

## Growing PAUD Teacher Creativity Through Creative Play Activities

Lilis Suryani<sup>1</sup>, Nita Adiyanti<sup>2</sup>, Mila Wahyuni<sup>3</sup>, Ilah Carilah<sup>4</sup>, Ilis Kandarisah<sup>5</sup>

Postgraduate PAUD, Panca Sakti University, Bekasi, Indonesia

Corresponding author: adiyanti1226@gmail.com

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### ABSTRACT

Early childhood children are very interested in creative and unique learning media. Teacher creativity in this matter is really needed. It is hoped that the importance of creative play in children can be fulfilled through school. However, in reality teachers are still fixated on the curriculum prepared by the government but there is a lack of development in learning applications. Apart from that, the facilities provided by schools to create creative learning media are still limited. The aim of holding this training is to develop the potential and creativity of teachers so that learning at school becomes interesting. This training was carried out at the Creative Center Building, Purwakarta Regency on 11 May 2024 and in Tegalwaru District, Purwakarta Regency on 18 May 2024. The results obtained by educators can be applied through creative play in learning activities. Based on the results obtained, it is known that the average pre-test result is 70. Meanwhile, the average post-test result is 87. Thus, it can be concluded that there has been an increase in the competency capacity of training participants before and after participating in the training by 17%. These results are input for various stakeholders, especially intuitions that oversee the institutions that are training participants in this program.

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## INTRODUCTION

The world of children is the world of play, in children's lives most of their activities are spent on play activities, so the practical value of play is so important. Children will understand things more easily by playing. Playing can be used as a medium to improve children's skills and intelligence. Play can be termed as an activity carried out using or without using tools that produce understanding, provide information, provide pleasure and can develop children's imagination. Playing is very important in the process of a child's growth and development to become a complete human being. Through play activities, children can achieve physical, motoric, intellectual, emotional and social development.

Creative play, in particular, plays an important role in encouraging children to think outside the box, develop problem-solving abilities, and build self-confidence and independence. One of the factors that can improve thinking power and have creative thinking is a teacher through the environment. Learning that is conducive to children.

Providing opportunities for creative play is essential for the holistic development of young children. By understanding and analyzing the current creative play situation, educators and parents can create a better environment to support children's growth and development. An investment in creative play is an investment in a brighter future for our children.

The learning environment is created in such a way that it is safe, comfortable and in accordance with the characteristics of early childhood. Educators are required to be able to create an interesting learning atmosphere and make students the subject of activities. Adequate skills and knowledge are required which must be mastered by early childhood educators.

Education continues to develop following the times, an educator when designing games is required to be creative according to the times. So it is very important to increase the capacity of educators in terms of creating games and creative media to develop teacher creativity.

Creative play refreshes the brain and makes a difference, children develop basic thinking and problem solving skills. They learn how to organize, execute thoughts, and adapt to unused circumstances. Imaginative play strengthens the brain and makes a difference. Children develop basic thinking and problem solving skills. learn to make plans, actualize thoughts, and adapt to modern circumstances. Through imaginative play, children learn to share, participate and convey other people's points of view. Additionally, they can express their feelings and learn to control the sentiment of their claims. Through creative play, children learn to share, coordinate, and convey other people's points of view. They can also express their feelings and learn to control their own feelings. Exercises such as drawing, cutting, and building with boxes offer children help to develop fine motor skills and hand-eye coordination. Imaginative play provides children with a way to organize themselves and utilize their creative abilities, which is essential for the improvement of individual personality.

Providing opportunities for creative play is key to children's all-round progress. By understanding and analyzing the current state of creative play, teachers and guardians can create a much better environment; higher; stronger; better">which is much better for supporting children's development and progress. Efforts in creative play are a speculation about a brighter future for our children.

### Creative Play

Creative play can be characterized as play exercises that energize children to utilize their creative energy, make something modern, and understand problems in unusual ways. In line with Sawyer (2017), imaginative play is a process where children can investigate unused thoughts and concepts without strict limitations, allowing them to develop imaginative thinking abilities. (Sawyer, 2021)

According to Herbert Spencer (Catron & Allen, 1999) children play because they have excess energy. This energy encourages them to carry out activities so that they are free from feelings of pressure. This means, without playing, children will experience serious problems because they don't have enough energy channeled (Priyanto, 2014) Based on Constructivist theory (Jean Piaget): Piaget stated that children learn through active interaction with their environment. Creative play allows children to build new knowledge based on their experiences and imagination. (Ermis Suryana1, Marni Prasyur Aprina2, 2022).

