

Fine Motor Stimulation Through Cutting Activities for 4–5-Year-Old Children at Bina Lestari Kindergarten

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Abstract

Fine motor skills are essential to early childhood development, and cutting is an effective activity for fostering them. Preliminary observations at Bina Lestari Kindergarten showed that children still struggled with cutting tasks. This descriptive qualitative study describes the process and outcomes of fine motor stimulation through cutting activities for five children aged 4–5 years in Group A at Bina Lestari Kindergarten, Sesait Village, Kayangan District, North Lombok Regency, West Nusa Tenggara (NTB). Data were collected through participant observation, documentation, and field notes across four sessions over two weeks, then analyzed using data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. Results showed that consistent stimulation improved children's fine motor skills: initially fearful children grew confident, grip technique improved, and cutting results became neater and more accurate, alongside gains in concentration and hand-eye coordination. Cutting activities are thus an effective medium for stimulating fine motor skills in children aged 4–5 years.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Early childhood education (PAUD) is a development effort aimed at children from birth to 6 years of age, carried out through the provision of educational stimulation to assist physical and spiritual growth and development so that children are ready to enter further education. The early childhood period is also known as the golden age, during which a child's brain develops rapidly and requires appropriate stimulation as capital for future development. This is emphasized in Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System.

One form of formal early childhood education institution is Kindergarten (TK) for children aged 4-6 years. The educational objectives in TK cover five main developmental aspects: religious and moral values, physical-motor (gross and fine motor skills as well as physical health), cognitive, language, and social-emotional. The physical-motor development aspect, especially fine motor skills, plays a very important role. Developing fine motor skills aims to enable children to use small muscles, such as finger movements, and coordinate hand and eye movements. Some common activities to develop fine motor skills include folding, drawing, shaping dough, painting, collage, and cutting (Susanto, 2018).

Fine motor skills are a child's ability to perform movements involving small muscles and requiring careful hand-eye coordination (Hurlock, 2016). Fine motor skills are essential for school activities such as holding a pencil, cutting, pasting, and stringing. If a child's fine motor skills are not properly stimulated from an early age, it will impact their readiness to write in elementary school.

One of the indicators of the achievement of fine motor development in children aged 4-5 years, according to the Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture Number 137 of 2014 concerning National Standards for Early Childhood Education, is being able to use tools to express creativity in various ways, one of which is through cutting activities.

Cutting is an activity that can train finger muscle strength, wrist flexibility, hand-eye coordination, and children's concentration (Aulina & Fauziddin, 2021).

Fine motor development cannot be learned independently by children; it must be taught and practiced. The role of kindergarten teachers is crucial in providing appropriate learning experiences and stimulation. Through cutting activities, children develop hand-eye coordination, focus, accuracy, and precise finger muscles. This process helps build visual-motor skills essential for everyday life and readiness for elementary school.

During early childhood, children experience development in various aspects, including religious and moral values, cognitive, physical motor skills, language, and social-emotional skills. Of these five aspects, one of the most important areas of development is physical motor skills. Fine motor skills development in early childhood plays a crucial role, considering that this ability provides significant benefits for children. Developing fine motor skills in kindergarten-aged children aims to enable them to use small muscles, such as finger movements, and to coordinate hand-eye movements. Some ways to develop fine motor skills in early childhood include folding, drawing with crayons, shaping or manipulating clay/wax/dough, painting with watercolors, playing with collage, or cutting.

Fine motor development cannot be learned on its own but must be taught. This is an accepted concept in early childhood education. In this context, the role of educators or teachers in kindergartens or early childhood education institutions is crucial. Teachers are responsible for providing developmentally appropriate learning experiences for children, including the stimulation necessary for fine motor development. One way to achieve this is through cutting activities.

Physical development plays a crucial role in a child's life, as it determines their movement skills and fosters confidence. Physical development progresses alongside motor development, encompassing both gross and fine motor skills. Gross motor skills encompass stability, balance, and flexibility. Fine motor skills, on the other hand, develop hand-eye coordination, finger and wrist flexibility, and hand strength.

