aspirations of today's parents are also focused on building character and instilling noble values from an early age. According to a study by Thompson (2023), parents believe that values such as respect, discipline, empathy and a sense of responsibility should be instilled from the infant stage because they will shape the child's personality in the future. In daycare, these values can be implemented through simple but consistent daily activities. For example, teachers show examples of manners when eating together and encourage children say "thank you" after receiving something. Therefore, it is evident from these parents' goals that they may believe daycare may serve as a social institution that develops a new generation of morally upright individuals who can successfully navigate society in addition to being a place for children to receive an education.

Implementation of The Teaching and Learning (T&L) Approach in Nursery

Among the implementations of the T&L approach carried out at the nursery is the play-based approach because playing is a natural way for children to explore the world around them. This can be linked to the study by Noor and Hashim (2023), where playing activities not only provide fun but can also stimulate cognitive, motor, emotional and social development as a whole. For example, games that use sensory such as touching sand or playing dough can stimulate the senses and fine motor coordination. In addition, block-building games can also train children's thinking skills to solve problems and

hone their understanding of basic mathematical concepts such as size and balance. So, indirectly, parents want their children to learn in a fun but not burdensome way and can achieve their goals with the nursery.

Besides, the social interaction and language approach is one of the most important teaching strategies in early childhood education. According to Lim and Tan's study (2024), young children's language development can be directly influenced by the frequency of interaction with adults and peers in the nursery. In this case, teachers play an important role in encouraging communication through activities that require children to interact verbally such as storytelling using large picture books, singing and pair play. Children not only increase their vocabulary, but also gain a better understanding of intonation, speaking turns and emotional expression. Therefore, planned social interaction can build children's self-confidence to communicate and reduce shyness when dealing with others.

Lastly, parental involvement in the teaching and learning (T&L) process at taska is a crucial element that contributes to the holistic development of young children. Parents not only act as supporters of educators but also as collaborative partners who reinforce their children's learning through home-based activities. Strong cooperation between educators and parents creates continuity in learning between home and taska, helping children to adapt more effectively to the early educational environment. According to Ngadni and Chen (2024), teachers and parents can better understand children's developmental needs and adapt T&L strategies to each child's potential when they communicate in both directions. Therefore, in addition to strengthening family ties, active parental involvement in events like open days, child development workshops, and collaborative learning projects also satisfied the desires of contemporary parents who want an early education approach that is more collaborative.

Challenges in Implementing T&L

Based on the study, there are several challenges that need to be addressed even though the implementation of teaching and learning

approaches in nurseries is growing. One of the main challenges is the uneven level of teacher training and competence. This can be linked to the study by Azizah et al. (2022) that educators who do not have sufficient training in early childhood pedagogy, cause the T&L approach to not be implemented well. In addition, the attitude of parents who are less involved or overly emphasize early academic achievement also puts pressure on nurseries educators. For example, there are a few parents who prioritize children reading and writing quickly over creative play activities, while play activities are actually more suitable for the development of babies and toddlers. Next, resource and facility constraints, especially in nurseries that have a large number of children but limited space or equipment. This situation can affect the effectiveness of activities based on games, social interaction and holistic learning. Thus, all these challenges show that the implementation of the T&L approach requires full support from teachers, parents, and administrators so that the aspirations desired by today's parents can be realized.

Suggested Improvement

Several improvement suggestions can be implemented to address these challenges. Firstly, teachers should be provided with continuous training that emphasizes early childhood pedagogy, including skills in planning play-based activities, language interaction, and managing the behavior of infants and toddlers. This is important to ensure that the teaching and learning approaches used are truly aligned with the developmental stages of children. Secondly, taska can strengthen collaboration with parents by organizing regular meetings or using digital applications to share children's daily progress reports. This allows parents to stay informed and involved in their children's ongoing development. Thirdly, the government and taska administrators should provide clearer guidelines and better facilities, especially or taska in urban and rural areas facing resource and space constraints. With these recommendations implemented, it is hoped that the teaching and learning approaches in taska can be carried out more consistently, effectively, and in line with the aspirations of today's parents.

CONCLUSION

Overall, the implementation of teaching and learning (T&L) approaches for infants and toddlers in daycare centers plays a very important role in meeting the aspirations of today's parents. In this regard, the aspirations emphasized by parents are aspects such as safety, health, holistic learning, and effective communication. Meanwhile, these aspirations can also be achieved through a child-centered T&L approach, based on play activities, prioritizing social interaction and language from an early age. Although there are several challenges faced such as different levels of teacher competence, facility constraints and unbalanced parental involvement such as continuous training for educators, close cooperation between daycare centers and parents, and facility support can help strengthen the implementation of T&L approach can not only build a strong educational foundation, but it can also fulfil parent's hopes that their children will grow up in a safe, fun and competitive environment in the future.

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