

CALISTUNG LEARNING CONCEPTS IN EARLY CHILDREN BASED ON A CIRCULAR LETTER No.1839/C.C2/TU/2009

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Abstract. Based on circular letter No.1839/C.C2/TU/2009 which says that actually learning Calistung in early childhood is not justified. However, in reality the phenomenon that is currently happening in the school and community environment is regarding the ability to read, write, count or calistung in early childhood, in which some teachers or educators still teach calistung to children who are not according to their age, as well as various kinds of demands from other parties. If the child has graduated from *PAUD* and wants to enter *SD* or *MI*, he or she must be able to read, write and do arithmetic or can be known as Calistung, because this demand makes most parents anxious, they are afraid that their child will graduate from early childhood education. unable to do Calistung, which causes their children to not be accepted at the top (favorite) schools, so their parents demand that the early childhood teachers teach Calistung, because the demands of these various circumstances require teachers to beat all children to be able to do Calistung before they enter. to Elementary School (*SD*). Through this paper the researcher tries to analyze the intent of the Circular Letter and tries to offer the concept of calistung learning to early childhood, so that it does not conflict with existing circulars. The approach in this study is the library research approach, because this research was carried out using literature, either in the form of books, circulars, notes, or reports on the results of previous research. The research data is only on library collection materials, books and articles without the need for field research. Material sources include books, journals, various documents and the last is giving opinions in research on what has happened before by presenting new discoveries in connecting different thoughts, especially in this paper is about calistung learning in children aged earlier than the existing circular letter. Based on the results of the analysis, the researcher found that calistung learning must be adapted to the developmental stages of the child's age, the ability of the child and prioritize learning while playing. The implications of this research are that it is hoped that there will be no more coercion on children in learning calistung from both parents and teachers.

Keywords: Calistung Learning Concept, Early Childhood Education Programs, Circular Letter No.1839/C.C2/TU/200

INTRODUCTION

A correct understanding of the nature of a child and the foundation of early childhood education should be owned by everyone. Starting from the family environment, educators who deal directly with early childhood, the community, and also policy makers from the central government to the regions. With the hope that through correct understanding, all of these parties can provide the best service for early childhood.

Early childhood learning uses a play while learning or learning while playing approach. In playing, children will use their body muscles and stimulate their body's senses to explore the world around them. Because the world of children is a world of play, by playing children will discover and learn new things or new skills without realizing it without burdening the child (Conscience S Yuliyanti, 2016:87). For a child playing activities are far more effective than instructional learning activities. Playing is also a principle in teaching in kindergarten, where playing is the best way to develop students' abilities.

Early childhood is an individual figure who is undergoing a rapid and fundamental development process for the next life. At this time the process of growth and development in various aspects is experiencing a period of rapid development in the span of human life. During this Golden Age, parents and teachers competed to provide teaching through academic activities. This inaccurate perception makes the concept of children's play neglected. If the child's play needs have not been met, it will disrupt the next child's development to be less than optimal. Almost all the time in learning is done through academic activities. Where teachers teach by explaining and children learn by listening and paying attention. The statement above confirms the existence of the phenomenon of efforts to improve reading, writing, and arithmetic skills in early childhood today.

Based on the reality on the ground there is a phenomenon where early childhood education institutions focus more on mastering calistung skills (reading, writing, and counting) and the approach changes to being oriented towards emphasizing calistung knowledge. This happens due to the demands of each student's parents who expect their children to be able to read, write, and count after graduating from the previous Early Childhood or Kindergarten. Seeing the fact that elementary schools accept new students by means of age selection and tests. Therefore, it is only natural that parents will demand early childhood teachers to teach calistung to their children. So far, early childhood education is interpreted as a place to prepare children to enter the school period which begins at the elementary school (*SD*) level. The activities carried out in *PAUD* are just playing using educational game tools. Reading, writing, and arithmetic lessons are not permitted at the *PAUD* level, except for the introduction of letters and numbers, and that is also done after the children enter Kindergarten B.

