

CREATIVE LEARNING STRATEGY IN VEGETABLE INTRODUCTION USING FILM, COLORING, AND COOKING ACTIVITIES FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD AS A STUNTING PREVENTION EFFORT

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Abstract - Preventing stunting in early childhood requires innovative approaches that can increase awareness of the importance of a healthy diet, including vegetable consumption. This study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of creative learning strategies in introducing vegetables to early childhood through educational film media, coloring activities, and cooking activities together at Masyithoh Plampang 1 Kindergarten, Kulon Progo Regency. This study uses the Participatory Action Research (PAR) method which actively involves children, teachers, and parents in the learning process. The results of the study show that creative learning strategies through film, coloring, and cooking together are effective in increasing children's awareness of the importance of vegetable consumption as part of stunting prevention. Continuous support from the family environment is needed to maintain a change in children's behavior in the long term.

Keywords: Stunting, Creative Learning, Vegetable Introduction, Early Childhood, Participatory Action Research (PAR).

1. INTRODUCTION

Stunting is one of the significant health problems in Indonesia. According to Pepi Lusita et al., (2017) stunting is a condition of a child's short body as a result of chronic malnutrition. Stunting or short children is defined as children under five whose height is lower than the normal height of toddlers of their age (Waliulu et al., 2018). Stunting not only has an impact on children's physical growth, but also affects cognitive development and long-term well-being. Therefore, the problem of stunting in developing countries such as Indonesia is one of the child health problems that must be handled seriously and continuously. One effective way to prevent stunting is to increase balanced nutritional intake, including introducing vegetables as an important part of a healthy diet from an early age (Hutabarat et al., 2017). This is because early childhood growth and development has a great influence on the future life of children.

Early childhood or children in kindergarten, which is called the Golden Age period, is a unique individual time and is in the process of growth and development. Early childhood can also be interpreted as a child who is vulnerable to the age of 0-8 years and a figure who is undergoing a rapid and fundamental development process for the next life (Wiwik Pratiwi, 2017). Education in early childhood has an important role in forming healthy living habits (Maharwati & Dinatha, 2023). Basically, early childhood likes to imitate and emulate all actions taken by adults and idolized figures, so it is very important to provide an example of a healthy and clean life. Meanwhile, early childhood education as a place for children to learn and gain knowledge should provide healthy living lessons starting from the simplest to how to protect against all diseases (Hasibuan, 2019). Therefore, Early Childhood Education Institutions have a strategic role in preventing, mitigating, and handling stunting cases through the implementation of play-learning activities that provide psychosocial stimulation and age-appropriate development and become a forum for learning about parenting and child growth.

The lack of knowledge about vegetables is one of the causes of children's lack of interest in consuming vegetables. Efforts that can be made to increase knowledge and interest in consumption are by providing nutrition education as early as possible (Wicaksana & Rachman, 2018). For this reason, creative learning strategies are expected to increase knowledge and form a positive attitude towards vegetable consumption in early childhood, so that it is expected to be an effort to prevent stunting.

The strategy was implemented at Masyithoh Kindergarten located in Plampang 1 Hamlet, Kulon Progo Regency, as a community service activity by innovating creative learning through various media to educate children about the importance of vegetable consumption. The methods used include screening educational animated films about vegetables, coloring activities of vegetable pictures, and cooking and eating vegetables together. This approach not only aims to introduce vegetables, but also to instill an understanding of the importance of nutrition in children's growth and development. Creative learning through diverse media such as movies and coloring is designed to engage children, so they can learn

in a fun and interactive way. In addition, cooking activities together provide children with direct experience in processing and consuming vegetables, which are expected to form healthy eating habits from an early age.

This article will discuss the creative learning strategies applied in Masyithoh Plampang 1 Kindergarten, Kulon Progo Regency as an effort to prevent stunting, as well as analyze the effectiveness of this approach in increasing awareness and behavior of vegetable consumption in early childhood.

2. METHOD

The method applied in this Community Service program is the Participatory Action Research (PAR) approach, to analyze and develop creative learning strategies in the introduction of vegetables to early childhood as an effort to prevent stunting in Masyithoh Plampang 1 Kindergarten, Kulon Progo Regency. According to Yolanda Wadworth in Aziz et al., (2022), Participatory Action Research is basically research that involves all relevant parties working together to find actions at the moment (which they consider a problem) to improve and change them.

