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Transition in Early Childhood Education

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Abstract. The purpose of this article is to explain why the transition must be researched, comprehended, and included in the Early Childhood Education (ECE) level. In the early childhood education, we need to perceive that involvement, collaboration, and communication between children, families, schools, and community are important factors that will strengthen the transition towards a positive direction in helping children to go to school and encourage them in passing through the transition to Elementary School. Fundamentally a child's growth is influenced by child development aspects which include religious, moral values, physical and motor, cognitive, social-emotional, language and art that has become the basis of every development in learning programs that will be carried out at the level of Early Childhood and Elementary Education. By applying the literature review method, this article aims to gain a holistic apprehension from various perspectives on the significance of transition in Early Childhood Education. The aim of the transition in Early Childhood Education is none other than to help children develop the basic potential that has already existed inside them, not only for increasing children's knowledge and independence but also their apprehension which will later support each other in preparing themselves for Primary level.

Keywords: Transition, Early Childhood, Education, Elementary School

INTRODUCTION ~ The term of transition is actually described as a developing process which has many definitions. Transition in the context of education explains how the process of change experienced by children from previous schools that he/she had known to the new school environment that he/she did not know, called elementary school. According to the Bio-Ecology Theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1986), the transition to primary school is a form of first and foremost Bio-ecological transition in the life of a child (Ebbeck & Binte, 2013). So that when school transition is not yet known, children experience different conditions in different school environments. Children are required to have readiness to face these changes and adjust to the school environment. These changes experienced by children can be in the form of social-emotional relationships with teachers or peers, how to teach, the environment, place, time, learning content that makes the moment of transition can fulfil all children's needs (Jimerson et al, 2006). However, the contemporary comprehension highlights the holistic nature of the transition which focuses more on families, communities, educators, schools and other institutions as well as their roles in preparing children. (Dockett, Perry and Kearney 2010, p. 1) There are three dimensions of school readiness that are often identified in school readiness namely; (1) children's readiness for school, (2) school readiness for children, (3) family and community capacity to provide opportunities, conditions and support needed to optimize children's development and learning (Dockett, Perry & Kearney 2010, p. 2). The adjustment process is dynamic and ongoing, for it is

very important in supporting the child's academic success in their future lives.

Transition period is an important issue to analyze because the transition is closely related to the educational environment, especially in the PAUD environment itself. Throughout this time, Early Childhood education is mostly focused and crammed on the child's academic cognitive mastery, whilst the affective and psychomotor seem to be secondary ones. Basically, Early Childhood Education (PAUD) focuses on a child's development and amusing learning process, whilst at the elementary school level education is clearly focused on subject areas, especially on literacy and mathematics goals. However, this transitional issue has not been fully realized by parents and the PAUD and SD environment (Peters, 2010, p.12). This phenomenon creates an intense competition to enter favorite elementary schools which causes parents to try to improve their children's competence as early and as much as possible. Furthermore, this phenomenon will probably get rid of children's learning experiences that should assist their developmental period which has an important role for children in the long term, because learning in early childhood is integrated, interrelated and interdependent on all aspects of child development (Mwangi, 2016).

Starting school with a new school environment is a significant experience for children. Various research results show that the first day of entering school is an event that has the potential to cause stress to children and parents (Hirst, 2011). Although the transition is not a new phenomenon, various studies have shown that many children are not well prepared and have adequate support to go through the transition to elementary school positively (Margetts & Kienig, 2013). Furthermore, the concepts that occur in the field are more emphasized on the abilities and skills mastered by a child to be able to meet academic demands in school, so the latest view states that the transition to primary school and school readiness are two inseparable concepts, and not only assessed from the child's ability, but also must be seen by the role of the environment in providing support for children (Kagan & Rigby, 2003).

Previous research results indicated the distinction comprehension between parents, children and teachers regarding the concept of school readiness and a positive transition to school (Brandt & Grace, 2005; Mollborn & Dennis, 2012; Scott-et al., 2006; Winter, et al. 2007). Many parents tend to think the school transition will run smoothly if it is supported by the readiness of children's abilities related to social-emotional, motor and language readiness (Barbarin et al, 2008; Puccioni, 2015; Smith, 2012). On the other hand, the Ministry of Education and Culture in collaboration with UNICEF and the World Bank has evaluated the Early Childhood Education program in 33 provinces in Indonesia and found that teachers teach children to memorize numbers and letters

in order to pass the School Readiness Test to enter Primary School favorites (Hasan, Hyson, & Chang, 2013; UNESCO, 2005). By now, researchers recommend further research to analyze school readiness and school transsition by involving the perceptions of parents, children and teachers.

