

Improving Children's Fine Motor and Cognitive Skills Through Watercolor Finger Painting Activities

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Abstract

This article examines the support offered in learning finger painting for the Indria Mola-Kalabahi study group. The aim of this program is to assist young children in early development through finger painting to improve their cognitive abilities and fine motor skills. This task seeks to create a solid developmental base, promoting children's development and equipping them for a successful future. The execution of this program occurred in three phases: 1) Planning, 2) Implementation, and 3) Assessment. Students and instructors from the PG-PAUD Study Program at Universitas Tribuana Kalabahi took part in the project. The youngsters participating ranged from 4 to 6 years old. The finger painting activity demonstrated success in enhancing cognitive and fine motor skills by utilizing readily available and inexpensive materials. The outcomes of the children's finger paintings showed evident advancement during the activity.

Keywords: *Fine motor skills, Cognitive, Finger Painting.*

INTRODUCTION

Early childhood symbolizes the future generation of the country, and their arrival is eagerly awaited by families, society, and the government. This phase of life, commonly called "The Golden Age" is a crucial time when experiences greatly impact future growth. Children in kindergarten are inherently drawn to play (Nur Atika Adam, 2023). The realm of play is crucial to childhood and has intrigued educators, psychologists, and philosophers for a long time. Children participate in numerous activities through play that aid their self-development (Yolanda Pahrul, 2023). They watch, assess, contrast, communicate, and investigate, gaining new skills without even noticing. Through play, children find and take pleasure in activities that are naturally fulfilling (S. Amalia, 2023). Play not only inspires children but also assists them in acquiring different skills without the stress of traditional education (Rihhadatul Aisy, 2024).

Young children are typically attracted to vibrant, appealing, and stimulating experiences. They take pleasure in discovering new experiences, which aids in honing their skills (Yolanda Pahrul, 2023). Play activities that promote early childhood development are varied and include exploration, questioning and responding, as well as participating in creative endeavors like drawing, writing, coloring, and storytelling. Numerous young kids take pleasure

in conveying their feelings through drawing or scribbling their ideas, frequently on walls, paper, or books. The majority of kids like to use pencils, crayons, or colored pencils for drawing, coloring, or painting. One activity that improves children's fine motor and cognitive skills is finger painting.

Finger painting offers kids an enjoyable and interactive activity. It is a method in which paint is put onto paper using fingers or the palm. The phrase "finger painting" comes from the English terms "finger" and "painting," which literally refers to painting using one's fingers (Wahyuni, 2020). This artistic method enables children to produce pictures without tools such as brushes, using their fingers to apply color directly (Akbar et al., 2020). Finger painting entails utilizing one's hands to mix colors and produce patterns (Handayani et al., 2023). The procedure usually consists of three phases: planning, implementation, and assessment. This task aids children in enhancing their cognitive skills, creativity, and aesthetic sensitivity by motivating them to create imaginative and unique pieces of art (Bayyinah Nurrul Haq, Damar Rangga Putra, Santo Tjin, 2024). By engaging in finger painting, children are able to openly convey their ideas, thoughts, and creativity.

Finger painting offers a different approach to crayons, enhancing color exploration for kids. It aids in the growth of fine motor skills,

especially hand-eye coordination, which can be improved through activities such as drawing, coloring, cutting, painting, sticking, and weaving (W. Amalia et al., 2021). Finger painting is especially beneficial for young children, as it enhances both fine motor skills and cognitive development. Finger painting lacks rigid methods; instead, it allows children to investigate, share their feelings, and develop their artistic sensibilities. It is crucial to make certain that non-toxic, safe paints are utilized for kids during this activity.

Even though finger painting offers substantial advantages for early childhood development, its use is still constrained. Insights and preliminary interviews performed by the community service team at collaborating institutions indicated that finger painting is seldom included in students' everyday routines, despite its potential to ease boredom and enhance concentration through hands-on involvement. To bridge this gap, the Early Childhood Education Teacher Education program launched a community service initiative named "Enhancing Children's Fine Motor and Cognitive Skills through Watercolor Finger Painting" aimed at children aged 4-6 in the Indria study group. The aim of this initiative is to inform educators at partner institutions about the advantages of finger painting and to give children the chance to improve their fine motor and cognitive skills through this artistic activity.

