Contextual Weaning Process for 3–4-Year-Old Playgroup Students

Mochammad Ramli Akbar1,2, & Intan Malina Rachmadani2
1,2Program Studi PGPAUD, Universitas PGRI Kanjuruhan Malang, Indonesia
DOI: 10.26858/tematik.v9i2.48090

Abstract:
This study describes the weaning process for students who are still attached to their parents or caregivers at the start of learning in play groups using contextual learning and describes the factors that influence it. Qualitative descriptive research with the subjects of school principals, teachers, students, and parents in Kemuning Kepanjen playgroup, through the process of observation, interviews, and documentation analysis. The results of the research show that the strategy for weaning students using contextual learning media and infrastructure in a fairly complete learning environment. The chronology of the weaning process is: (1) preparation, (2) weaning process and (3) follow-up. This strategy is supported by quite complete outdoor media, good communication and socialization patterns, participation and support of parents in the environment around the school. The factors that influence the weaning process are (1) early childhood socialization, (2) the initial process of introducing learning to the environment, (3) effective communication patterns between teachers and parents, (4) teacher’s strategies during early learning, and (5) media infrastructure that is complete, safe, and easily accessible. There were no significant obstacles in the weaning process, apart from variations in the communication between teachers and parents, and the conditions that were there were interrelated.

Keywords: Weaning; Contextual; Facility; Communication

INTRODUCTION

Early Childhood Education (ECE) is a coaching effort carried out for children from birth to six years of age through providing useful stimuli to provide stimulus to physical and spiritual growth and development so that children have readiness to enter the next level of education. ECE is organized to achieve a goal that can form Indonesian children who have quality through providing stimulus to children so that children grow and develop according to their level of development so that they can have optimal readiness when entering the level of basic education and life in the future (Kemendikbud, 2014). Early childhood is an appropriate time to stimulate child development, as 80% of it occurs during this period. Child development is also influenced by the care environment of the child and mother or family (Amra et al., 2023).

Early childhood is a child who is at the age of 0-6 years. Whereas in the ECE science family in several countries it is explained that early childhood is organized from the age of 0–8 years. The scope of ECE consists of Infant (0-1 years), toddler (2–3 years), preschool (3-6 years), Early Primary School (6-8 years) (Kemendikbudristek, 2022). The development of
children aged 3-4 years is still influenced by the care environment in the family. Family is a small group that has a blood relationship. The family is the first basic educational institution in a child's life as a place to learn and introduce moral education, religion, cultural values and skills (Rusmayadi, 2018).

The success of children is supported by the role of parents in caring for children. According to Ki Hajar Dewantoro, the family is the first place to get education that is individual or social in nature to form a whole human person (Titrarahardja & Sulo, 2018). Parenting is a process carried out from the time the child is in the womb until the child is ready to become a parent, parenting includes nurturing, raising and educating children to become positive and disciplined individuals (Haeriah, 2018). Parents provide positive potentials to raise intellectual intelligence, instill moralistic ideals and emotional stabilization. Disciplinary attitude is considered as a process carried out to instill certain behavior patterns, habits, shape human behavior to have mental and moral qualities, this is important and requires time and is carried out continuously through the role of people who are around them such as family and school.

The transition of learning between family and school requires special attention for teachers in general, that is, on the specific strategies, media and skills that teachers and parents possess (Wildenger, et. al, 2008: 69). The process of the relationship between children and parents or caregivers is a process of bonding parents to build attachment to children that affects the good and bad of the child's personality in order to develop well in social, ethical, and morals (Latifah, 2020). Child and parent attachment with insecure bonding will make it difficult for children to learn independently when early childhood begins to enter the education or school level. Parenting is often ignored by parents, even though parenting is important in the sustainability of attachment between children and parents that an emotional relationship is formed by an individual (Putri et al., 2022). On the other hand, the school also expects that parents or caregivers must also give trust to the school to provide appropriate learning.

The first step in disciplining children can be conducted from an early age as a first step towards children's understanding of following simple rules, responding to parents' orders, having an attitude of waiting patiently, being able to control emotions, and children's ability to adapt to new environments. Some schools have begun to implement strategies for the adaptation process, but none have been able to document and describe well the strategies that are considered effective and efficient to implement. Kemuning Kepanjen Playgroup is an early childhood center located within the closed military area of Yonzipur 5/Brawijaya. The contextual learning process is very well implemented in Kemuning playgroup with a safe and spacious area. Similarly, the pattern of communication, interaction, and discipline by teachers and parents is very easy to apply here. The process of weaning students from their caregivers or parents at the beginning of school is no exception (Kellerman, n.d.).

