

## Improving Reading Literacy Skills in Early Childhood Using Letter Card Media at Paud Prima Pertiwi

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### ABSTRACT

Improving reading literacy skill in early childhood is an important step in building a solid foundation for their academic and cognitive abilities so that recognition of letters and sounds becomes a fundamental aspect in the process of learning to read. However, many young children still experience difficulties in identifying letters, recognizing words and connecting sounds with the correct symbols. The use of hum cards allows children to integrate directly with the visual form of letters and equate with relevant images, thereby speeding up their understanding process. In addition, this method can optimize the development of children's fine motor skills, which also affect their reading ability.

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## 1. Introduction

In the teaching and learning process, teachers play an important role in improving children's reading and language skills, PAUD (Early Childhood Education) serves as a foundation for basic skills in preparing children and other developmental tasks. As a teacher must be able to provide stimulation that can develop all aspects of growth possessed by children, including aspects of language development in children. An effective teaching and learning process can improve children's reading and language skills through reading literacy activities.

Nutbrown & Clough (Wartomo, 2017) suggests that the introduction of literacy for early childhood (AUD) began to be developed. For example in England since the 1980s because teachers and researchers see that the importance of introducing or teaching literacy reading and writing for early childhood. Agree with this according to Subiyanto (Wartomo, 2017) the introduction of children's literacy culture basically children will absorb a special system of rules related to sound and meaning that children get excellent reading and writing skills.

Literacy is a person's ability to process and understand information during the reading and writing process. In its development, the definition of literacy always evolves according to the challenges of the times. In the past, the definition of literacy was the ability to read and write. Nowadays, the term literacy has begun to be used in a broader sense. Etymologically, the term literacy itself comes from the Latin "literatus" which means a person who learns. According to Elizabeth Sulzby (1986) "literacy is the language ability possessed by a person in communicating, reading, speaking, listening and writing" in different ways according to the purpose. If defined briefly, the definition of literacy is the ability to write and read.

Language learning, especially reading, is very important. According to Burns in Rahim, reading ability is vital because every aspect of life involves reading activities (Rahim, 2008: 1). Early childhood education is not required to require children to be able to read fluently, at least at that age they are introduced to beginning reading, at least children recognize the sequence of letters as

well as understand the shapes of letters so that it makes it easier for children to learn to read fluently.

Media is a means that functions as an intermediary in conveying a message and has a very important role in the world of education. Arsyad (2011) says that media is a means or device that functions as an intermediary or channel in a communication process between the communicator and the communicant. Meanwhile, Khadijah (2016) reveals that learning media is everything that can be used as a tool to convey messages from the sender to the recipient in order to stimulate attention and focus on learning.

The definition of letter cards is widely stated by experts based on their respective emphases, Arsyad (2005: 1999), that letter cards are alphabet cards containing pictures, letters, symbol signs, which increase or demand children who are related to these symbols. Cards are thick paper pots containing text, pictures, numbers and other visual symbols in a size that is not too large (Kustiawan: 2016).

## **2. Method**

This research uses the action research method (Action Research). The purpose of this action research is to improve reading literacy skills in children. Improving reading literacy skills using picture media is designed by researchers consisting of several stages, so as to get the best steps in learning activities. This study analyzes how to improve reading literacy skills through the use of letter card media at PAUD PRIMA PERTIWI South Barumun Kecamatan Padang Lawas Regency, North Sumatra. the subjects in this study were group A students in the 2024/2025 school year with a total of 26 people consisting of 14 women and 12 men. this observation was carried out in October 2024. the data collection instruments used in this action research are observation and research documentation.

## **3. Results and Discussion**

Pre-action that has been done, reading literacy skills in children are still lacking. Then after taking action, namely using letter card media, the ability to read literacy in children has increased. Based on the discussion of each child in each aspect of the research findings that the improvement in reading literacy skills was achieved by ZA, HL, and AA. the ability they gained during the treatment took place they looked active and could understand the material provided. The three of them from the pre-treatment have been seen as independent children and more prominent academically. The lowest scores were obtained by MA and AS. They both in participating in activities lack concentration and lack of attention to information so that in carrying out this activity they are often guided.

This study aims to improve reading literacy skills in early childhood through the use of letter card media at PAUD Prima Pertiwi. Based on the results of the study, it was found that letter card media has a significant influence on the development of reading literacy in early childhood. The data shows a significant increase in children's ability to recognize letters, pronounce letter sounds, and arrange letters into simple words after using letter card media. Interactive and fun learning activities with letter cards succeeded in attracting children's interest and motivating them to learn to read.

Letter card media is in accordance with the characteristics of early childhood learning which requires a visual, kinesthetic and play approach. Children can learn through direct manipulation of letter cards, which helps strengthen the connection between letter symbols and the sounds they represent. This is in line with constructivist learning theory which emphasizes the importance of direct experience in the learning process. The successful use of letter card media is influenced by several factors, including: Active involvement of the teacher in guiding children to use letter cards. ttractive card design, with bright colors and supporting illustrations. Game-based

learning methods, which make children feel comfortable and enthusiastic during the learning process.

Some of the obstacles encountered in this study include the different levels of children's reading ability, which requires a more individualized approach. In addition, there were challenges in maintaining children's focus during the activities. The solution applied was to vary the learning method with group and individual games to maintain children's interest. The results of this study have important implications in the development of literacy learning methods in early childhood. Letter card media can be an effective alternative for educators to improve reading literacy skills, especially in PAUD. The implementation of this media also supports the government's efforts to improve the quality of basic education as an important foundation for the success of education at the next level.

The results of this study support the findings of previous research which states that visual and kinesthetic-based learning media, such as letter cards, are effective in improving literacy skills in early childhood. For example, [Name of Previous Researcher, Year] showed that interactive media such as alphabet cards help children understand the relationship between symbols and sounds faster than conventional methods. This study reinforces that view with empirical evidence from its application at PAUD Prima Pertiwi. This research contributes to educational theory, particularly in the experiential learning approach. In addition, the findings provide practical contributions in the form of guidelines for the implementation of letter card media in daily learning in PAUD. Teachers can utilize letter cards to develop other creative activities, such as word search games, word strings, and storytelling with the help of pictures on the cards.

Overall, the use of letter card media proved effective in improving reading literacy skills in early childhood at PAUD Prima Pertiwi. This success reflects not only the effectiveness of visual media-based learning methods, but also the importance of learning approaches that are fun, interactive and in accordance with the characteristics of early childhood development. With further development, this media has the potential to become a more widely used learning tool at the basic education level.

## **Conclusion**

Letter card media is proven effective in improving early childhood reading literacy skills. Children showed significant improvement in recognizing letters, pronouncing letter sounds, and arranging letters into simple words after participating in learning using this media. The use of attractive, interactive and game-based letter cards is in line with the characteristics of early childhood who learn through visual and kinesthetic activities. The successful implementation of letter card media is inseparable from the active role of the teacher in guiding children, as well as the use of fun and varied learning methods. This helps to create a conducive learning environment and supports children's literacy development. This research makes a significant contribution to the development of literacy learning methods in PAUD. Letter card media can be an effective alternative to improve the quality of literacy education in early childhood, which serves as the basis for future educational development. The results of the research that have been described are an increase in reading skills at PAUD PRIMA PERTIWI, South Barumun District through the use of letter card media applied in learning to provide another color in the learning process, especially in improving children's reading literacy skills, this has proven effective and has a positive impact on the development of academic abilities at PAUD Prima Pertiwi where there is a significant increase.

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