Based on Law No. 20 of 2003 concerning the national education system relating to early childhood education it is written in article 28 paragraph 1 which reads "Early childhood education is organized for children from birth to six years and is not a prerequisite for attending basic education. Furthermore, in Chapter I article 1 paragraph 14 it is emphasized that early childhood education is a coaching effort aimed at children from birth up to the age of six which is carried out through the provision of educational stimuli to help the physical and spiritual growth and development of children to have readiness to enter further education. further (Ministry of National Education, 2004:4). From the explanation above, it is clear that early childhood education is the provision of efforts to stimulate, guide, nurture, and provide learning activities that will produce children's abilities and skills.

In accordance with the uniqueness of early childhood and the growth of early childhood, the implementation of education for early childhood is adjusted to the stage of development. *PAUD* efforts are not only from the educational side, but include efforts to provide nutrition and child health so that the implementation of *PAUD* is carried out in an integrated and comprehensive manner (Depdiknas, 2002: 5). Basically the efforts made by educators and parents in the process of care, education and parenting by creating an aura and environment where children can explore experiences that provide opportunities for children to know and understand learning experiences obtained from the environment, through observing, imitating and experimenting which takes place repeatedly and involves all the potential and intelligence of the child.

The assumption that develops in the community is that *PAUD* institutions apply the calistung learning model because of the background to the selection provisions for entering elementary schools (*SD*) with the calistung test (Istiyani, 2013: 14). Dariistiyani's research revealed that prospective elementary school students who were accepted were prioritized who already had calistung skills. Researchers are very interested in reviewing calistung policies in early childhood, where the learning orientation in *PAUD* places more emphasis on the concept of play.

RESEARCH METHOD

Library research (library research) is research that is carried out using literature (library) in the form of books, notes and research results reports from previous studies. According to M. Nazir, literature study is a data collection technique by conducting a review study of books, literature, notes, and reports that have to do with the problem being solved. Literature study is an important step where after a researcher determines a research topic, the next step is to conduct studies related to theory and research topics. In the search for theory, researchers will collect as much information as possible from related literature. Library sources can be obtained from books, journals,

magazines, research results (theses and dissertations), and other appropriate sources (internet, newspapers, etc.) (Mahmud, 2011: 31).

RESULT AND ANALYSIS

First, learning to Read, Write and Count Calistung is an abbreviation of the words read, write and count. Calistung is the basis for humans to be able to recognize numbers and letters. Many experts state that the importance of calistung is to facilitate communication in language, writing and numbers. Usually calistung learning is given to formal educational institutions, namely schools. Reading is a form of cognitive activity through stimulation in the form of letters and other punctuation signs that are received by the visual receptor senses (eyes) and then proceed to the brain (Surya M, 2015:21). The ability to read as a cognitive gateway that plays an important role in all human life, especially making contact and communicating with the mind and imagination, and as a basis for education for writing and arithmetic. Children must master the prerequisite reading, namely learning to distinguish letters of the alphabet. Reading is an activity of absorbing, analyzing, and interpreting which is done by the reader to get the message conveyed by the writer in written media (quoted from Wikipedia). Writing is a skill that can be learned after other aspects of ability are fulfilled. One of them is the aspect of fine motor coordination and visual perception abilities. This fine motor skill is the use of body parts or small muscles such as the hands. Basic writing activities can be started when the child shows behavior such as scribbling on a book or wall. These conditions indicate the functioning of brain cells that need to be stimulated so that they develop optimally (Depdikdas, 2017:6). Writing tools do not have to be paper, but you can also use educational game tools that can stimulate flexibility and finger coordination in preparation for initial writing such as cutting, tearing, pinching, squeezing. Flexibility training activities begin when children pretend to write on paper, sand or other media. If before learning to write the children have gone beyond the pre-writing stages above, then the child will easily and enjoy writing activities. When viewed from the aspect of logical mathematics, the characteristics of an intelligent child are those who like to explore their curiosity to observe something in order to discover new things. The introduction of mathematical concepts such as counting from an early age can be started from the surrounding environment or daily habits. Counting is an attempt to do calculations such as adding, subtracting, or manipulating numbers. The introduction of the concept of counting can be applied with educational game models and creates a fun atmosphere when learning to count. So that children do not feel burdened in learning arithmetic.

