

Perceptions of Preschool Teachers on Children's School Readiness in Purwakarta Regency

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Abstract: School readiness is the condition of a child who already has the ability and skills to participate in learning activities at school including physical readiness, mental social-emotional abilities, the ability to interact and communicate, and knowledge readiness. This ability is a determinant of the success of children's learning processes and outcomes. The school readiness program for children is carried out from the age of 4-7 years through the transition stages of education. The teacher's perception of school readiness is fundamental because perception will determine the teacher's knowledge, understanding, and actions in an effort to create a quality learning process and output. The purpose of this research is to describe the perceptions of preschool teachers on children's school readiness in Purwakarta Regency. The method in this research is descriptive qualitative. The data collection process was carried out by interviewing teachers from 8 preschool in Purwakarta City. The material obtained from the interviews was transcribed and analyzed. The results of the research analysis have shown that age and literacy are considered the most ideal standard in determining children's school readiness. This is also reinforced by the selection to enter elementary school, especially favorite and competitive schools which require that prospective students already have the ability to read, write, and count. Therefore, parents provide strong interventions for preschool institutions to provide literacy and arithmetic learning programs. There is no cooperation between school and family because the teacher believes that school is the only institution that develops children's readiness to go to elementary school.

Keywords: Teacher Perception, Children's School Readiness

INTRODUCTION

Entering elementary school is one of the child's development tasks when they are in early middle childhood. At this time, the child will transition from the kindergarten stage to the elementary school stage. there will be changes in class activities, differences in learning methods, and also the learning materials provided. Children who are not able to adapt or children who are immature and not ready, will have problems when they are in the elementary school stage. For example, difficulty understanding learning material, difficulty understanding class rules, conflicts with friends or not wanting to go to school. The Minister of Education and Culture requires children to attend Early Childhood Education before entering the elementary school level. Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia Number 51 of 2018 states that the requirements for new students in grade 1 elementary school are 7 years old or a minimum of 6 years on July 1 of the current year, except for a minimum age requirement of 5 years and 6 months on July 1 which is intended for students who have potential intelligence or special and psychosocial talents as evidenced by written recommendations from professional psychologists and not carried out by teachers (Faqumala and Pranoto, 2020). The regulation indicates that a child's readiness to go to school in Indonesia is determined based on a child's chronological age. The criteria for school readiness based on a child's age were pioneered by Arnold Gesell (1880-1961), by developing a theory called 'the Maturational Theory'. According to Gesell, the success and readiness of a child's school is determined by the child's age development. Gesell's theory assumes that with increasing age, children's abilities and skills also increase which support academic success in school. Furthermore, Rifani. R (2022) in his research stated that students who have a history of entering elementary school earlier under the age limit (<7 years) have long-term effects such as feelings of

discomfort in peer association, fear, worry, lack of confidence, and negative feelings to himself. So chronological age not only determines school readiness but also has long-term effects.

Hurlock state about developmental theory that each individual is different in development even in twins. Each child will follow a predictable pattern, in their own way and at their own pace. This difference is because everyone has different biological and genetic elements. Environmental factors also contribute to the development of a child (Masganti, 2012). Deliviana (2017) stated that the readiness of children to enter elementary school is not only determined by chronological age, but also by aspects of cognitive, language, motor, socio-emotional development, and children's independence. Based on these two different theories, it can be understood that chronological age is not the only determinant of a child's school readiness.

However, there are still many children who are not ready for school, especially in the social-emotional aspect. According to Anayanti Rahmawati (2018), the average scores from highest to lowest in the dimension of school readiness are the dimensions of academic knowledge, the dimensions of physical well-being and motor development, the dimensions of basic thinking skills, the dimensions of self-discipline, the dimensions of emotional social maturity and the dimensions of communication skills. The average value of the dimensions included in the aspect of cognitive abilities (dimensions of academic knowledge and dimensions of basic thinking skills) is higher than the average value of the dimensions included in the non-cognitive abilities aspect (dimensions of self-discipline, dimensions of social-emotional maturity and dimensions of communication skills) .

