

RESEARCH ARTICLE

ALIGNING TEACHING AND LEARNING PRACTICES IN CHILDCARE CENTRES WITH THE ASPIRATIONS OF TODAY'S PARENTS: A FOCUS ON INFANTS AND TODDLERS: A CASE STUDY

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the implementation of a teaching and learning approach (PdP) for children enrolled in TASKA that can meet the aspirations of today's parents. The aspirations include safety, holistic development, fun learning, close communication between parents and educators, and controlled use of technology. Data was collected through the analysis of articles and research reports published between 2020 and 2025. The results of the study found that the most effective approach is play-based learning, child-centered learning, sensory experiences, consistent daily routines, parental involvement, and limited use of technology. Although this approach is in line with the developmental needs of children with disabilities, its implementation faces challenges such as lack of resources, trained workforce, and physical facilities. This study recommends that TASKA provide specific training to educators, improve communication with parents, and improve the learning environment to make it safer and more child-friendly.

Keywords: Preschoolers, Early Childhood Education, TASKA, Parents' Aspirations, Malaysia

INTRODUCTION

Early childhood education is an important foundation for a child's long-term growth because the early years are the most critical for building physical, emotional, social, and cognitive skills. At this stage, toddlers are in a unique phase of development as they move from being fully dependent on adults to becoming more independent, learning to walk, talk, and explore their surroundings. They need a learning approach that suits their natural way of learning through exploration, play, and social interaction.

In today's modern era, parents place great importance on the quality of early education. They expect TASKA to be more than just a day care centre, but also a place that provides a safe, fun, and stimulating learning environment that supports their child's overall development. Parents are increasingly aware that early education plays a key

role in helping children reach their full potential. Therefore, implementing the right teaching and learning (PdP) approach at TASKA is crucial to meet these expectations. It is also important to ensure that children with disabilities receive equal opportunities to learn and grow in a meaningful way.

This study focuses on PdP approaches at TASKA that support the development of all children, with special attention to children with disabilities who may need extra support in areas like motor skills, language and communication, and emotional and social development. By using child-friendly and play-based approaches, TASKA can create a supportive environment where children build confidence, learn essential skills, and enjoy the learning process. This report explores how the right PdP approaches can help TASKA meet parents' expectations and support the healthy development

of all children, including those with disabilities.

LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Lee et al. (2022), today's parents prioritize the safety of their children in TASKA, including the provision of a child-friendly environment such as soft floors and protection at sharp corners. They also expect holistic development that includes cognitive, social, emotional, physical, and language. Studies by Li (2020) and Lunga et al. (2022) asserted that play-based learning is the best way for children to learn because it supports natural development and stimulates creativity. Activities such as block play, push-pull games, and sensory activities (sand or water) provide opportunities to improve fine and gross motor coordination.

Phang et al. (2021) also stated that child-centered learning allows children to explore according to their interests, while the teacher acts as a facilitator. Radzi et al. (2023) emphasized the importance of sensory-based learning because toddlers learn about the world through the experience of touching, hearing sounds, seeing colors, and feeling textures. A study by Nur Adlina & Loo (2025) found consistent daily routines such as eating, sleeping, and playing schedules help toddlers feel safe and confident. Radzi et al. (2023) also highlighted that parental involvement through effective communication with educators strengthen children's development. O'Keeffe & McNally (2024) added that the use of controlled technology, such as interactive songs and educational visuals, are able to support learning without disturbing the balance of development.

METHOD

This study uses an approach to library research by examining articles and research reports published between 2020 and 2025 related to early childhood education and the implementation of PdP for children in TASKA. This study adopted a qualitative descriptive research design to explore the implementation of teaching and learning (PdP) approaches for toddlers in TASKA and to investigate how these approaches align with the

aspirations of today's parents. A qualitative design was chosen because it allows researchers to capture real-life practices, experiences, and perceptions from teachers, parents, and administrators. This is crucial to understand not only what approaches are used (such as play-based and sensory learning) but also whether they fulfil parents' expectations for their children's development.

FINDINGS

Parents today prioritise several key aspects in early childhood education. They value physical safety, which includes child-friendly furniture, soft flooring, and safe play areas to prevent accidents. They also expect holistic development, focusing on cognitive, emotional, social, language, and physical growth. Parents look for fun and engaging learning experiences that spark curiosity and exploration, rather than rigid academic instruction. Additionally, they emphasise good communication between teachers and parents through regular updates and progress reports, as well as the smart and balanced use of technology, such as interactive songs, visuals, and videos to support learning without overexposing children to screens.

To meet these aspirations, TASKA commonly adopts play-based, child-centred, and sensory-based teaching approaches. These methods have been proven to increase toddlers' motivation, self-confidence, curiosity, and motor skills development because they align with the natural ways young children learn through play and exploration rather than formal academic drills.

Another crucial element is the implementation of consistent daily routines, including regular times for meals, naps, play, and structured learning. Such routines help toddlers feel secure and calm, adapt more easily to the TASKA environment, and participate effectively in learning activities while developing emotional stability.

Finally, parental involvement plays a vital role in strengthening the impact of these approaches. Regular communication between teachers and parents through meetings, progress reports,

communication books, and informal updates allows parents to reinforce similar strategies at home. This continuity between home and centre enhances the effectiveness of the teaching and learning process, ensuring that toddlers benefit from a consistent and supportive approach to their development.

DISCUSSION

The implementation of a suitable PdP approach for children in TASKA needs to emphasize the balance between safety, fun, and learning effectiveness. Research findings confirm that play-based learning and sensory experiences are in line with the natural developmental needs of toddlers as they help develop physical, cognitive, and social skills through fun activities.

A stable daily routine at TASKA also has a positive effect because it helps to build a sense of security and confidence among children. However, the effectiveness of this approach requires teachers who are trained in early childhood pedagogy so that they can plan activities that are appropriate for the level of development.

The aspirations of today's parents who want fun but safe learning can be achieved by strengthening communication between TASKA and families, while also ensuring that the physical environment and learning materials are child-friendly. Challenges such as lack of financial resources and manpower need to be overcome by providing professional training, community support, and strategic collaboration between TASKA and the government or private sector.

CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

This study concludes that the implementation of PdP at TASKA that combines play-based learning, sensory activities, consistent routines, and active parental involvement is effective in meeting the expectations of today's parents. This approach supports the overall development of toddlers, including their thinking, emotions, social skills, language, and physical growth. It also prepares them for future learning and school by creating a safe and supportive environment where they can explore,

gain confidence, and develop early problem-solving skills.

To make this approach successful and sustainable, several steps are important. TASKA should provide regular training for teachers and caregivers so they understand the best ways to teach young children, manage behaviour, and include children with special needs. The learning environment at TASKA should also be improved to ensure safety and encourage learning, with child-friendly furniture, soft floors, sensory materials, and toys that inspire curiosity and creativity.

In addition, strong communication between TASKA and parents is crucial. This can be done through regular meetings, progress reports, and workshops to help parents understand how to support their children's development at home. Finally, extra funding from the government or private sector is needed to improve facilities, buy better learning materials, and provide inclusive resources so that all children, including those with disabilities, can learn and grow in a safe and stimulating environment.

Safety needs to be improved to encourage learning environments. Extra funding from the government or private sector is needed to improve facilities.

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