

The Transition Program of Early Childhood Education to Elementary School from the Perspective of Teachers and Parents

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ABSTRACT

There are many challenges faced by elementary school teachers in implementing the ECE to ES Transition Program. Among them are many parents who demand that ECE institutions teach their children to read, write, and count, and there are still students entering first grade who have not received the foundation they are entitled to. For this reason, the government is promoting the ECE to ES transition program so that young children can undergo adjustments appropriate to their age. The purpose of this study is to understand the ECE to ES transition program and explore the perspectives of teachers and parents in the NH Elementary School environment. The research method uses a qualitative approach. Data collection was conducted through observation and interviews. The research subjects were classroom teachers and parents. The results of the study show that many teachers and parents still do not understand the ECE to ES transition program. The perspectives of teachers and parents are that they strongly agree with the elimination of literacy tests as a prerequisite for entering elementary school, the implementation of adequate numeracy and literacy introduction, and the approval of an orientation period. Teachers accompany children's foundation skills, report on children's development, and develop curricula in accordance with technical standards.



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1. INTRODUCTION

Boivin and Bierman (in Valiente, et al., 2021) define primary school transition as the basic skills that children need to have when entering school in order to adapt to the school environment, to learn and to achieve developmentally appropriate targets. Therefore, children's primary school transition is important especially in academic and social-emotional competencies entering formal education. Important primary school transition skills include social-emotional competencies such as understanding the emotional state of others, being able to socialize in their environment well and being able to demonstrate prosocial behavior. In early academic skills including early language, reading and simple math skills will affect children's academic abilities and achievements later in life (Ren et al, 2022).

School readiness is a condition in which children have the foundation capabilities as lifelong learners (MoEC, 2022). These foundation skills need to be instilled and included in the ECE to PS Transition Program. By having good foundation skills, learners are expected to be ready to participate in school learning and ready to become lifelong learners. The foundation skills that need to be fostered through the activities of the School Environment Introduction Period (MPLS) in the PAUD-PS Transition program are as follows: (1) familiarity with religious values and manners, (2) emotional maturity sufficient for activities in the learning environment, (3) social and language skills sufficient to be able to participate in the school environment independently, (4) positive meaning of learning, (5) development of motor skills and self-care sufficient to participate in the school environment independently, and (6) cognitive maturity sufficient to carry out learning activities, such as basic literacy, numeracy and understanding of basic things that occur in everyday life.

However, there are still many challenges encountered by primary school teachers in implementing the PAUD-PS Transition Program. Among them, there are still many parents who demand ECE institutions so that their children can master calistung, there are still students who enter grade 1 PS (Reza & Asbani, 2024) and they do not get the foundation they are entitled to (Pebriani & Handayani, 2024). While ECE is an institution that organizes fun activities not forcing students to be able to read, write and count, in addition, there is the implementation of calistung tests in the selection of new students in some primary schools which is one of the obstacles in the implementation of the PAUD-PS Transition Program (Bidi, 2023). Another challenge is that many children also face difficulties in adapting to new situations, resulting in negative experiences such as stress due to separation anxiety and school phobia (Maulani & Mutiara, 2023). Based on the facts and the many challenges encountered, it requires the commitment of all relevant parties, especially teachers, to optimize their role in designing, implementing and evaluating the

ECE transition program to primary school level. Because teachers have great urgency in implementing the ECE to PS transition program (Kasih et al, 2023).

The main objectives of the ECE to PS Transition Regulation above are to: 1) eliminate academic pressure in early grade primary schools (no more reading, writing and counting tests as a condition for entering primary school), 2) adapt to early childhood development that focuses more on playing while learning, 3) create a comfortable learning environment with more flexible and fun learning methods, and 4) ensure continuity of ECE education to primary school with learning materials that adjust to children's learning in PAUD.

In the implementation of grade 1 learning at SDI NH, there are several learning methods that are not appropriate for use because they are not in accordance with the characteristics of early childhood development, including; 1) learning that is too teacher-centered while students only listen without much interaction, 2) learning using the lecture method without variation so that students are easily bored and less active during teaching and learning activities, 3) the main focus of learning is reading, writing and counting (calistung), 4) lack of play and motor activities, because during learning activities students sit more still without involving body movements, 5) excessive assignments such as written exercises and students are given homework every day, 6) learning that is not contextual and does not use media / teaching aids because it is not contextual. The teacher only relies on textbooks without visual aids or hands-on practice using interesting media, and 7) a rigid approach and lack of freedom because the teacher is too demanding of high discipline without providing space for children's creativity.

