

## Good Practices in Implementing *Enjoyable Transition from Early Childhood Education to Primary School Movement*

**Jakarta, March 28, 2023** – Students' readiness to learn during the transition from early childhood education to primary education is part of the effort in transforming education. Through a quality and comfortable learning environment for Early Childhood Education (PAUD) students, it is hoped that a foundation of superior character will be formed. It will then help them to be better prepared in joining the higher education level in the following phases enthusiastically and happily.

To deepen the concept of the PAUD to Elementary School (SD) transition movement, the launch event of the 24<sup>th</sup> Episode of *Merdeka Belajar* (Emancipated Learning) has also presented several education practitioners. They are Muhammad Yasin Damang, a teacher at SD Inpres Purwodadi; Neli Purwani, Darul Amin's Kindergarten Teacher; and Sitti, Kindergarten Superintendent, at Buru District. On this occasion, they shared good practices around implementing an enjoyable transition education from early childhood to elementary school.

Before moderating the talk show, the Minister of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (Mendikbudristek), Nadiem Anwar Makarim reiterated that education for PAUD students does not only prioritize cognitive abilities. According to him, education for children must also hone students' abilities that are holistic including emotional maturity, independence, ability to interact, and others.

Starting the conversation, Muhammad Yasin Damang, a teacher at SD Inpres Purwodadi, Central Mamuju district, West Sulawesi province, and Neli Purwani, a teacher at Darul Amin Kindergarten, Seruyan district, Central Kalimantan province, explained the common conditions in the field. For example, there is a reading, writing, and arithmetic (*baca, tulis, hitung/calistung*) test that is implemented by educational institutions as part of the New Student Admissions (PPDB). Some teachers and parents consider *calistung* ability to be mandatory, so many parents provide additional tutoring to preschool-age children as preparation before entering elementary school.

Early childhood to elementary school education transition policy regulates three target changes starting from the new school year, namely: 1) there is no *calistung* test during PPDB; 2) implementing an introductory period for new students so that they are more adaptable; as well as designing learning activities that can provide information about children's needs under the initial assessment signs in the learning aids in the first two weeks at the start of the new school year; and 3) designing enjoyable learning activities, building foundational skills, and no tests.

After utilizing the learning aids, both of them realized that the concept of literacy is much broader than just reading and writing, and the aspect of numeracy is even broader than just counting. According to Muhammad Yasin, other aspects of ability are no less important for children to master. Bearing in mind that children with diverse characteristics must undergo a learning process as a whole (holistic) according to their rights. *"This whole process should be appreciated, not just looking at the final results of the children's achievements,"* said Yasin.

Muhammad Yasin designed the School Environment Introduction Period (MPLS) in the form of fun games or activities to bridge students' transitional preparation according to their age developmental stage. *"So they don't go too far in adaptation,"* he said.

Yasin hopes that with the launch of this policy, there will be no more blaming each other between SD and PAUD teachers. This is because during the transitional period what is needed is that the policy stakeholders need to synergize each other in providing children with the right to learn. *"We are taking advantage of the tools that have been provided by the ministry through the Merdeka Teaching Platform (PMM) and the Merdeka Learning website to find inspiration,"* he said.

Meanwhile, Neli Purwani said, to create a better PAUD-SD transition period, the school holds a consultative meeting involving PAUD teachers, early-grade elementary school teachers and parents to share a common understanding of this policy and overcomes any misconceptions. *"There, it is explained that there is no demand to master calistung when children enter elementary school. Then, there is a visit from PAUD to the nearest elementary school to directly observe learning activities. Thus, PAUD students will be better prepared to enter the learning environment in SD,"* he said.

Furthermore, Neli sees this policy as a bright spot or a solution to the misconceptions that have occurred so far. He invites teachers throughout Indonesia to make the PAUD-SD transition a joyous success to bring PAUD students to a happier level of primary education.

Sitti N. Sitania, a representative from the Buru District Education Office, Maluku Province, also felt the benefit magnitude of this policy. With this policy and movement, according to Sitti, it is possible for children who have never attended PAUD to continue to receive coaching which includes holistic foundation skills. For this reason, her party conducted socialization with PAUD teachers, elementary schools, and parents because Sitti believed that the success of this policy was the responsibility of all elements of education. *"Everyone responded well,"* he emphasized.