Early weaning is a process of gradually stopping the mother's love for her child (Amra et al., 2023). Providing stimulus through weaning at the right time for children can have an impact on child development through proper support and care (Amra et al., 2023). The weaning process is very sensitive to the development of the child if weaning is done prematurely, it can cause the child's emotional disturbance. The weaning process can be carried out at the age of over two years through various activities or stimuli so that the child can be released slowly by the period of love. The weaning process can also be done through school assistance by inviting children to enter the playgroup, so that children get new activities and can train children's independence (Qurniyawati & Ratnawati, 2020). This Wea-
ning process can help children to be more independent and learn to adapt to a new environment without any help from parents.

The teacher also functions a lot as a facilitator, preparing media and teaching materials and contacting related parties if the child has a desire to explore the Yonzipur/5 environment. Parents also support the attachment separation process carried out by the school even though each child's attachment background is different. The separation makes students feel comfortable in their school environment. Least parents have concerns when leaving their children to learn for the first time and become bar students at Kemuning playgroup. The process of accelerating the adaptation of early childhood in schools that refers to the contextual weaning process that has been implemented at Kemuning playgroup, from initial observations, has several advantages, namely: the teacher's strategy in implementing the weaning process, the completeness of the media and infrastructure facilities used for the weaning process, child adaptation, ease of building socialization, providing meaningful and child-centered learning experiences for children.

Learning activities are always communicated with children in advance every day because the infrastructure at the Kemuning Playgroup located in the Yonzipur 5/Brawijaya area is standardized. With a land area of 166 m², this school has met the infrastructure facilities including classrooms, library rooms, laboratory rooms, practice rooms, leadership rooms, teachers' rooms, worship rooms, Student Health Unit, toilet, warehouse, circulation rooms, playgrounds, staff rooms, counseling rooms. Kemuning Playgroup is located in a strategic area in the neighborhood of Yonzipur 5/ Brawijaya, directly guarded by Army soldiers. Learning media for early childhood are varied because of the support of Yonzipur 5 as a place to explore children's curiosity. Teachers' activities and understanding of the weaning process are carried out mostly outside the classroom which has been considered child-friendly (Read, 2007).

Contextualized learning learn directly from all the media and infrastructure outside the classroom is more feasible for teachers at Kemuning playgroup when implementing the weaning process, with the aim that teachers find it more enjoyable than directly in the classroom (Johnshon (2017:14). Contextual learning is a meaningful learning that focuses on children's abilities so that children can gain knowledge from learning process. In the contextual learning, the teacher acts as a facilitator for children to obtain the desired meaning. Contextual teaching and learning (CTL) according to the US department of Education the National School to Work Office is one of the learning concepts that provides teachers with the convenience of compiling learning content in accordance with field conditions and child motivation.

The purpose of this learning model is to provide children with motivation to easily understand what the teacher conveys. There are six main elements in contextual learning, namely a). Meaningful learning, this learning children are able to have an understanding and adapted to real events; b) Application of Knowledge, Application of Knowledge, namely the ability of children to be able to understand what is learned; c) Higher level thinking, children are trained to train critical and creative thinking skills in collecting data, understanding information and having problem solving skills; d) Curriculum developed based on standards, the material taught is related to a range and variety of local, state, national, association and industry standards; e) Culturally based learning, as educators the importance of understanding cultural values, beliefs and habits of students, mutual understanding between fellow educators and the school environment, understanding related to culture can help educators in teaching; f) Authentic Assessment, in contextual learning educators can use various types of valid assessment strategies to represent children's learning outcomes. Assessments used can be in the form of project assessments, portfolios, rubrics, checklists...
and other observation guides (Anggraini, 2017).

These advantages are still not recognized and documented in detail by the personnel at Kemuning Playgroup. The explanation above leads to the focus of the research, which is to describe the weaning process of 3-4 year old playgroup students contextually at Kemuning Kepanjen Playgroup. There is no protracted weaning process for new students at Kemuning Playgroup. Teachers made almost no significant efforts to get children to adapt well when they first entered the Kemuning Playgroup class, as is commonly done in ECE generally, such as allowing parents or caregivers to join the class, crying hysterically when already in the class because their parents left, or other behaviors that are considered not able to adapt well when early childhood children become new students in ECE.