Learning in grade 1 should be designed according to students' needs. Based on the explanation above, learning methods that are too rigid, academic or teacher-centered tend to be less effective so that students experience obstacles in adapting to the demands of learning activities in elementary school. While the implementation of learning in ECE uses student-centered learning methods, based on fun and contextual activities so that it is more interesting and helps students understand learning concepts better.

Perspective in this study is intended as a behavior, response or opinion that arises as a result of a stimulus present from the environment (Sari, 2020). This study aims to explore the responses and views of parents and teachers towards the implementation plan of the ECE PS transition program. Researchers are interested in raising this theme because if this program is implemented, it will encounter various challenges, including the clash of parents' understanding of the indicators of children's learning success who still think that calistung ability is the main goal; creative learning strategies are needed by elementary school teachers so that there is active and

explorative learning and ignites the curiosity of students; program rules that call for avoiding written and written test assessments in class require teachers to be able to design learning activities that are different and more interesting than usual.

The transition stage is a process that includes: fostering curiosity, emotional development, language use, cognitive development and general knowledge (Mardiani, Fitria and Yulianingsih, 2024). Directly and indirectly, the role of early childhood educators (parents and teachers) is one of the factors determining the success of this transition program. Thus, research with the title Elementary ECE Transition Program in the Perspective of Parents and Teachers is necessary to be conducted.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The definition of elementary school transition is based on Bronfenbrenner's Bio- Ecological theory which states that the elementary school transition can be seen as of development based on what the child has experienced and the child's interactions more broadly. Primary school transition is not only determined by the child's own characteristics, but is also influenced by his or her active interaction with the environment in which he or she lives. In addition, a child's primary school transition is influenced by the child himself, family, school and community. Based on this theory, to improve primary school transition, the child's abilities (social and emotional) and the role of the ecological system (e.g. family, school) should be emphasized (Zephanya et al., 2022).

The purpose of the ECE to primary school transition period is to prepare appropriate learning patterns and environments for learners who have just left ECE and want to continue their education in primary schools. Therefore, learners who have just entered primary school can slowly adjust to the pattern and learning environment in primary school. According to Gropper (2020), the objectives of implementing the ECD to primary school transition fall into several main areas. First, assessing the impact of this transition on learners' physical activity levels and overall health, which includes understanding patterns of physical activity and behavior as learners move from ECD to primary school. Second, evaluate the social dynamics and support systems during this transition, including the influence of parental and peer social support on learners' physical activity behaviors. Third, this research should also seek to understand the implications of the transition on learners' social support networks and friendships, and their impact on physical activity behaviors.

Fun early childhood education in this transitional context involves various strategies, such as the use of play methods, creative activities and project-based learning (Syahrial, et al 2022). These methods not only strengthen children's self- confidence but also build sustained enthusiasm for learning (Kiska et al 2023). In addition, emotional support from teachers and parents plays an important role in creating a sense of security for children during the adaptation period. When children feel that their learning environment is supportive and friendly, they more easily establish social relationships, both with peers and teachers, which in turn accelerates their adaptation process.

The synergy between ECE and PS institutions is a key element in the success of this transition. ECD teachers can provide information on the characteristics and needs of each child, so that primary school teachers can design appropriate learning approaches. On the other hand, training for primary school teachers to understand children's transition needs is a strategic step to ensure effective learning continuity. Parents also need to be actively involved through parenting activities or orientation programs, so that they can provide moral support and help children feel more prepared for change.

Through a playful educational approach, this transition not only impacts the child's initial experience at primary school, but also provides long-term benefits. Children who undergo a positive transition tend to have higher motivation to learn, better social skills and the ability to face future challenges (Kiska, Hayanto & Indryani, 2024). However, challenges in implementation remain, such as a lack of teacher training, limited facilities, and a lack of parental understanding of the importance of a planned transition. Therefore, a joint commitment from various parties, including policymakers, is needed to develop a structured and supportive transition program. Thus, enjoyable education can be an effective solution in ensuring a successful transition, building a strong foundation for children's future development.