Some studies explain that academic achievement can be reached by children may be hindered when the child is not accompanied by mature readiness in PAUD period (Walsh, 2003). This shows that children who did not undergone PAUD before entering elementary school were categorized as children who were not prepared by their parents to enter elementary school. Teachers at an early age agree that the transition includes: growing curiosity, emotional development, language usage, cognitive development and general knowledge (Rosenkoetter et al., 2007). According to this opinion, it is important to develop all the potential early on in early childhood education before entering elementary grade (SD), especially in transition (Ramli, 2003). (Peters, 2010) also added that children's success cannot be based solely on external behaviors and observable behaviors, but must pay attention to many things, especially in the child's growth and development process itself.

In regarding with the opinion above, the disappearance of transition issue is also often disregard by family, especially by parents themselves who often focus on the academic side. According to the research (Wu & Chiang, 2014) that family is the broadest context and closely influences the process of child socialization. Research which have conducted abroad such as in the United States, the United Kingdom and Ireland has raised significant concerns over more complex changes taking place in family situations, such as an increase in birth rates that occur outside of marriage and also the extent of parental knowledge about the transition. (Canavan, 2014; Panico, 2012, p. 11). In a study found and compared intact parents with single one, the results of the study found that single parent or divorce, resulting in a disrupted cognitive and social emotional development in children, so will mental parents who become also disturbed. The difference is due to other factors, namely poverty in family income. All of these factors can damage the capacity and quality of childcare (Berger, 2012; Hall & Monica, 2009, p.3).

Furthermore, children support participation in every learning as part of a successful transition. Roseline (2013) provides evidence of agreement in grade one elementary school that takes into consideration the balance between ability and challenge. Mwangi (2016) adds the opposite of the opinion of Nyland & Alfayez (2012) that learning which is too easy proves to be difficult, especially for gifted students. Although discussion in learning is seen as an aspect of a successful transition. Therefore, in this transition it becomes very important to be

studied continuously, influencing the process in the future can be an evaluation material and find the right solution to improve it so that the process is not in vain with consideration of the increasingly complex turnover of interests (Nakamura & Csikszentmihalyi, 2009).

METHOD

This research is a study based on literature review that examines a number of recent references related to the transition from PAUD to Elementary School. According to this research, an analysis will be conducted to explain the importance of the transition to Early Childhood Education.

DISCUSSION

Characteristics of Children Ready To Enter School

Characteristics of children who are ready to enter primary school to be able to know whether a child already has school readiness or not, the criteria set by (Priyanto, 2011, p.11) in the School Children Readiness Book can be a reference for parents in seeing school readiness children, namely: (1) physical development, (2) fine motor development, (3) aspects of independence, (4) ability of concentration, (5) social aspects, (6) cognitive aspects. Gordon and Browne (2011) explains that at the age of 6 years children also begin to make plans based on the actions they take and involve other people's perspectives for other

considerations (p.60). Children who will enter elementary school also begin to show behavior in choosing activities they want to do themselves, can work together in small groups with their classmates, and can participate in planning daily activities. Parents can also stimulate children by actively involving them in planning an activity.

In the School Children Readiness Book compiled by (Priyatno, 2011, p.11) written some characteristics of children who are ready to enter primary school education which can be a reference for parents in seeing the readiness of children's schools, such as: (1) Physical development, (2) fine motor development, (3) independence aspect, (4) ability of concentration, (5) social aspects, (6) cognitive aspects. Gordon and Browne (2011) explains that at the age of 6, children also begin to make plans according to the actions they take and involve other people's perspectives for other considerations (p.60). Children who will enter elementary school also begin to show behavior in choosing activities that they want to do themselves, able to work together in small groups with their classmates, and able to participate in planning daily activities. Parents can also stimulate children by actively involving them in planning an activity.

Children's experience with family at home has an important role in their language development and literacy. Book reading activity, limiting watching activity by replacing them with activities or games, or

singing and reading poetry reading can be an alternative activity done by parents to stimulate children's language development. The social emotional development (Sparks and Edward, 2010) (in Gordon & Browne, 2011) said that this aspect is closely related to how children have a relationship with themselves and others, how self-concept and identity that show self-confidence are formed, and how they are able to manage and express their feelings (p. 79). Woolfolk (2009) elaborates that when children look for identity and form self-image, they also learn to overcome various emotions and try to understand others around them (p.142)

Comprehending other's perceptions is one element for understanding and managing various emotional situations. Emotional social competence is critical for academic and personal development. Parents can help improve this competency through a number of ways, such as helping children recognize feelings of themselves and others by seeing examples of images of emotional expressions and their names, giving children space to express their emotions (for example through crying), reading stories about emotional situations and how the characters are able to handle it appropriately, often ask and invite children to tell their feelings and how to overcome them.