Through cutting activities, children will develop hand-eye coordination, which is expected to improve their fine motor skills. Furthermore, cutting activities also play a role in training children to focus and concentrate. Stimulation plays a crucial role in helping children discover their potential. Children who receive appropriate and optimal stimulation can experience diverse development, not just limited to one aspect.

Cutting is not only a fun, creative activity for children, but it also plays a significant role in the development of their fine motor skills. As children follow a preferred pattern and cut along the designated lines, they actively engage their eyes and hands in structured coordination. This process helps improve precision of hand movements, hone fine motor control, and build visual-motor skills essential for child development.

Based on initial observations conducted by researchers at Bina Lestari Kindergarten, some children still have difficulty holding scissors. Using scissors in this activity provides children with the opportunity to learn precise tool control, stimulate the development of small finger muscles, and develop visual comprehension. By combining elements of creativity and fine motor skills, cutting activities provide an experience that not only supports children's physical development but also stimulates creative expression and mastery of technical skills useful in everyday life.

At Bina Lestari Kindergarten, initial observations indicate that some 4-5 year olds still have low fine motor skills, particularly in controlling finger strength and accuracy of movement. One effective stimulation to address this issue is cutting activities. Cutting activities not only serve as a means of creative play but also train the intrinsic muscles of the hand. When children guide the scissors blades along a line pattern, visual and motor perception actively integrate (visual-

motor integration). This exercise is very crucial in building the pincer grasp (the ability to hold objects using the thumb and index finger), which children need when holding a pencil to write in elementary school.

This situation is a concern for researchers and classroom teachers. If these fine motor difficulties are not addressed promptly, it is feared that they will hinder children's further development, particularly in writing skills. Therefore, appropriate, enjoyable, and safe stimulation is necessary for children. One activity that can be used is cutting. Cutting was chosen because it is easy, inexpensive, and readily available at school. Children also enjoy this activity because it produces tangible work (Mustika & Wulandari, 2023).

Several previous studies have shown a positive relationship between cutting activities and the fine motor development of young children. Ananda and Putri (2021) found that cutting activities significantly influence the fine motor development of children aged 4-5 years, while Fadilah and Hidayat (2022) reported that cut-and-paste media effectively improve fine motor skills in the same age group. Similarly, Yuliani (2020) and Rahma (2021) demonstrated that cutting and pasting activities strengthen finger muscles and hand-eye coordination. In classroom-based studies, Asmara (2020) and Nofianti (2020) further reported that guided, pattern-based cutting practice raised children's fine motor skill scores across repeated learning cycles, while Nurjani, Jubaedah, Nurjayati, and Aliyah (2019) found comparable gains when cutting activities were introduced systematically to children of a similar age group. However, most of these studies relied on quantitative, pre-test/post-test, or experimental designs that measured outcomes numerically without describing in depth how the stimulation process unfolds for individual children over time. Few studies have examined, descriptively and qualitatively, the step-by-step process by which children's cutting skills develop, from initial hesitation to eventual confidence and accuracy, particularly within the everyday classroom setting of a rural kindergarten. This gap indicates the need for a descriptive qualitative study that not only measures outcomes but also documents the developmental process of fine motor stimulation through cutting activities. The novelty of this study lies in its process-oriented, descriptive qualitative approach, which captures individual variation among children at Bina Lestari Kindergarten as they progress through structured cutting stimulation, offering insights not typically captured by quantitative research designs.

Although cutting activities have been proven to have many benefits, their use as a structured stimulation medium in kindergarten is often less systematic. Therefore, this study aims to describe the process and results of fine motor stimulation through cutting activities for children aged 4-5 years at Bina Lestari Kindergarten.

2. RESEARCH METHODS

This research employs a descriptive qualitative approach using a case study design. This design was chosen because it allows the researcher to describe, in depth and holistically, the process and outcomes of a naturally occurring phenomenon, fine motor stimulation through cutting activities, within its real classroom setting, rather than isolating variables for statistical testing. Specifically, this research uses the *Descriptive Qualitative* is a research procedure that produces descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words from people and observable behavior. This research is directed at the setting and the individual in a holistic or complete manner. Therefore, researchers do not isolate individuals or organizations into variables, but view them as part of a whole. Qualitative research is research that aims to understand phenomena about what is experienced by research subjects, for example, behavior, perception, motivation, and actions holistically and through descriptive methods in the form of words and language (Moleong, 2017).