Thus creative play is activity which chosen children because it is fun, through active interaction with their environment it allows children to explore ideas and can develop skill growth through children's creativity based on their experiences and imagination.

Creative play can provide great benefits for children's growth and development according to Theory (Moritz Lazarus) states that children play because they need to be refreshed or restore energy that is used up for routine daily activities. This implies that if children do not play they will suffer from lethargy due to a lack of refreshment. (Nofianti, 2021). Theory Sociocultural (Lev Vygotsky): Vygotsky emphasized the importance of social interaction in cognitive development. Creative play often involves collaboration with other people, which helps children develop social skills and learn from each other (Mulyani, 2005).

According to Csikszentmihalyi, creative play can create a state of flow, where a person is fully involved and enjoys the activity. This condition encourages deep learning and happiness. (Aini & Fahriza, 2020)

Masitoh (2008: 25), emphasizes that playing is also an essential demand and need for kindergarten children. Through play, children will be able to satisfy the demands and development needs of the motoric, cognitive, creative, language, emotional, social dimensions, values and attitudes to life. So that the application of the play method can motivate children in learning. Through the play method, children will be in a pleasant atmosphere and learning will become more interesting (Arfa et al., 2022).

The benefits of creative play develop development children include:

- Cognitive Development: Creative play stimulates the brain and improves critical thinking skills and problem-solving abilities. Through games involving puzzles and challenges, children learn to think logically and strategically.
- Emotional Development: This activity helps children express their feelings and overcome negative emotions. Creative play provides an outlet for stress and anxiety, and increases self-confidence.
- Social Development: Through playing together, children learn to communicate, negotiate and cooperate. They also learn to respect other people's perspectives and develop empathy.
- Physical Development: Some forms of creative play, such as construction or art games, help develop fine motor skills and hand-eye coordination. Implications in Education.

## Teacher Creativity

Guilford states that creativity refers to the abilities that mark a creative person (Ngalimun, et al, in V. Diana, 2016). According to NACCCE (*National Advisory Committee on Creative and Cultural Education*), creativity is imaginative activity that produces new and valuable results (Craft, in V. Diana, 2016). Creativity is the modification of something that already exists into a new concept. In other words, there are two old concepts combined into a new concept (Semiawan, in V. Diana, 2016). In product terms, creativity is the ability to produce or create something new. Creative products must be observable, new, useful and represent the unique qualities of an individual in interaction with the surrounding environment. Meanwhile, the term press refers to the internal drive aspect, namely creative ability as initiative produced by individuals with their ability to break through ordinary thinking. Thus it can be said that creativity is a person's ability which in everyday life is associated with special achievements in creating new things or something that

already exists into new concepts, finding ways to solve problems that most people cannot find. , create new ideas that have never existed before, and see the various possibilities that will happen.

Characteristics of non-aptitude creativity are characteristics that are more related to attitudes or feelings, motivation or encouragement from within to do something. Characteristics of creativity (Desmita, in V. Diana, 2016), include:

- Have a strong imagination
- Enjoy looking for new experiences
- Have initiative
- Have broad interests
- Always be curious
- Have freedom in thinking
- Have strong self-confidence
- Have a sense of humor
- Full of enthusiasm
- Have an insight into the future and dare to take risks

Creative behavior in early childhood may not be produced if the child is afraid to think about new things or does not want to be creative because of a lack of appreciation from parents, teachers and the environment.

## Early Childhood

Early age is the most important and fundamental initial period in the entire range of growth and development of human life. This period is marked by various fundamental important periods in the child's subsequent life until the final period of development. One of the periods that characterizes early childhood is the golden period. Many concepts and facts have been discovered that provide an explanation of the golden period in early childhood, where all children's potential develops most rapidly.

Every child is born with potential which is an ability (*inherent component of ability*) which is different and is realized due to the dynamic interaction between the child's individual uniqueness and environmental influences. Various abilities that are actualized stem from the functioning of our brain. Critical age in the sense of the golden period determines the next development as a stage for the development of various potentials possessed by the child and determines the next stage of development, but if it is not optimal and not optimal in its stimulation, then the child will experience developmental difficulties in the next life. This shows how much loss it would be for a family, society and nation if they ignored the important periods that take place in early childhood.