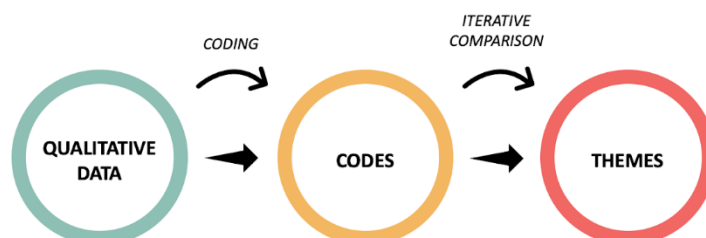
The concept of school readiness is the child's ability to manage himself in terms of knowledge, skills, and socio-emotional, which is the result of the child's continuous interaction with various experiences in the environment where the child grows and develops so that he can adapt to the challenges of learning at the next level. The difference in stimulation that children get from families, schools, and the community will have a big impact on children's readiness. Affandi and Mariyati argued that there were differences in school readiness in terms of different regions of origin according to the unique stimulus that developed in their respective regions. Early childhood education as an institution that prepares children to continue elementary school, must be prepared with development programs and must be a fun place for children. The concept of children's school readiness must be understood by all teachers. Because with this understanding, teachers can determine well-planned programs according to the target.

Several researchers have focused on the profile of children's school readiness and no research has focused on teachers' perceptions of school readiness. The teacher's perception of school readiness is fundamental because the perception will determine the teacher's knowledge, understanding, and actions in an effort to create a quality learning process and output. Therefore, this study focuses on preschool teachers' perceptions of school readiness, with the aim of knowing preschool teachers' perceptions of the dimensions of children's school readiness, stimulation of children's school readiness, and problems in the transition period of children's school readiness.

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative descriptive method with thematic analysis include: *Qualitative data*, researchers obtain data by exploring in depth through the perspective of participants by using interview transcripts that need to be explored more deeply. *Codes*, the researcher determines which data in the interview transcript needs to be coded. The researcher will review all the codes he has made and will evaluate which codes are relevant to his research and which codes are irrelevant. *Themes*, looking for themes that are in accordance with research objectives and related to research problems. The researcher determines the theme according to the data from the coding results. Researchers are free in interpreting the data to bring up the theme. In detail the thematic analysis can be seen in chart 1.

Chart 1. Thematic analysis



The research population is kindergarten teachers in Purwakarta district. The selection of data sources in the study was determined by purposive sampling, and the participants were 8 (eight) kindergarten teachers. The sample was selected with the criteria that teachers come from Kindergartens with minimum accreditation B. This criterion is based on the consideration that Kindergartens with good accreditation are considered good in all aspects including teacher competency in preparing children to enter elementary school. Sample details can be seen in table 1.

Table 1. Research sample

Num	Respondent	Kindergarten
1	NA	Ilyasa Nurul Qomar
2	IN	Miftachul Jannah
3	IK	Arraudoh
4	SR	Al Istiqomah
5	MW	Nurul Hidayah
6	AHM	Al Akhyar
7	IH	Nurul Islam
8	HL	Ulul Al Baab

The researcher is the key instrument in this research. However, in collecting research data, researchers used instruments to interview respondents. The instrument is in the form of an interview sheet which is based on a theoretical construct regarding children's school readiness. In detail the theoretical constructs can be seen in chart 2, which is used as a basis for developing the interview instrument in table 2.