METHODS

The research employed a descriptive qualitative method, which aims to explain or describe the context in a natural way and the subject diagnostically, deeply, interpretatively, in the sense of describing facts. Descriptive research is adopt to describe an object according to the conditions obtained in the field or often referred to as qualitative research. Field facts collected through interviews, observations, and documentation analysis for a total of 50 days in a participant manner to three teachers and the principal directly describe various field events carried out by several subjects by not reducing or adding events, natural, or processes or subjects understood in terms of the framework and description of the subject's own implementation (Moleong, 2010). Based on the data obtained, it then be analyzed using the Miles and Huberman method and for data validity, researchers use 3 (three) data validity checking techniques, namely: triangulation, through FGD discussions with peers, principals and teachers.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results and findings of the first study on the weaning process were carried out chronologically, namely: (1) preparation, (2) weaning process and (3) follow-up. The first step of the preparation process for weaning children with parents carried out at Kemuning Playgroup is the way that teachers provide comfort and approach to early childhood first. The initial stage prepared by the teacher in the weaning process so that early childhood children want to learn at school independently or in groups and are no longer tied to their parents or caregivers is (1) by preparing the child's socialization process with a more intense environment (Rankin, 2004), (2) preparing learning media that are appropriate and more familiar to early childhood, (3) preparing ways and patterns of communication that are more intensive with parents. Preparations covering these three aspects can be carried out simultaneously or alternately depending on the teacher's ability and conditions at school. Researchers observed that the socialization process carried out by teachers did not require much effort because teachers and parents of new students already knew each other well. Teachers and parents who have good communication with the right pattern in the same environment in one military complex have their own advantages when teachers socialize the vision and mission of the institution to parents. There is no significant rejection or questioning because the parents have a good understanding of the educational institution in the same environment.

The process stage plays an important role in the weaning process for young children to adapt to school and their new environment. The weaning process begins with the teacher identifying, observing and assessing the child's condition when they first come to school. Teachers often do not immediately invite children to go directly to the classroom, and allow children to play, interact, and get to know the environment around the school that has been
prepared (Li, 2006). Teachers supervise and conduct behavioral assessments of young children who are interacting contextually with the school environment from the prepared media and infrastructure. This stage shows the very important function of learning in the environment with contextually prepared media and infrastructure for early childhood. The researcher observed that there were no specific actions and processes carried out by teachers for the weaning process because students were very active when learning in the environment. Teachers only supervise, look after, and provide comfort to students.

The process of adaptation to the contextual environment is also assessed by the teacher from the behavioral patterns, attitudes and emotions of early childhood whether early childhood can be encouraged to learn independently or in groups in the classroom, or are still attached, remember, or anxious about the absence of parents or caregivers nearby (Stacks, 2005). There are many factors that support or even hinder this weaning process, one of which is if the parents also feel attached or are unable to allow children to learn on their own, then the weaning process will run slowly and not immediately adapt to school. These inhibiting factors will be handled by teachers by means of more effective communication with parents to be more able and encourage children to reduce too close attachment to parents but also have good attachment to the school environment. The researcher observed that the factor of intense communication between teachers and parents to understand each other's learning in educational institutions and takes place even before new students set foot in educational institutions is an important factor for the weaning process of students. There were no questions, refusals, objections or just concerns from parents about the teacher's process of weaning each child.

The follow-up stage of the weaning process carried out by the teacher is how the teacher can assess the child's ability to begin to be able to learn independently or in groups with their peers in the environment and begin to be able to temporarily separate from parents or caregivers during the learning process at school. The assessment process begins to be well observed when the child interacts and learns in the environment contextually (Malone, 2006). If it is felt that the child has begun to adapt well with peers, learning activities will continue in the classroom environment. However, if learning outside contextually for adaptation is still considered by the teacher to be unable to release children from parents, the teacher will evaluate the weaning process that has not been carried out optimally. In this process, teachers use more experience in assessing and identifying children who have begun to adapt or who have not been able to adapt and are still attached to parents or caregivers. Follow-up of the weaning process does not only occur when the child is in the environment and playing, but is also discussed together with other teachers and parents of the child if it is felt that it requires consideration. Learning in institutions that are flexible between in-class and out-of-class supported by infrastructure and media facilities that are almost not much different provide greater comfort to children to be able to adapt well to school institutions. These findings provide new insights for ECE teachers in general for the actions of teachers to be able to wean or adapt new students in educational institutions in the classroom and school can more or less be reduced by means of more intensive communication before new students enter and learn and the utilization of media, infrastructure, and environments that children already know well.
The institution provides a rule that children should not be waited on at school and provides independence in learning through play in the environment around the school which is conveyed to parents and students themselves. Teachers recognize that the transition to kindergarten is a significant event for young children and their families. The methods teachers employ to orient children and families to formal schooling can have a long-term impact on academic achievement (Nelson, 2004). The socialization and adaptation activities of students around the school environment and residential complexes that are safe and child-friendly are realized by teachers to be an important role and facilitate adaptation in shaping children's independence and courage before entering the Playgroup school level. In the weaning process at Kemuning Playgroup, there are no significant obstacles due to the support of parents and the surrounding environment. Direct or contextual patterns are used in the weaning process when children are new to the institution. Children are always invited to take a walk to explore the environment of the Yon Zipur area so that children feel safe, comfortable and happy because of the observations made by teachers, many children are not allowed to leave the house by their parents for various reasons. In addition, the infrastructure & media facilities used at Kemuning Playgroup are the surrounding environment with complete and safe facilities and infrastructure, children learn directly (contextually) in the pond, parking lot of war vehicles, field, and park or garden according to the interests of children so that children are considered independent in learning (Swick, 2007: 393). Kemuning Playgroup also always innovates in organizing play activities outside the Playgroup environment, using various media and environmental infrastructure so that children do not feel bored learning at school. Educators and education personnel also always collaborate with parents in preparing meaningful contextual learning for children. Children's play activities at Kemuning Playgroup are carried out in the classroom and outside the classroom. The weaning process of new students from their parents or caregivers at Kemuning Playgroup can be described as follows: 