## METHOD

This PKM activity is projected to early childhood educators in Tegalwaru District, Purwakarta Regency. One of the considerations in selecting a location is developing the potential of educators in the Tegalwaru area which is expected to have a positive impact on teachers, schools and related institutions. So that the quality of early childhood learning can be improved by providing training and mentoring.

Implementation of Community Service activities (PKM) using training and mentoring methods. The activities involve presenting material by resource persons and making learning media using basic materials that can be found and are cheap.

After the training activities are carried out, the next stage is to provide assistance to the training participant institutions. Mentoring is carried out using mentoring observation instruments. This instrument

is used for verification and evaluation of training participants in implementing creative play in their schools. The hope in this activity is that it can provide input and solutions to problems that occur in the mentoring participating institutions. At the end of the activity, the assistant provides evaluation and input to educators regarding the results of implementing creative play in their school. In the series of activities carried out there are pretests and posttests to determine the achievements of mentoring participants in the successful implementation of the PKM program.

Several things that need to be prepared for this PKM activity include preparing the program structure; schedule of face-to-face meetings (presentation of material by resource persons); mentoring and closing activities

**TABLE 1.** Program Structure

No	Activity	JP
1.	Face to face	12
2.	Independent task	20
Total		32

**TABLE 2.** Material and Training Resource Person

No	Material	JP	Source person
1.	Creative Play for Early Childhood	2	Dr. Lilis Suryani, M.Pd
2.	Creative Play Through Traditional Game Activities	2	Ilis Kandarisah, S.Pd
3.	Utilization of Recycled Materials as Creative Media	2	Nita Adiyanti, S.Pd
4.	Play Creatively by Digitizing Learning Media	2	Ilah Carilah, S.Pd
5.	Creative Play Practices	2	Mila Wahyuni, S.Pd
6.	Practice Creating Media	2	Resource Persons and Participants
7.	Independent Assignments and Creative Play Assistance	20	Pancasakti Students and Participants
TOTAL		32	

After the PKM activities are carried out, the target desired by the author is achieving the participant competency targets. The following are several indicators of participants' competency attainment: Understanding of learning media; understanding creative learning objectives; understanding how to create creative learning media; understanding how to manage the classroom; developing the teaching abilities of educators. In detail, the expected achievements in each module can be described in the table below:

**TABLE 3.** Expected Achievements

No	Assessment Materials	Expected Achievements at the End of the Module
1.	Basic Concepts of Creative Play for Early Childhood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participants can learn the basic concepts of creative play for early childhood</li> <li>Participants can understand the meaning of creative play</li> </ul>

No	Assessment Materials	Expected Achievements at the End of the Module
2.	Creative Play Through Traditional and Modern Game Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participant can understand the meaning of creative play through activities games traditional and modern</li> <li>Participants can understand various traditional and modern games</li> </ul>
3.	Utilization of Recycled Materials as Creative Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participants can understand the benefits of learning media</li> <li>Participants can utilise used goods recycled re-use it as a learning medium</li> </ul>
4.	Play Creatively by Digitizing Learning Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participants can understand about digitalization media learning</li> <li>Participants can create digital learning media</li> </ul>
5.	Creative Play Practices	Participants can modify existing games
6.	Creative Play Media Practices	Participants can create new creative games

### Guaranteed Observation Instruments

TABLE 4. Mentoring Observation Instrument

No.	OBSERVATION DESCRIPTION	OBSERVATION RESULT		SUGGESTION
		THERE IS	NO	
1.	Teachers Make Learning Plans			
2.	Teacher Prepares the Media needed for Creative Games			
3.	Teachers provide a platform for playing with children			
4.	Teachers stimulate children's development using creative media			
5.	Teacher and Children Play Creatively Using Recycled Materials			
6.	Teachers give children time to play using media that suits their wishes			
7.	Teachers provide a variety of tools/play materials and children are free to choose			
8.	Children's Responses During Play Activities			
9.	Presentation of Creative Play Projects from Children			
10.	Teachers provide a variety of activities and children are free to choose			
11.	Unique and Different Children's Work			
12.	The teacher carries out the assessment			

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Activity Results

Face-to-face activities are focused on presentation activities by resource persons. The activity takes the form of a presentation made by a resource person. The material presented to the training participants is:

First, creative play for early childhood which was conveyed by Dr. Lilis Suryani, M. Pd.