Second, the Calistung Paradox with Early Childhood Development Differences in the understanding of learning are the beginning of problems in learning something, including calistung lessons. Over the years learning has become a term that represents an activity that is serious, drains the mind and concentrates. Therefore, games and songs are no longer said to be learning activities, even though the contents of these games and songs are science. According to Vygotsky, 1920 (cited in saniy M, 2014: 14) that concrete play and creativity can provide natural momentum for children to learn something according to their stage of development and the special needs of children. Early childhood is often also called the Golden Ages, which is the period when children begin to be sensitive and sensitive to receiving various stimuli, because children have brains that are capable of developing up to 80% of a child's abilities. According to Piaget, the stages of cognitive/intellectual development of children are divided into the following 4 phases (Nurani S, 2016:120-121): a. Sensory Motor Phase (age range 0-2 years) In this phase the child interacts with the world around him through the five senses. Can think complexly, such as how to get an object you want and do what you want through it. This ability is the beginning of children's thinking symbolically. Children's intelligence appears in the form of motor activity as a reaction to sensory stimuli. The concept of a child's action is imitation. b. Pre-Operational Phase (age range 2-7 years) In this phase is the beginning of the child to build his ability to compose thoughts. Therefore, the child's way of thinking is not well structured and unstable. But in this phase the child's language skills begin to develop. c. Concrete Operational Phase (age range 7-11 years) In this phase the child already has the ability to think logically provided that the object of thinking is in a concrete form. Children can classify objects, sort objects according to their order, understand other people's perspectives and think deductively. For example, the child already knows that there is the same amount of water in a slender glass and a wide glass. d. Formal Operational Phase (12 years) In this phase children can think abstractly such as the ability to express ideas, predict events that will

occur, carry out scientific thinking processes, namely making conjectures and determining how to prove the truth of these conjectures. For example, on an overcast day, the child will suspect that after this there will be rain. In the pre-operational phase, children who are not even 7 years old are not suitable for calistung learning which requires a structured way of thinking. Learning calistung that is too forced on children can interfere with children's mental intelligence. Both in terms of thoughts, attitudes, emotions, which are reflected in their attitudes and actions. This obstacle to the growth of children's mental intelligence is called mental hectic, that is, when children can become rebellious (Ema P, 2015: 282). This hectic mentality arises from parents' expectations that are too high for their children to be able to master calistung from an early age which is not in accordance with the child's developmental stage. This disorder can cause children to show academic ability below standard potential as evidenced by the comparison of learning achievement of children who receive calistung is lower than children who do not receive calistung at early childhood (Saniy M, 2014:18). Some of these risks will have an impact in the long term when the child grows up.