Meanwhile, descriptive research is research conducted to systematically describe or depict the facts and characteristics of the object being studied precisely (Sugiyono, 2019).

This research aims to systematically, factually, and accurately describe the facts, characteristics, and relationships between the phenomena being investigated. This research does not seek causal relationships, test hypotheses, or make predictions.

So, *Descriptive Qualitative* is a research method that aims to describe and understand phenomena that occur in depth based on data in the form of words, behavior, and documentation in the field. In this study, what is described is the process of Fine Motor Stimulation of Children Aged 4-5 Years Through Cutting Activities at Bina Lestari Kindergarten.

The research was conducted at Bina Lestari Kindergarten, located in Sumur Pande Tengah Hamlet, Sesait Village, Kayangan District, North Lombok Regency, West Nusa Tenggara (NTB). The location was chosen because the researcher works as a teacher at the kindergarten, allowing for direct, in-depth, and ongoing observations.

The research was conducted for two weeks from August 14, 2026, to August 28, 2026. The core activity in the form of cutting stimulation was carried out in 4 meetings.

The subjects of this study were 5 children in group A aged 4-5 years at Bina Lestari Kindergarten. The subjects were selected using *purposive sampling*, namely, determining the subjects based on certain considerations and objectives.

Subject criteria:

1. Aged 4-5 years
2. Still experiencing difficulties in fine motor activities, especially cutting
3. Registered at Bina Lestari Kindergarten

The number of subjects was limited to 5 people so that researchers could conduct in-depth and detailed descriptions of each child.

In qualitative research, two data sources are known:

1. Primary data is data obtained directly from the subject. In this study, the results of observations of 5 children and the results of interviews with these children were used.
2. Secondary data is supporting data obtained from documentation such as photos of activities and children's work.

The data collection techniques used were participatory observation and photo documentation. The researcher acted as a teacher, both conducting the activities and observing. Data analysis was conducted by reducing the data, presenting it in narrative form, and drawing conclusions.

1. Observation

Observation is an activity of direct observation of research objects, in this case children aged 4-5 years at Bina Lestari Kindergarten, to see and record the phenomena that occur.

Researchers conducted participatory observation, meaning they participated in the learning activities while observing the children's behavior while cutting. The observed aspects included how they held the scissors, hand-eye coordination, cutting accuracy, and the children's attitudes and emotions. Observations were conducted at the beginning and end of the cutting activity.

2. Interview

Interviews are a data collection technique using direct questions and answers between researchers and children aged 4-5 years who will be studied.

3. Documentation

Documentation is a data collection technique that involves collecting documents, images, or recordings. In this research, these include photos of the activity process and children's cutouts.

Documentation is used to strengthen observational data.

Data analysis in descriptive qualitative research is done using the Miles, Huberman, and Saldana model, which consists of 3 flows, namely data condensation, data presentation, and conclusion.

The reason researchers use a descriptive qualitative approach is that the data they want to obtain is in the form of a description of the process of activities, children's behavior, and changes that occur in depth during the cutting activity.

3. RESULTS

1. A Brief History of Bina Lestari Kindergarten

Bina Lestari Kindergarten was established on January 10, 2004, and continues to this day in 2026. It is located in Sumur Pande Tengah Hamlet, Sesait Village, Kayangan District, North Lombok Regency, NTB. Initially, this institution had the status of a PAUD KB Bina Lestari. Then, in 2026, the KB status changed to a Kindergarten. Since its inception, several teachers/educators have changed, and hundreds of students have graduated.

2. Vision and Mission of Early Childhood Education KB Bina Lestari

Vision of PAUD KB Bina Lestari

Realizing Early Childhood Education that is intelligent, pious, creative, and independent.