The development of independence that shown is a factor that influences child's readiness of school because it is a matter that requires a child to be able to deal with a situation or complete a task without relying on others. If the child is independent it means he is ready to face a situation without depending on others. Mooney (2000) (in Gordon & Browne, 2011, p.110) provides advice on what parents can do so that children have independence for it helps shape school readiness. This is giving children the opportunity to choose simple things (e.g asking simple things like drinking water or milk, etc.), giving children the opportunity to learn to do other independent activities (eating, wearing clothes, wearing socks and shoes, doing toilet training although under supervision). In addition to factors within the child, there are other factors that also affect children's school readiness. As a result of research conducted by Kurniasari (2015) shows that other factors that can affect children's school readiness are (1) Mother's status, (2) Parental stimulation, and (3) School. Further explanation is that mothers who do not work have children more ready to enter elementary school because there is more time to monitor and stimulate children's growth and development. In addition, the role of parent stimulation is also very influential on children's school readiness.

Successfully Passed the Transition Phase

The Bio-ecology Theory from Bronfenbrenner, states that school transition is an ongoing process, involving environmental change and requires cognitive, social and emotional

adjustment (Vogler, Crivello, & Woodhead, 2008). The transition to school does not only involve children, but also family, schools and communities. The transition from kindergarten to primary school is a form of vertical transition, where children change their status from a non-formal education level to a higher level of formal education. Throughout this transition phase a child must adapt to changes in the environment, social identity, social networking, and teaching and learning methods. From the results of Sally Peters' research (2010), it was found that there are several factors that can support a child's success in passing the transition phase to school, namely:

1. School Transition Program

    The school transition program provides opportunities for children and families to get to know the school environment, as well as teachers who will teach children at school. If the children are familiar with the environment, friends and teachers at the new school, then they will not feel stressed and afraid when left by their parents in the classroom.

2. Continuity of Learning Program

    Transitions can also be challenging when elementary environment different from children's experiences in kindergarten. Communication between kindergartens and elementary schools need to be established, so that the sustainability of learning programs at both levels of education can be sustainable, for

children do not experience many changes, so that children more easily adjust.

3. Peers

    Peers are one of the supporters of the success of children in the transition period. Peers provide emotional support for children, because if there are friends, children will not feel alone and alienated. Thus, increasing the confidence and courage of children to face the new environment at school.

Policy and Procedures on Transitions

In a national study in Ireland on the school transition, only 10% of preschools had policies regarding the transition and its implementation, and the level of communication between preschool and primary school was reported to be low (O'Kane and Hayes, 2006). Having a clear, disseminated, useful procedure for parents, early childhood and school staff for they have the same focus and direction to support children in experiencing school transition (Dockett and Perry, 2002; O 'Kane and Hayes, 2006). Therefore, it is important to develop independence, concentration, communication, and language skills in children (O 'Kane and Hayes, 2006). Fabian and Dunlop (2005) believe that transition can develop children's understanding of the situation or curriculum, new beliefs, anger and competence, and learning progress. How these skills are supported can be articulated in public transportation policies

which can include key worker policies, recording systems, problem solving policies, game policies and relocation policies to support sustainability among settings (French, 2003).

CONCLUSION

Transition as an idea and movement that tries to focus on the opinions and information of children, parents, and teachers about the experiences and practices of the school transition and readiness to attend elementary school. The contribution of parents and teachers, is massive in supporting children through school transition to elementary level, as well as helping children's school readiness. Transition is not only influenced by cognitive factors, but also by social-emotional factors that come from the support of parents, peers, teachers, communities and environmental factors such as home, school, other social environments around the child from time to time. In the case of early childhood education, it needs to be comprehended that involvement, collaboration and communication between children, families, schools and the community are important factors in the success and support of the transition and readiness of children to attend school. In addition, government policies are needed in the success of the transition at the level of early childhood education, such as the curriculum at the Early Childhood and Primary School Education levels that support the process of transition and

readiness to attend school, especially those that provide guidance for school readiness and the practice of school transition, because until now there has been no special program from the Ministry of Education and Culture, especially those in Indonesia relating to the school transition and school readiness, for then gain a broader and deeper understanding of school transition**.**

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