Chart 2. The theoretical construct of children's school readiness

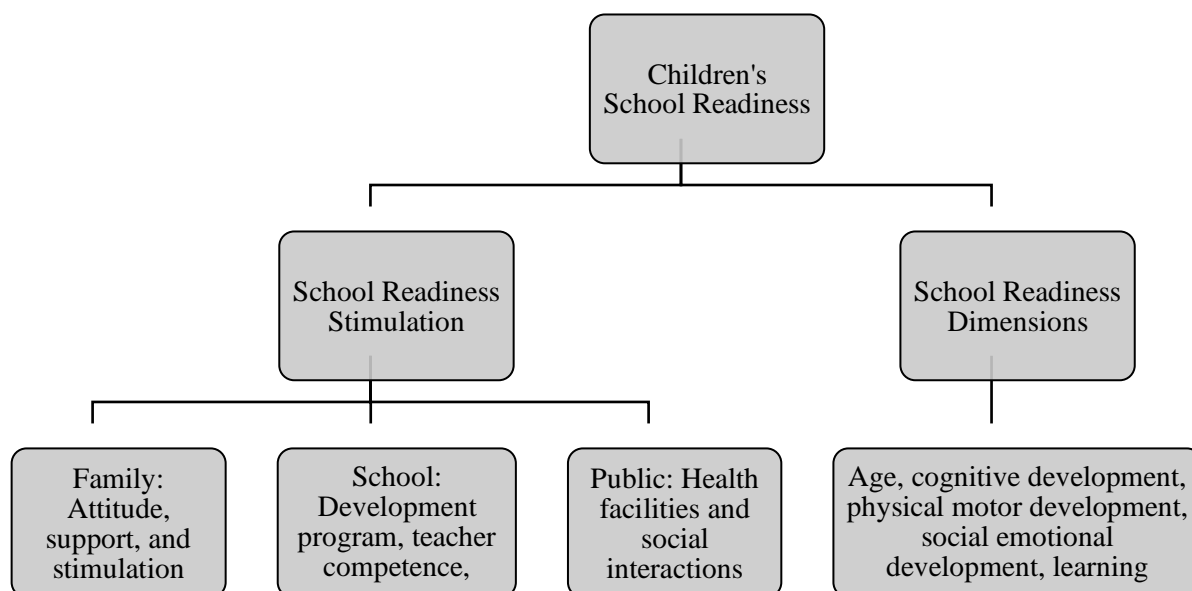


Table 2. Interview Instrument

No	Question
1	How many children in your class are ready to go to elementary school?
2	Why do you think the child is ready?
3	How many children in your class are not ready to enter elementary school?
4	Why do you think the child is not ready?
5	What abilities should children have when they want to enter elementary school?

6	What abilities do children really need to be successful in learning in elementary school?
7	What factors influence a child's readiness to enter primary school?
8	What efforts have you/the school made to help children get ready to enter primary school?
9	What is your basis for deciding that your child is ready to enter elementary school?
10	What are the problems in preparing children to enter elementary school?
11	What problems did you encounter during the transition from kindergarten to elementary school?

Data collection techniques were carried out by interviewing. The data analysis technique used is a thematic analysis technique, namely an analysis technique that focuses on compiling coding based on predetermined research questions so that the themes are arranged in accordance with the research questions and become a frame of reference in explaining the phenomena that occur (Heriyanto, 2018).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Children's school readiness relates to the role of kindergarten as an institution that provides services in stimulating children to have readiness. Specifically the role of the teacher in providing teaching to children. The teacher's perception is considered important because through perception it will affect understanding, process, and quality output.

The results of the interviews showed that all 8 (eight) teachers agreed that age was the minimum standard for children's school readiness, at the age of 7 years or at least 6,5 years. Some of these kindergartens have a children's school readiness test program in collaboration with professional psychologists. This is reinforced by the regulation of the minister of education and culture concerning regulation on the acceptance of new students which requires prospective students to be 7 years old or at least 6.5 years old by attaching a recommendation letter from a professional psychologist. Despite this government regulation, there are differences in teachers' perceptions of the dimensions of school readiness. There are 3 (teachers) who think that children are ready to go to school if they already have skills in 6 aspects of development (cognitive, language, social-emotional, physical-motor, religious and moral values and art), have a positive self-concept or self-image, have mental readiness (independence and self-confidence) and the courage to communicate. This skill is also an indicator of a child's success in participating in elementary school learning. With this understanding, teachers focus on stimulating school readiness in the form of programmed teaching to develop 6 aspects of development (cognitive, language, physical-motor, social-emotional, religious and moral values, art) through a variety of fun games both inside and outside the classroom. teach habituation in affective development, also introduce arithmetic literacy at the initial level, even provide parenting to parents regarding the ability to read and write arithmetic beginning in children. However, even though 1 out of 2 teachers understands that it is important to stimulate 6 aspects of child development, it is also important to provide additional tutoring in reading, writing and arithmetic in group B as preparation for entering elementary school.

There is 1 (one) teacher who believes that the dimensions of children's school readiness which are also the basis for success in participating in primary school learning are the ability to read, write and count. Because this ability is what children need when learning in elementary school later. Standard grade 1 elementary school subject matter already requires children to be able to read, write and do arithmetic. Even to be able to work on the questions given in the elementary school entrance test, especially in the favorite school, children must have the ability to read, write and count. Therefore, at the time when children are transitioning from kindergarten to elementary school, teachers place more emphasis on teaching reading, writing and arithmetic.

Furthermore, 3 (three) teachers have the opinion that school readiness which is ideally good for children to have is very different from the ideal according to the learning climate in elementary schools. They understand that children's school readiness is an ability that children must have in order to be able to take part in learning well. These abilities include independence, self-confidence, responsibility, courage to communicate and adaptability. All of these abilities are commonly referred to as the 6 aspects of development. However, they also understand that the learning climate in elementary school is very different from that in early childhood education. The curriculum and questions in elementary school already require children to be able to read, write, and count. Therefore, teachers are starting to adapt between suitability and needs, which sees school readiness as not only for children to have abilities in 6 aspects of development but also to master literacy and numeracy skills. Based on this new understanding, it has an impact on the stimulation provided in children. The teacher

provides learning programs in developing 6 aspects of development through a variety of fun games and habituation. Apart from that, it also provides additional programs for reading, writing and arithmetic which are integrated in the learning process as well as in the form of additional tutoring.