KB Bina Lestari PAUD Mission

- a. Making the institution a place for quality education in society
- b. Providing early education to children in their golden age
- c. Providing noble moral values

3. Map of educator, student, and parent profiles at school

In the 2026/2027 academic year, the Bina Lestari Kindergarten Institute has four teachers, including one principal and three teachers. The educational qualifications of the teachers at this institution are: three have bachelor's degrees, and one is a high school graduate. Meanwhile, the students at the Bina Lestari Kindergarten Institute consist of 35 children aged 3 to 6 years old, with learning activities grouped into two groups. The first group consists of students aged 3-4 years, and the second group consists of students aged 5-6 years.

Meanwhile, the majority of the students' guardians come from Pande Tengah Hamlet, where our institution is located. Others come from various surrounding hamlets, such as Batpawang, Sumur Pande, Sumur Pande Daya, Kebaloan, and Lokok Ara. Most of them make their living as farmers, while others work as traders, civil servants, and laborers.

4. Student Number Data and Its Development

In the 2025/2026 academic year, the number of students at Bina Lestari Kindergarten was 34 children. Consisting of Group A, there were 16 children, 6 girls and 10 boys, while Group B had 18 children, consisting of 8 girls and 10 boys. This study focused on Group A aged 4-5 years with 5 children, namely Zahwa, Moza, Jihan, Nathan, and Rifki.

Based on the initial measurement data carried out, the physical development of children aged 4-5 years at Bina Lestari Kindergarten is in the normal category according to the Ministry of Health standards. The average height of children is 101.2 cm, with a range of 83 cm - 121 cm; the average child's weight is 14.9 kg, with a range of 10 kg - 23.7 kg; and the average child's head circumference is 50.2 cm, with a range of 47 cm - 53 cm. Based on anthropometric measurement data conducted in September 2025, the physical development of Bina Lestari Kindergarten children is generally in the normal category according to the Indonesian Ministry of Health's Child Anthropometric Standards Number 2 of 2020. However, in the fine motor aspect, especially in cutting activities, children are still found to have difficulty holding scissors correctly, and the results of their cuts are not neat.

5. Facilities and infrastructure

Means and infrastructure owned by Bina Lestari Kindergarten include 2 classrooms, that is, Class A and Class B, 1 teacher's room, children's and teachers' restrooms, and a playground equipped with a seesaw, slide, swing, and iron climbing frame. Various educational play tools such as puzzles, blocks, stringing tools, balls, dolls, and other APE, as well as learning media such as children's scissors, colored paper, glue, blocks, colored pencils, crayons, colored paint, and many others. These facilities and infrastructure are used to support all learning activities, including fine motor and gross motor stimulation activities for children.

6. Indicator and Focus of Observation

Before the activity begins, safety is a top priority. The teacher ensures that the child uses blunt-tipped scissors, with their thumbs facing upward, and is always under close supervision. This ensures the child feels safe and confident in trying.

The focus of this research observation is on 2 aspects:

- a. How to hold scissors: If you are using one hand, place your thumb on top.
- b. Cutting skills: accuracy in following patterns, neatness, and eye-hand coordination.

Assessments don't use numbers. Progress is measured by changes in a child's behavior from the beginning to the end of an activity.

7. Description Research result

The research was conducted on 5 children aged 4-5 years at Bina Kindergarten Sustainable for two weeks. Data were obtained through direct observation, interviews, and documentation.

a. *Condition Beginning Before Stimulation*

At the first meeting, differences in initial abilities between the children were seen. At the first meeting, the children were given an activity: freehand cutting without a pattern. Children cut small pieces of colored origami paper and then glued their names on them. The learning theme at that time was "Myself," with a subtheme "My Name." During the cutting activity:

- Zahwa and Moza had already dared to pick up scissors themselves. However, when cutting, the scissors often slipped, leaving broken pieces.
- Rifki, Nathan, and Jihan still showed hesitation. Rifki often procrastinated and looked at his friends first. Nathan tended to remain silent and wait for the teacher's help, while Jihan held the scissors with both hands out of fear.