On this occasion, Sitti appealed in order that more and more regions form communication forums (forkom) at the sub-district level to facilitate access to education so that it is more affordable. *"(It is very important) that children experience learning with a sense of happiness so that learning becomes a pleasant experience,"* said Sitti.

Next, I Wayan Wirawan, Office of Youth and Sports Education (Disdikpora) of Badung Regency, Bali Province talked about the role of the PAUD-SD forkom which is very helpful in strengthening partnerships and advocacy. Disdikpora in their respective regions has formed PAUD-SD forums which involve various elements to provide positive strengthening of the education ecosystem.

*"Through socialization, dissemination, and technical guidance to forkom members, it is hoped that they will be able to follow up on the PAUD-SD transition policy down to the district/city, sub-district, and education unit levels to be passed on to parents,"* explained Wayan.

His party also evaluated the practice of calistung which exceeded the limit for PAUD children to prevent the learning process from being hard and forcing students (drilling). *"Children must get an appropriate education, let's collaborate through forums involving village heads, education observers, and private education foundations on a massive and continuous basis so that this transitional problem can be overcome together,"* he appealed.

## Advocacy to Overcome Learning Misconceptions in PAUD-SD

The advocacy aims to clear up learning misconceptions that are commonly found in the early-grade of PAUD and SD where *calistung* tests are still enforced, or graduation exams in PAUD, as well as a narrow definition of numeracy literacy. This condition is experienced by many elementary school students, especially those who have never gone through education at PAUD.

On the other hand, advocacy is also important to encourage the successful implementation of the six basic competency aspects that need to be honed in PAUD and SD. This foundational capability is formed through the structure of the PAUD curriculum and the basic education curriculum. The six basic abilities of children are 1) recognizing religious values and character; 2) social and language skills for interaction; 3) emotional maturity for activities in the learning environment; 4) cognitive maturity to carry out learning activities such as basic ownership of literacy and numeracy; 5) development of motor skills and self-care to participate in the learning environment independently; and 6) reflection towards positive learning.

Head of Field 1 *Solidarity Action Organization for the Advanced Indonesia Cabinet Era* (OASE KIM) and General Chair of Dharma Wanita Association (DWP), Franka Makarim stated that strengthening the learning process and the transition of PAUD students to SD focus on constructing the foundational abilities of children as a whole, not just academics. This policy is in line with the mission being managed by Field 1 OASE KIM, which is to strengthen various programs related to parenting and character education in Indonesia.

*“Every child has the right to be fostered so that the abilities acquired are not only cognitive but also holistic foundation abilities. Thus, in the future they will have a positive impact on the nation and state. Therefore, with this pleasant PAUD-SD transition policy, let's advocate each other around us in order that this policy can be carried out continuously together as a whole,”* said Franka Makarim while encouraging parents to uphold an enjoyable learning process for children.

Furthermore, as DWP Advisor to the Ministry of Religion, and a member of OASE KIM field 1, Eny Retno Yaquut Cholil said that this program has the same goals as the movement in which it aspires to ensure that every student gets full foundation capability development.

*“The Ministry of Religion's DWP has an inclusive education program emphasizing on collaboration and connections between education unit leaders, teachers, parents, and professionals as well as policymakers in providing support to students to get quality education,”* said Eny Yaquut.

Subsequently, a Lecturer at the Faculty of Psychology, University of Indonesia, Lucia Royanto shared the basic skills that early age children need to have. He also emphasized the importance of advocacy as a learning goal that can be developed in PAUD and early primary education. *“The six foundation abilities of children are built on aspects of children development. It is based on the Pancasila Student Profile that must be applied holistically,”* he said.

On this occasion, the Principal of Alam Manusak School, NTT, Yahya Ado, expressed his appreciation for the application of the six basic abilities which he considered very beneficial for the future of his students. *“Education in PAUD is very important as a foundation that supports their life in the following years. This policy is very supportive in understanding children's character and supporting a growth mindset. Thus, every stage of learning in children must be respected,”* concluded Yahya.

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