Based on the teacher's understanding of the concept of school readiness, there are certainly many problems in implementing this understanding. The results of the research interviews show that the problem in the process of children's school readiness is the elementary school curriculum which requires children to be able to read, write and do arithmetic. Elementary school teachers are of the opinion that it is a disappointment for children who enter elementary school but cannot read, write, and count. Even in favorite elementary schools, children must be skilled in literacy and numeracy in order to be successful in the selection to enter the school. This condition is not unfounded, elementary schools compete with each other to be superior to other schools. Admission selection and learning programs that require literacy and numeracy are seen as the most effective way to get the best quality students. This will certainly have an impact on the image of the school by the community, where many people still think schools that can teach children to read, write, and count early are the best schools. This view is also another obstacle for kindergarten teachers. Parents have an understanding that a child who can read, write and count at an early age is something to be proud of. And when the child is able to read, write, and count, he is seen as ready to enter elementary school. Moreover, parents are competing to send their children to their favorite schools which require them to be able to read, write and do arithmetic. This condition then encourages parents to ask kindergarten teachers to teach reading, writing and arithmetic. Another problem that kindergarten teachers encounter is that there are some children who are mature in age but do not have complete readiness. Children still have difficulty controlling their emotions, have difficulty socializing with other people, cannot be responsible for what they do, and cannot follow rules. This condition will certainly disrupt the learning process. However, parents insist that they still send their children to elementary school.

Table 3. Mapping teacher perceptions of children's school readiness

Num	Respondent	School readiness dimensions	School readiness stimulation	Problem in transitional age
1	Teacher 1	6 Aspects of development	Variety of programmed play and habituation early reading, writing, and counting	Parents' request to teach reading, writing and arithmetic
2	Teacher 2	Positive child self-concept	Development of positive self-concept and early arithmetical reading and writing	Elementary school requires the ability to read, write, and count
3	Teacher 3	6 Aspects of independent development self-confidence and courage to communicate	Stimulation of 6 aspects of programmed development and additional tutoring in reading and writing for group B semester 2	children do not have complete readiness, do not understand the rules
4	Teacher 4	Ability to read, write and count	Stimulation read write count	Elementary school requires the ability to read, write, and count
5	Teacher 5	6 Aspects of development Ability to read, write and count independent and responsible	Stimulation of 6 aspects of programmed development and additional tutoring in reading, writing and arithmetic	children do not have complete readiness, do not understand the rules, Elementary school requires the ability to read, write, and count there is no parental cooperation

6	Teacher 6	Emotional and cognitive readiness	Stimulation of 6 aspects of programmed development and additional tutoring in reading, writing and arithmetic	Selection to enter elementary school requires reading, writing, and arithmetic
7	Teacher 7	Social and emotional readiness	Stimulation of 6 aspects of programmed development and additional tutoring in reading, writing and arithmetic	Elementary school requires the ability to read, write, and count
8	Teacher 8	Independence and habituation in terms of affective, social so that it is easy to adapt, and cognitive and movement control	Stimulation of 6 aspects of programmed development and additional tutoring in reading, writing and arithmetic	Children are not fully ready, the elementary school curriculum requires reading, writing, and arithmetic

Based on the data in table 3, it is known that preschool teachers have various perceptions about children's school readiness. With regard to the dimensions of school readiness: 3 (three) teachers thought that the achievement of 6 aspects of development was an important thing for children to have when they entered elementary school, 1 (one) teacher thought that the ability to read, write, and count was a determinant of children's success in following learning in elementary school, 4 (four) teachers argued that 6 aspects development and the ability to read, write, and count are both important for children to be able to take part in learning well. Regarding the stimulation of school readiness: Kindergarten teachers have various perceptions of school readiness. Some teachers provide learning programs in developing 6 aspects of development through the main variety of fun and habituation, some teachers provide additional programs for reading, writing and arithmetic that are integrated into the learning process or in the form of additional tutoring.