Field notes: "The classroom atmosphere was still lively at that time. Several children asked, "Ma'am, are these scissors sharp?", showing fear.

b. *Process During Stimulation*

During four sessions, the cutting activity was conducted with different themes. The teacher/researcher provided examples, provided guidance, and provided praise.

The children seemed to be getting used to it. Moza, who initially got bored easily, was able to sit for 10 minutes to complete her cutting activity. Rifki, who initially refused, started to try after the teacher/researcher held his hand.

c. *Final Condition after Stimulation*

- Zahwa
Initially, Zahwa was hesitant, and her cuts weren't straight. By the end of the activity, she was holding the scissors correctly and could cut short, straight lines more neatly. She also gained more confidence and often offered to go first.
- Girl
Moza showed the most rapid progress. From having weak skills, she was finally able to control the scissors well. Her cutting results were the neatest among her classmates. Moza even asked for extra paper to practice at home.
- Rifki
The biggest change in Rifki was his courage. He went from being passive to becoming more active. He began taking the initiative to pick up tools and show his work to the teacher. His shyness lessened.
- Nathan
Nathan has seen improvements in his concentration. Initially easily distracted, he can eventually focus on following a pattern until completion. His cuttings, from being random, are now starting to follow the lines.
- Jihan
The biggest change in Jihan was her courage. From initially being afraid and crying, Jihan was finally able to hold the scissors herself, even if her results weren't perfect. She no longer needed anyone to hold her hand.
In general, no child's abilities remain constant. All show progress toward improvement.

4. DISCUSSION

1. **Improvement Fine Motor Aspects**

Activity: Scissors train the small muscles in the fingers. The repeated opening and closing motion of the scissors strengthens a child's grip. They also learn coordination between the eye, which sees the line, and the hand, which cuts.

2. **Improvement: Non-Physical Aspects**

In addition to motor skills, there's also an increase in self-confidence and independence. Children who were initially afraid become braver and more willing to try. Children who were initially dependent on teachers become more capable of doing things on their own.

3. **Factors Supporters**

This success was supported by a pleasant atmosphere, attractive colored origami paper media, and the teacher's patient role model. This aligns with Suyadi's (2018) opinion that early childhood learners learn best through play and hands-on practice.

Based on the description above, cutting activities can stimulate the fine motor development of children aged 4-5 years. Improvements are evident in the child's handling of tools, courage, concentration, and neatness of their work. Although each child's pace varies, all show positive progress.

This improvement in fine motor skills occurs because repeated scissoring exercises train eye-hand coordination and strengthen the fine muscles in children's fingers. The opening and closing motion of the scissors trains the finger muscles to control the tool precisely. This finding is in line with Hurlock's (2018) account of motor development, which holds that structured and repeated stimulation, rather than natural maturation alone, accelerates the development of physical-motor skills in early childhood; the pattern observed among the five children in this study, moving from hesitant, uncontrolled scissor movements toward steadier, more deliberate cutting after four sessions, illustrates concretely how such stimulation operates in a real classroom setting.

This improvement in fine motor skills can be explained through several child development mechanisms:

1. *Intrinsic Muscle Maturation of the Hand and Pincer Grasp*

Scissoring requires the coordination of the flexor and extensor muscles in the wrist and fingers. The repeated opening and closing of the scissors strengthen the intrinsic hand muscles, which control the grip of the thumb and index finger *pincer grasp*. The skill of holding scissors with the thumb facing upwards trains the neutral position of the wrist, which is the main basic capital for children in controlling writing tools without quickly experiencing muscle fatigue. This is consistent with Rini and Ilham's (2024) explanation that fine motor development in early childhood is closely tied to the maturation of the small muscles of the hand, which underlies children's later readiness to hold and control writing instruments. The field data support this link directly: Zahwa and Jihan, who initially held the scissors incorrectly or with both hands, gradually adopted the correct thumb-up grip over the four sessions, after which their scissor control and cutting accuracy improved together, suggesting that the grip correction and the motor gains observed in this study reflect the same underlying muscle-maturation process described by Rini and Ilham.