The role of teachers is also an important factor in supporting the transition. Preschool and primary school teachers involved in transition programs reported that collaboration between levels helped them better identify children's needs (Taukhida, et al. 2024). Primary school teachers who received specialized training on playful education approaches felt better equipped to support children during the transition. In addition, teachers' use of creative learning methods was also shown to increase children's participation and engagement in learning (Susanti et al., 2025).

3. METHODS

In this study, researchers used a qualitative method with a case study research type. This study describes what the researcher did while conducting observations, documentation and interviews, observations that aim to conduct an in-depth study of the ECE to PS transition program from the perspective of parents and teachers. Based on the focus of the problem which is the main study, the researcher conducts an in-depth study of the conditions that exist at SDI NH, both from students and teachers as well as the SDI NH education implementation unit.

The object of observation was carried out on the grade 1 teacher of SDI NH. Other subjects besides teachers are parents of students at SDI NH, in observation, the author combines participatory observation in classroom learning and implementing observation.

Data collection methods used by observation, documentation and interviews by asking questions prepared by researchers and conducted on teachers and parents of grade 1 SDI NH related to the ECE to PS transition program. After the data is obtained from observation, documentation and interviews, a description and analysis is carried out regarding what is obtained from the ECE to PS transition program from the perspective of teachers and parents.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

School readiness is a condition in which children have the foundational skills to become lifelong learners. While transition is the process of moving children and adjusting to a new learning environment. Thus, the transition from early childhood education to primary school is the process by which children move from their role as early childhood learners to primary school learners. An effective ECD transition is one in which children do not need to make too many adjustments as a result of the move (Kemdikbudristek, 2023). This research highlights the responses and views of parents and teachers that will be closely related to the implementation of the ECD transition. Parents are the ones who set certain expectations for their children's academic development, while teachers are the implementers of these expectations at school. Efforts to change views about learning activities in ECD need to be officially supported and structured by the government (Wulandari & Fachrani, 2023).

It is intended that there is a common understanding of the PAUD- PS transition program so that the government's goal of fulfilling children's rights to have the foundation ability to become lifelong learners at any grade level is realized, namely by not imposing calistung skills in early childhood, and

strengthening the foundation of child development first. The foundation abilities referred to (Wijaya, 2023) are: 1) Recognizing religious values and manners, 2) Sufficient emotional maturity, 3) Adequate social and language skills to interact with friends and other individuals, 4) Positive meaning of learning, 5) Development of motor skills and self-care, 6) Cognitive maturity sufficient for learning activities (basic literacy, numeracy and understanding of simple things). These basic abilities need to be built continuously through the scope of learning in ECE to early grade elementary school up to grade 2, which of course must be overshadowed by the early childhood graduate competency standards (STPPA) (Kemdikbudristek, 2023).

Table 1. Identifikasi of Problems in Early Childhood Education to Promary School Transition Program

No	Identification of problems in the transition program from ECE to SDI NH	Actions
1	Have you ever participated in training on preparing the ECE transition program to PS Islam Nurul Hidayah?	Yes, I have, from training conducted by the education department and the school.
2	How prepared are you to implement the ECE transition program to PS Islam Nurul Hidayah?	This year, SDI NH teachers are ready to implement the ECE to PS transition program because they understand how to apply this program to early first graders.
3	During the teaching and learning activities, did you encounter any obstacles in implementing the ECE transition program to PS Islam Nurul Hidayah?	The challenges faced by some teachers vary greatly from class to class and student to student, including differences in children's readiness, a lack of supporting infrastructure, a lack of parental understanding of the importance of the transition from ECE to PS, and varying adaptation times for children. However, teachers are able to adapt and overcome these challenges over time.
4	What are the factors that hinder you in implementing the ECE transition program to PS Islam Nurul Hidayah?	The factors contributing to these obstacles include differences in children's levels of readiness (emotional, social, cognitive, motor skills), children's unfamiliarity with the elementary school environment and routine, a lack of educational toys and appropriate learning media, parents' overly high expectations of their children's academic achievement from an early age, and a lack of communication regarding the ECE to PS transition policy to all relevant parties.
5	If there are obstacles or challenges, what is your strategy for dealing with them?	The strategy is to work with schools to organize training on the transition from ECE to elementary school, holistic learning approaches, and child-friendly learning methods for teachers and parents, develop fun, play-based school introduction activities without academic pressure, and explain the importance of a gradual, child-friendly transition through parent meetings or school communication media.