Second, creative play through traditional game activities presented by Ilis Kandarisah, S. Pd.

Third, the use of recycled materials as a creative medium, which was conveyed by Nita Adiyanti, S. Pd.

Fourth, play creatively by digitizing learning media presented by Ilah Carilah, S. Pd.

Training activities do not only focus on presentations but also involve the activity of the training participants. These activities take the form of discussions, questions and answers and group work practices. Discussions were held to find solutions to problems that occurred at the training participant school institutions. Meanwhile, practical activities consist of making interesting creative play media.

Mentoring activities are one of the PKM programs which are carried out face to face for 8 days. The mentoring process is carried out to verify teaching and learning activities that take place at the mentoring participating educational institutions. The following are the instruments used during mentoring which refer to the material provided during training activities. During mentoring, several things you want to see as achievements in the material that has been presented include:

- Have participants understood the material presented during the training activity?
- Have participants applied the material at their respective institutions?
- Have participants created creative play media after participating in the training program?
- Communicate regarding teaching and learning activities related to the material presented during training.

### Discussion of Activities

Face-to-face mentoring is carried out twice on May 11 2024 at 07.00 – 16.00 WIB and May 18 2024 at 07.00 – 11.30 WIB. Location 1: Community Service Activities in the form of training for PAUD educators located at the Creative Center Building, Purwakarta Regency on May 11 2024 at 07.00-16.00 WIB. Location 2: Community Service Activities in the form of mentoring PAUD educators located in Tegalwaru District, Purwakarta Regency on May 18 2024 at 07.00 - 11.30 WIB. Independent assignments will be carried out for 5 days from 13 - 17 May 2024.

Mentoring is carried out for 1 week, this activity is carried out through two activities, namely offline and online. Visits were held to workshop participating schools (offline) and online activities via WhatsApp. Mentoring is not only for one week, participants can continue to communicate and discuss even after the workshop and mentoring activities have ended.

In training activities, participants carry out a pretest before the training event begins. Participants took a pretest via Google Form with 20 multiple choice questions. Participants were given 15 minutes to complete the questions. After obtaining the results/scores from the pretest, the participants carried out training activities for 1 day to get material and practice regarding creative play. After the practical activities and materials were carried out, the participants carried out a posttest to see the achievements of the training. The following are the pretest and posttest results of the training participants:

**TABLE 5.** Pretest and Posttest Values Training Participants

No.	Participant Name	Pretest Score	Posttest Value
1	LJA	75	80
2	LT	90	100
3	M.P	75	90
4	DR	70	75
5	YL	75	80
6	EL	50	75
7	SJ	80	95
8	SR	60	90
9	ASA	60	65
10	E.U	70	90
11	LL	70	85
12	SNK	55	75
13	S.A	80	100
14	IS	70	80
15	L	80	100
16	A A	55	100
17	IH	85	90
18	A	70	100
19	TN	65	90
20	E.P	60	80
<b>Average</b>		<b>70</b>	<b>87</b>

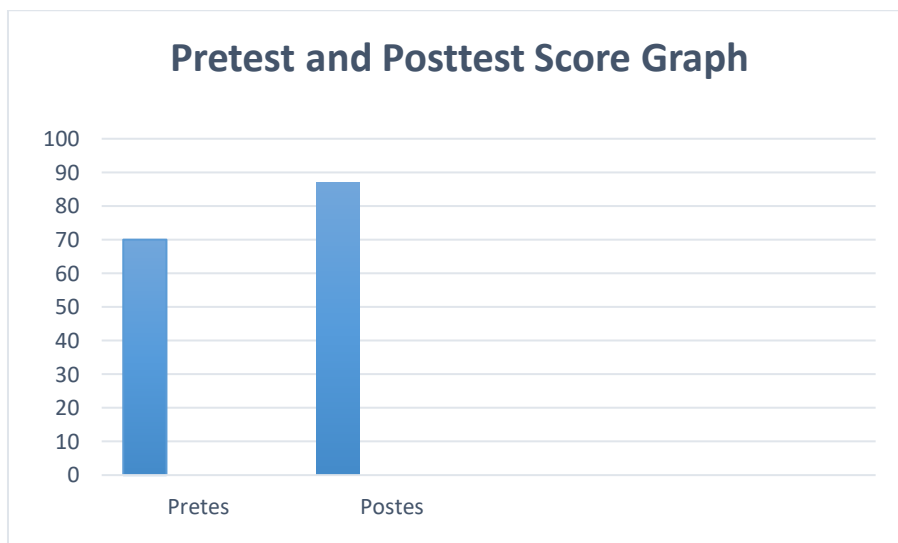







FIGURE 1. Increase in Training Results



Based on the pretest and posttest results of the training participants, there was an increase in the resulting scores of 17%. During the implementation of mentoring, educators participate in question and answer interactions and create creative learning media. This shows that training and mentoring activities provide positive things to early childhood educators and are motivated to give the best to their students.