Participatory Action Research (PAR) encourages researchers and those who benefit from the research to collaborate fully at all stages of research. In essence, PAR is active research where all relevant parties are actively involved in the analysis of ongoing actions (where their own experiences are problematic) with the aim of changing and improving for the better. The basis for conducting Participatory Action Research (PAR) is that we need to get the desired change (Afandi, 2013). This research was carried out in several stages of PAR, namely:

- a. **Problem Identification and Action Planning:** The first stage involves initial discussions with teachers, parents, and schools to identify problems related to low awareness and vegetable consumption among children. Through this discussion, the research team together with the participants designed creative learning strategies involving the use of film media, coloring activities, and cooking and eating together activities as solutions that are expected to be effective.
- b. **Implementation of Action:** After planning, the action is carried out in the form of introducing vegetables to early children. This activity consists of three main components:
 - 1) **Educational Films:** Children watch short animated films that introduce different types of vegetables and their health benefits.
 - 2) **Coloring Activity:** Children color pictures of vegetables that have been introduced in the movie, with the aim of strengthening their knowledge of the vegetables.
 - 3) **Cooking and Eating Together:** Children engage in simple cooking activities using introduced vegetables, followed by eating together to appreciate the taste of vegetables.
- c. **Observation and Reflection:** During the implementation of the action, the researchers and participants conducted participatory observations to record changes in children's knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors towards

vegetables. After each session, a joint reflection is held with all stakeholders to evaluate the effectiveness of the activity and identify areas that need adjustment.

- d. Evaluation and Adjustment of Actions: Based on the results of observation and reflection, the research team together with the participants evaluated the activities that had been carried out. If shortcomings or challenges are found, adjustments are made to the learning strategy to increase the effectiveness of the intervention in the next stage.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on initial observations before the implementation of the creative learning strategy, children in Masyithoh Plampang 1 Kindergarten have a low level of understanding of the importance of vegetable consumption. From interviews with teachers and parents, it was revealed that many children tend to avoid vegetables in their daily diet. Some children are unable to even name the vegetables they consume frequently, indicating a lack of exposure to vegetables both at school and at home. After the intervention with creative learning methods using film, coloring, and cooking together, there was a significant change in children's behavior related to vegetable consumption. Here are the results of each stage of the activity:

- a. Educational Movies: Children are very interested and engaged while watching animated movies about vegetables. Interesting characters and simple stories help children understand the benefits of vegetables in a fun way. Most children can remember the names of the vegetables shown in the movie and show interest in trying them.
- b. Coloring Activities: Vegetable coloring activities help strengthen children's visual memory. They seemed enthusiastic in choosing the appropriate colors and creating a connection between the vegetable images and the new knowledge they gained from the film. This activity also facilitated discussions between teachers and children about the benefits of vegetables, deepening their understanding.
- c. Cooking and Eating Together: This activity showed the most significant results. Children who were previously reluctant to try vegetables began to be more open to vegetables after being directly involved in the cooking process. When eating together, some children who initially avoided vegetables were willing to try it and gave positive feedback about the taste. Teachers and parents who were involved in this activity also reported that children were more excited to consume vegetables at home after this activity.

From the results of observations and interviews, there was a significant increase in children's positive attitudes towards vegetables. Before the intervention, about 70% of the children stated that they did not like vegetables, but after the intervention, only 10% still showed disinterest in vegetables. These results indicate that creative approaches involving visual, interactive, and practical activities are highly effective in changing children's perceptions of healthy food. Based on reflections from teachers, parents, and researchers, creative learning strategies

have proven to be effective in raising children's awareness of the importance of vegetable consumption. Parents reported positive behavior changes at home, where children began to ask for vegetables in their daily meals.

Teachers also stated that this method helps children understand and remember information faster compared to traditional approaches.

The results of this study are in line with the theory of constructivist learning, where children learn through direct and active experience. The film, coloring, and cooking approach provides opportunities for children to learn through a variety of media that supports visual and kinesthetic learning styles. Direct involvement in cooking activities also reinforces the theory that hands-on experiences can influence attitudes and behaviors, especially when it comes to eating habits.

In the context of stunting prevention, the introduction of vegetables through creative learning has the potential to have a long-term impact. Although changes in vegetable consumption in children cannot be seen instantly, increasing awareness and positive attitudes towards vegetables is an important first step in efforts to build sustainable healthy eating habits. While there are some challenges in implementing this strategy, especially in terms of the availability of time and resources in schools, collaborative efforts between schools and parents will be an important key to maintaining the sustainability of this program. Teachers need to get additional training to effectively integrate these methods in the daily curriculum. In addition, the sustainability of cooking activities requires better logistical support, such as the availability of cooking materials and equipment in schools. With support from the family environment, children can continue to get used to the consumption of vegetables which will ultimately contribute to preventing nutritional problems, including stunting.



Figure 1. Educational movie watching activities



Figure 2. Vegetable coloring activity



Figure 3. Cooking and eating vegetables together

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the results obtained, it can be concluded that the use of educational film media, coloring activities, and cooking activities together is effective in increasing understanding, interest, and consumption of vegetables in early childhood. Educational films have been shown to be able to simplify information about the benefits of vegetables and make children more interested in healthy food. Coloring activities help strengthen the visual recognition of vegetables and increase children's involvement in the learning process. Meanwhile, cooking activities together allow children to get hands-on experience in preparing vegetables, which significantly encourages them to try eating vegetables.

Nonetheless, the implementation of this program faces several challenges, especially in its sustainability at home. Further involvement from parents is needed

to ensure that the habit of consuming vegetables continues after school activities. Overall, this creative learning strategy has great potential as an innovative approach in preventing stunting by forming healthy eating habits from an early age. Collaboration between schools and families is essential to support the success and sustainability of this program.

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