2. *Visual-Motor Integration and Focus*

When cutting, children are required to focus their eyes and coordinate their hand movements. This process stimulates spatial perception and motor precision. Repeating the stimulation routinely over four sessions over four weeks (30 minutes per day) provides a conditioning effect on muscle memory (*muscle memory*), so that children become more skilled at controlling the pressure and direction of the scissors. This finding is consistent with Aulina and Fauziddin (2021), who found that repeated cutting practice strengthens finger muscles, wrist flexibility, and hand-eye coordination in young children. The field observations in this study add a further layer to this finding: visual-motor integration did not develop uniformly across the five children. Moza and Zahwa, who were already willing to hold the scissors at the first meeting, showed smoother eye-hand coordination within the first two sessions, whereas Jihan and Nathan, who initially hesitated or depended on the teacher's hand-over-

hand guidance, only achieved comparable coordination by the third and fourth sessions. This pattern suggests that visual-motor integration through cutting is shaped not only by the amount of repetition, as emphasized in prior research, but also by each child's initial confidence and willingness to engage with the tool, a nuance that aggregate, outcome-only measurements are less able to capture.

3. *Confirmation with Previous Research*

The findings of this study reinforce the theory of motor development, which states that structured and repeated stimulation effectively accelerates physical-motor maturity in early childhood. These results align with Rahma's (2021) research, which concluded that cutting and pasting activities significantly improve finger muscle strength and hand-eye coordination, as well as with Ananda and Putri (2021) and Yuliani (2020), who similarly found that cutting activities significantly improve the fine motor development of children aged 4-5 years. Compared with monotonous activities like coloring, cutting provides the right mechanical load for the finger dexterity of children aged 4-5 years. What this study adds to these earlier, largely quantitative findings is process-level detail: rather than only confirming that cutting improves fine motor outcomes in aggregate, the four-session observation in this study shows how individual children move through distinct stages, from fear and avoidance, to guided practice, to independent and confident cutting, illustrating concretely how the mechanism identified in Rahma (2021), Ananda and Putri (2021), and Yuliani (2020) actually unfolds for children with different starting abilities in an everyday classroom setting. Similar improvements have also been documented by Saadah and Komalasari (2018), who found that cutting activities using buffalo-paper media significantly enhanced the fine motor skills of children aged 4-5 years, and by Azurah, Fauziddin, and Nuralina (2023), who reported that pattern-based cutting practice increased children's fine motor scores across successive learning cycles; the present study's process-level observations are consistent with, and help explain, these outcome gains.

Thus, the results of this study confirm that providing safe, planned, and varied cutting stimulation has proven effective in improving the fine motor skills of early childhood at Bina Lestari Kindergarten.

5. CONCLUSION

This descriptive qualitative case study of five children aged 4-5 years in Group A at Bina Lestari Kindergarten shows that consistent, structured cutting stimulation across four sessions supported fine motor development in several distinct, observable ways. Cutting activities can stimulate the fine motor development of children aged 4-5 years. Children who initially feared holding scissors became more confident; their grip and scissor-handling technique improved; and their cutting results became neater and more accurately aligned with the given patterns. Beyond the motor aspect, the activity also fostered greater self-confidence, concentration, and independence, with each child improving at a different pace and from a different starting point: Moza and Zahwa progressed quickly in cutting accuracy, while Rifki and Jihan showed their most notable gains in courage and initiative. As this study involved only five children in a single kindergarten setting over a two-week period, these findings describe, in depth, the process of fine motor stimulation through cutting activities in this specific context rather than establishing statistically generalizable causal claims; they are intended to offer a detailed, contextual understanding of how such stimulation unfolds for individual children, consistent with the descriptive qualitative approach adopted in this study.

6. SUGGESTION

1. For Teachers: Use a variety of cutting activities with interesting patterns and media as a form of routine fine motor stimulation.

2. For Schools: Provide supporting equipment such as blunt-tipped children's scissors and adequate pattern paper.
3. For further researchers: Conduct research with a larger number of subjects, longer treatment duration, or develop other dependent variables.

7. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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