### Activity Documentation



**TABLE 6.** Activity Documentation Links

Date and time	Documentation	Documentation Link
February 26, 2024 and March 18, 2024		Socialization and meetings for PKM Program Preparation <a href="https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1Lcd4d9EXmpXqZqHifupWT8d7QRpB1atI">https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1Lcd4d9EXmpXqZqHifupWT8d7QRpB1atI</a>
May 11, 2024	 	Training Activities Session 1 <a href="https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1LaDyptxK1NAeDgn2Lhba5sO_V2xK2ZUZ">https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1LaDyptxK1NAeDgn2Lhba5sO_V2xK2ZUZ</a>  Session 2 Training Activities <a href="https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1LaDyptxK1NAeDgn2Lhba5sO_V2xK2ZUZ">https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1LaDyptxK1NAeDgn2Lhba5sO_V2xK2ZUZ</a>
13 - 17 May 2024	 	Mentoring Activities <a href="https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1LcRlyMZtWSJ7U8X_uET1r44I31GPNo66">https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1LcRlyMZtWSJ7U8X_uET1r44I31GPNo66</a>

		
<p>May 12, 2024</p>		<p>Online Media Documentation</p> <p><a href="https://www.kompasiana.com/iliskandarisah251288/6640b773c57afb4768243d04/pendampingan-bermain-kreatif-untuk-develop-capacity-teaching-children-of-early-age">https://www.kompasiana.com/iliskandarisah251288/6640b773c57afb4768243d04/pendampingan-bermain-kreatif-untuk-develop-capacity-teaching-children-of-early-age</a></p> <p><a href="https://jabar.ikiran-rakyat.com/pendidikan/pr-3658078706/mahasiswa-universitas-panca-sakti-kembangkan-besar-mengajar-pendidik-paud-via-bermain-kreatif">https://jabar.ikiran-rakyat.com/pendidikan/pr-3658078706/mahasiswa-universitas-panca-sakti-kembangkan-besar-mengajar-pendidik-paud-via-bermain-kreatif</a></p>

## CONCLUSION

In essence, children's fun is playing, but these playing activities can be directed into meaningful activities without reducing the attractiveness of the activity so that it can help stimulate and foster creativity in children. One way is to play creatively which involves digital media, traditional media, modern media and

creative media. Creative play can be implemented by early childhood educators with the support of facilities and motivation from the educators. This training is expected to be an intermediary for conveying knowledge to early childhood educators to continue developing their potential.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The training and mentoring activities carried out by Pancasakti University postgraduate program students can be said to be successful. The emphasis on the success of this program is the training and mentoring participants continue the PKM program at their respective institutions. So there is a need for further monitoring and the same program in different places to provide competency for early childhood educators.

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Alhamdulillah, by offering thanks to the presence of Allah Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala, thanks to His mercy and grace, we were able to complete Community Service activities through Creative Play Training and Mentoring activities to develop the teaching abilities of Early Childhood Educators in Purwakarta Regency.

This Community Service is an embodiment of one of the Tri Dharmas of Higher Education implemented by the academic community of the Early Childhood Education Masters Program. This activity was carried out on 11 - 18 May 2024. Training and Mentoring materials were selected based on the needs of educators in Purwakarta District, Plered District, Tegalwaru District, Purwakarta Regency. Next, we would like to express our thanks to the Director of the Master of Early Childhood Education, Mrs. Dr. Nita Priyanti, M.Pd. which has made it easier to carry out Community Service. Community Service Supervisor, Mrs. Dr. Lilis Suryani, M.Pd. who have provided support and guidance in implementing this Community Service activity.

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We give our appreciation to the training and mentoring participants who have implemented and helped make this PKM program a success. Hopefully the knowledge that has been conveyed can be useful for educators, teachers and others.

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