No	Identification of problems in the transition program from ECE to SDI NH	Actions
6	In your opinion, how does the transition program from ECE to PS affect the readiness of students in grade 1 at PS Islam Nurul Hidayah?	The noticeable impact is that it can improve children's emotional and social readiness, build a positive attitude towards learning, facilitate adaptation to the learning environment in elementary school, develop children's independence, and enhance collaboration between early childhood education, elementary school, and parents.

Source: research data, 2025

In general, efforts to improve calistung skills with drilling tend to be favored by parents, because by practicing continuously, children will master this skill more quickly. Unfortunately, understanding the context of reading is still a secondary priority. So there are still misconceptions about these literacy and numeracy skills among parents and teachers. This shows that the community's understanding of the ECD transition has not yet reached its full potential.

Researchers conducted interviews and observations with one class teacher who was directly involved with teachers and parents of grade 1 SDI NH. Teachers in the SDI NH environment have adequate competence to provide educational services for their students, in accordance with what is stated in Permendikbud No. 137 of 2014, the competencies that a teacher must have are pedagogical competence, personality competence, professional competence, and social competence (Mardiani, Fitria and Yulianingsih, 2024). Teachers, as the main implementers of the ECD transition program in schools, need to understand how the concept of implementation is implemented, thus, various lesson design preparations are needed to welcome the implementation of this ECD transition in schools. Designing lessons that support the strengthening of children's foundations is an important process for early childhood and primary school teachers to understand (Kemendikbudristek, 2022). Efforts to improve children's foundation skills, based on the results of interviews, obtained responses from parents who have not been much understanding of what constitutes a child's foundation skills and how to stimulate them appropriately. Most of their expectations still revolve around the learning outcomes of calistung, as they do not want their children to fall behind other students in terms of these skills when entering the early elementary school grades. Meanwhile, good stimulation in developing children's foundations needs to be carried out continuously from ECE to early elementary school

because it can affect success, well-being, engagement, and positive attitudes in learning (Yuliantina et al., 2023).

From the results of the research data exposure, the conditions regarding the preparations that will be made by ECE and PS teachers in welcoming the implementation of the ECE PS transition in the 2024-2025 school year are more or less the same, including by developing interesting learning strategies with simple and fun play both in the classroom and outside the classroom. This is in line with Santrok's opinion (in Windayani, et al., 2021) which suggests that play has a positive influence on aspects of early childhood development, which include motor, cognitive, language, social, moral, and language aspects (Windayani et al., 2021).

With the implementation of the ECE PS transition program, teachers within SDI NH are increasingly eager to develop learning and curriculum in accordance with the technical standards of the PAUD-DD transition program that is friendly to the world of children, so that they do not feel deprived of their childhood. In accordance with the opinion (Pebriani et al., 2024) that education units need to design fun learning activities. That way, children's world is expected to be passed happily without any coercion to master reading, writing and counting skills.

Children are still given an introduction to literacy and numeracy, but will not overemphasize these skills, but will follow government instructions to accompany learning aimed at maturing children's foundation skills. Teachers also need to assess the curriculum. Following the Merdeka curriculum, the assessments carried out are diagnostic, formative, and summative assessments (Ariyanto et al., 2023).

Broadly speaking, ECE and PS (MI) teachers in the scope of SDI NH have understood the concept of learning for early childhood, but for the technical implementation of the ECE PS transition, they have not really mastered it because there has been no technical guidance or socialization related to this and are waiting for the technical guidance. However, the teachers are ready to implement and succeed the government's efforts in the field of early childhood education that prepares them to become early childhood educators.

5. CONCLUSION

The plan to implement the PAUD-PS Transition program was welcomed by parents and teachers in the SDI NH environment. Parents and teachers strongly support the PAUD-PS transition which aims to mature children's foundation skills, and place calistung skills as a skill that needs to be taught but does not force children to immediately proficient. Parents began to understand calistung skills are not the only absolute measurement of learning

success for early childhood and readiness to learn towards primary school. Their response after knowing the purpose of this program was to strongly agree to abolish the calistung test as a prerequisite for entering primary school and then agree to a school orientation period to get to know the environment and school community better. However, parents and teachers still did not fully understand the implementation mechanism. Teachers are preparing for the PAUD-PS transition by planning the curriculum according to the technical standards.

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