**Figure 1.**
Chronology of the Weaning Process
The formation or support for the weaning process carried out by parents in the early childhood environment is that children are given stimulation to play in the surrounding environment rather than playing at home so that they can socialize. The ease of the weaning process by teachers to new students at Kemuning Playgroup is based on the similarity of a conducive environment, the freedom of the child’s socialization process, intensive communication with teachers how teachers have the same background and characteristics (military environment) to convince parents to care for children at school (Laverick, 2008). The teacher's focus on how to start the weaning process begins with how to divert the child's attention from parents or caregivers to the contextually enjoyable atmosphere and media around the school environment thereby children play more happily. Media and infrastructure that are safe and can be used for contextual learning at Kemuning Playgroup play an important role as a trigger for students to start learning at school and start to dare to be independent to learn together at school (Sandseter, 2009). The learning process is still directed according to the plan but with objects which has been adjusted to the media, infrastructure, and environment that students want. Stages in the implementation of the weaning process of early childhood in learning at school is carried out with 3 (three) main steps, namely preparation, process, and follow-up, with the following description:

Factors that influence the weaning process are as follows: (1) The process and capital of early childhood socialization, becomes an important foundation for an effective teacher weaning process, so that the learning adaptation process in a new environment inside the school with many friends becomes faster and more efficient (Lash, 2008). (2) The initial process of introducing learning in a familiar or similar environment is important when children are required to do activities outside the home or family environment. Adapting to a safe and familiar environment makes it easier for children to feel less unfamiliar with the new learning environment (Crawford & Coe, n.d.). (3) Communication patterns of teachers and parents with the same disciplinary characteristics and goals, mutual understanding, and mutual support facilitate the weaning process for children's learning to be more independent at school. Teachers' understanding and knowledge of the characteristics of ECE has an important role for teachers who are able to explain well the learning process at school to parents (Rule et al., n.d.). (4) The teacher's strategy during early learning to students with a
pattern of identification and understanding the characteristics of each child well can facilitate the weaning process. Experience and intensity of the frequency of early childhood interactions with teachers are important for teachers to be able to focus on student learning (Meyer and Mann, 2006: 93). (5) Media and infrastructure facilities that are complete, safe, easily accessible, and attractive to early childhood are important and greatly support the teacher's weaning process at school (Chai, Zhang, and Bisberg, 2006: 203). Media becomes a tool capable of diverting students' attention at school to focus more on learning, socializing, and being independent at school in ways and learning strategies developed by teachers in a targeted, effective, and efficient manner.

CONCLUSION

The weaning process at the beginning of children entering school is easier with the support of intensive socialization and communication between children and schools facilitated by teachers and parents. Communication between parents and teachers to understand each other's needs in learning adaptation and independence at school is a process that must be fulfilled before parents send their children to school for the first time (Swick, 2006). Basic infrastructure and media, especially outdoor, that is complete and able to attract children's attention is a major supporting factor when starting school and shifting children's attention away from attachment to parents or caregivers and towards learning at school. Assessment skills and sensitivity in communication and other weaning and learning strategies are crucial when having students with different conditions and environments (Baum & A, n.d.). Teachers are expected to be able to utilize facilities and media infrastructure effectively and efficiently from the beginning of students entering school, learning, until the transition to the next level of education. Future research is expected to be able to define the setting of the learning environment in ECE which can be a specific feature of the environment and infrastructure that supports the weaning process of new students in ECE.

REFERENCES