Third, reviewing Calistung in Early Childhood Children's demand to be able to do calistung as a condition for entering elementary school has occurred in many elementary schools. This is what encourages *PAUD* institutions to teach calistung to early childhood. In fact, in accordance with government policies listed in Government Regulation (PP) No. 17 of 2010 concerning Management and Implementation of Education. Article 69 Paragraph 5 states that the acceptance of new students in class 1 SD or other forms that are equivalent is not based on the results of a calistung ability test or other forms of tests. It's not that *PAUD* organizers don't understand this, but sometimes parents demand that *PAUD* schools teach calistung to their children. According to Suyanto (replubica.co.id), the practice of selection tests in the form of calistung for admitting new students to elementary schools is a violation. He made a circular letter to Regents and Mayors throughout Indonesia which said that the criteria for prospective SD/MI students was that they were at least six years old. Exceptions for children under six years are made on the basis of written recommendations from competent parties such as psychologists or school counselors. If you look at the stages of early childhood development, then calistung lessons should be given in concrete stages. Because to understand calistung, children need a structured way of thinking. In calistung lessons which are taught at the age of under 7 years, it is feared that children can lose their golden ages. In the sense that the children's playing time will disappear, so there is no enthusiasm to study again. There was even a case where a child was lazy to go to school because he was forced to be able to do calistung, which he did not like. Psychologically, children will experience pressure because they are required to master material that is not in accordance with their stage of development. If this process continues. So it will interfere with the learning process in the future. According to neuroscientists at an early age (Golden Age) is a period of formation of brain cell networks and occurs very quickly (Sugiyono K, 2016:256). In this regard, intensive stimulation from the educational environment is needed so that children can develop optimally. The Government's policy regarding calistung should be used as the main basis for all schools, both from the *PAUD* institution and the elementary school level. Also, the mindset of parents towards *PAUD* children who must be able to read, write, and count after graduating from kindergarten must be changed. Because basically early childhood is the age of play. Before going to school, playing is a natural way for children to discover new things around them and get to know other people, including themselves. So all calistung activities can be packaged in the form of a game combined with other methods, so that children don't feel bored in learning calistung. 4. The Calistung Middle Way We as educators and parents should not blame each other for Calistung's policies that are contrary to the reality on the ground. But it is precisely our task as educators to find solutions on how to teach reading, writing, and arithmetic to early childhood, provided that it does not burden the child's mind at all. The topic of learning calistung is not what hinders children from learning it, but how to learn calistung that is adapted to the child's learning style so that it will be fun and even inspire children to continue learning it. Steps that can be taken can be started by changing the previous learning method with a method that is simpler but seems interesting and is always remembered by children. For example, you can put up pictures or posters on the classroom walls with various shapes of letters and numbers. Serve with attractive shapes and striking colors so that it will attract the child's attention to know the picture. Indirectly, every day the child will see, remember and start reading it. This can be done alternately once every two weeks or once a week with different letters and numbers. Through activities that are simple and repeated continuously, the longer the child will experience rapid progress, and without realizing it the child

will be able to read, write and count without burdening their minds. The next step can be done with the concept of creative play. Research from M. Jakfar et al states that games with the concept of creative play can stimulate children to recognize numbers more quickly, make children's interest higher in mastering the concept of starting counting and stimulate children's intelligence and memory. In addition, children are able to develop their cognitive abilities, because children can have good counting concepts and children will develop all their potential according to their optimal abilities, children will also learn a lot about number sequences and understand the concept of numbers well (Jakfar dkk, 2014:18). One way to apply logical mathematical concepts can be done by exploring children's curiosity, such as exploring the corners of the room, observing objects that are unique to them, such as tinkering with blocks and doing trials. In general, it can be concluded that learning to use block media can increase creativity and early childhood numeracy skills that are effective. Beginning numeracy skills can also be done by playing up the stairs while counting or singing. Educators also need to change the way they approach calistung learning with a thematic approach. Reading, writing, arithmetic activities are implemented with different themes, for example the calistung activity takes the theme "Doctor". So the activity is to introduce medicines and tools used by doctors. Example: children are taught to read Si-rup, and to count the amount of drug introduced to the children. This calistung activity can be socialized through things that don't burden children, but can be done by introducing concrete objects that they usually see every day. Learning to read, write, count and even science nowadays doesn't need to be considered taboo for early childhood. The most important issue is reconstructing a way to learn calistung so that children perceive their learning activities as nothing but play activities and indeed a game. Developing the ability of *PAUD* teachers to teach calistung will be better than blaming calistung lessons. It is not the subject matter that needs to be questioned, but how do we give it or convey it to early childhood.

CONCLUSION

Parents' demands that require their children to be able to master calistung from an early age, make early childhood institutions to implement calistung learning which according to government policy is prohibited. Learning calistung in a hurry and forcing children will make children become rebellious, bored, and unprepared for entering elementary school. *PAUD* institutions that apply calistung learning should consider the principles of early childhood learning, namely through the world of play. So learning Calistung in *PAUD* is not given in a hurry and coercion, but only introduces Calistung through the introduction of letters, numbers with simple concepts, gradually through play, and fun learning for children.

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