METHOD

This event occurred at the Indria Playgroup located at Gmit Imanuel Mola on October 28, 2024. The initiative engaged 30 children and employed a mentoring strategy, where each of the 3 community service team members, from a total of 5, supported 10 participants, considering the young age of the children. The task was organized into multiple stages: planning/preparation, execution, monitoring and assessment, and reflection.

1. Planning/Preparation: The community service group started by inspecting the location at Imanuel Mola Church, Teluk Mutiara District, Kalabahi City. This included watching the students and carrying out casual discussions with teachers. This

phase was vital, as Amalia S. et al. (2023) highlighted that educational materials must correspond with children's interests and necessities to facilitate significant learning experiences and accomplish expected results. After the survey, the team collaborated with the local church, secured approval for the service activities, handled administrative duties, and organized the required tools, materials, and accommodations. The team chose the finger painting activities, identified necessary equipment and supplies, and readied both the indoor and outdoor spaces of the church for the event. The phases of the activity and the mentoring approach were completed in this stage.

2. Execution: The community service tasks were segmented into five stages: an introductory session, unrestricted finger painting, finger painting with restricted materials, a discussion on the aims and advantages of finger painting, and reflection and assessment.
3. Assessment: The concluding phase included assessing the team's performance. The team evaluated the activity by watching the children's reactions and conducting interviews with the teaching staff. Children received rewards, group pictures were captured, and farewells were shared with the parent council leader, the kids, and the local congregation members. The group also created an extensive report regarding the community service initiatives.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This community service initiative aimed at boosting creativity in young children using finger painting. The aims of the activity encompassed promoting children's eagerness for learning, nurturing creativity and productivity, enhancing their self-esteem, and improving fine motor skills and cognitive capabilities. The event started with a welcoming session in which the community service team presented themselves to foster a relaxed environment for the children. The team also offered a summary of the activities, detailing what finger painting entails and introducing the materials required, including

cardboard, HVS paper, vibrant watercolors, bowls for the paint, and water for hand washing.

The group talked about the guidelines and reached a consensus with the kids to guarantee a seamless experience. According to Amalia (2023), setting agreements in the classroom fosters a constructive learning atmosphere and imparts discipline to students. Following the introductions and consensus, the team presented the main colors that would be utilized in the activity: red, green, and yellow. The kids were split into three groups, and the team described how the activity would unfold. The kids were enthusiastic and thrilled to join in.

The finger painting exercise was split into two stages. Initially, the children were presented with finger painting and allowed to create art freely. The group gave every child HVS paper supported by cardboard and showed how to finger paint. At first, a few children were reluctant to use their fingers with the paint, showing that this kind of activity was unfamiliar to them.

To alleviate the children's reluctance, the team clarified that the activity was designed to be fun and reassured them that the paint was child-safe. Every facilitator showcased examples of what could be illustrated on the given paper. The finger painting activity subsequently advanced to the phase of painting on more structured surfaces. The kids were motivated to express their creativity on blank paper, utilizing their imagination for finger painting. This stage focused on improving the children's focus and their capacity to adhere to directions. During the activity, the children received guidance and support from the team, who offered direction without disrupting their creative flow.



Figure 1. Distributing HVS paper that has been coated with gardus



Figure 2. Provides an explanation of how to paint with fingers.



Figure 3. Children start painting with their fingers.





Figure 4. Results of children's finger painting creations

Overall, the activity was successful in achieving its objectives. The finger painting introduction was well received by the teachers, who found it highly inspiring. In the final interviews, the educators at partner institutions acknowledged the significant benefits this activity brought to the students. They also expressed their intention to implement similar activities in the future. The children were enthusiastic throughout the session, despite their initial unfamiliarity with finger painting. As this was a new experience for many of them, they quickly adapted due to the fun and creative nature of the activity.

CONCLUSION

The community service team from the Early Childhood Education Teacher Education Study Program at Tribuana Kalabahi University organized community service activities for young children to emphasize the importance of nurturing their creative potential. These finger painting activities were introduced at partner institutions after initial observations revealed that, despite their numerous benefits, finger painting had not yet been implemented in the schools. The aim of the activity was to familiarize teachers with finger painting as a tool to enhance fine motor skills and cognitive development in early childhood. The interactions during the activity, which involved multi-directional communication, were well received by both the teachers and the children at the partner institutions.

SUGGESTION

For this reason, in the future it is highly recommended to provide similar activities with

more frequent capture and adapted to the children's ages.

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