Based on the results of the interview data, it can be seen that Kindergarten teachers have different perceptions regarding school readiness. They agree that children are ready to enter primary school when they have mature age. However, there are different views on the dimensions of school readiness. Some teachers are of the view that the development of 6 aspects (cognitive, language, social-emotional, physical-motor, religious and moral values, and art) is the most important for children to have when they enter elementary school. Meanwhile, several other teachers are of the view that the ability to read, write and count is an indicator of a child's success following learning in elementary school. Readiness is not only an end goal but also a gradual and continuous process, which teachers need to understand, implement and evaluate. The process that needs to be followed so that children master all the skills needed to be able to successfully undergo learning at the next level.

Teachers should know that in order to achieve optimal child school readiness, several aspects must be met, including: *First*, Mature age. Maturity functions to create the nature and strength within to react in a certain way which is called "readiness". Readiness to behave, both instinctive behavior and learned behavior. There is a relationship between maturity and the child's learning process. In the process of child development the concept of maturity is very basic (fundamental). Child development is directed "from within (become), by the action of the genes". In fact, behavior is the result of a process of growth and development according to natural laws, namely the inner plan or timetable. For that maturity in the structure of the brain and nervous system is needed. So it can be concluded that maturity is very important in readiness, because in the end any behavior that is learned requires maturity, such as a child will not be able to act intelligently if his intellectual capacity is not yet possible (Faqumala and Pranoto, 2020). *Second*, Cognitive Development. Cognitive development refers to how thinking processes, intelligence and language change as children grow and develop. Language, such as: understanding speech or orders from the teacher, expressing will by using words. The ability to solve problems, such as: solving problems confidently and confidently based on the results of studies or studies from previously acquired knowledge and experience, knowing and understanding the function of an object, and using it according to the rules based on the information obtained. The ability to think logically, such as: recognizing differences, classifying and sorting objects, recognizing patterns of at least 4 types, recognizing cause and effect, showing initiative, making plans. Symbolic thinking abilities, such as:

understanding and using symbols which are seen a lot when playing roles, such as using a broom as a horse, saying number symbols in sequence, using number symbols to count, matching and writing them, recognizing various types of letter symbols, and assembling several letters into words, representing various kinds of objects in the form of pictures or writing. *Third*, Physical Development and Motor Sensory. Physical and sensory-motor development is a continuous process of development in bone formation, growth and development of muscle and nerve movements according to their age range which will affect children's skills in moving. This aspect of development includes two skills, namely: gross motor skills and fine motor skills. The purpose of developing the physical and sensoro-motor aspects is so that children are ready to carry out activities at the next level. *Fourth*, Social Emotional Development. Social emotional development refers to a child's ability to understand, manage and express emotions completely but not excessively, both positive and negative emotions, being able to establish relationships with other children and adults around them, and actively learning to explore the environment. Social Readiness, such as: showing responsible behavior, interacting actively with other children, showing prosocial behavior or willing to help others, showing courage to explore the environment. Emotional Readiness, such as: recognizing the momentary emotions that are felt, trying to manage emotions and express them in a way that is acceptable to the environment (eg expressing feelings of disappointment, anger, sadness, joy in a way that is not excessive). *Fifth*, learning attitude. Learning attitudes include curiosity, creativity, independence, and persistence in learning. Shows curiosity about new things, tries to complete the assigned task well, focuses attention when doing activities, shows a spirit of achievement (Direktorat PAUD, 2020). Aryanti (2015) state that school readiness is a physical and psychological maturity at the time the child will enter elementary school. Not only academic readiness, but also the readiness of physical, emotional and social development of children contribute to the next development phase.

Based on the results of interview data, it was found that teachers do not yet have standard guidelines regarding stimulation in developing children's school readiness. The diversity of perceptions about school readiness causes a variety of stimulation. Some teachers provide stimulation of school readiness in the form of programmed teaching to develop 6 aspects of development (cognitive, language, physical-motor, social-emotional, religious and moral values, art) through a variety of fun games both inside and outside the classroom, teaching habituation in affective development, also introduces reading, writing, and arithmetic at the beginning level. Some teachers provide learning programs in developing 6 aspects of development through a variety of games but also provide additional programs for reading, writing and arithmetic which are integrated into the learning process as well as in the form of additional tutoring. Perceptions that are not intact about school readiness result in a gap in the priority of stimulation given. Teachers prioritize stimulation related to cognitive abilities and reading, writing, arithmetic and physical motors, while very minimal stimulation related to social emotional development. Therefore, many children who enter the elementary school level do not yet have good social emotional readiness. Hairina (2017) in his research stated that aspects of readiness to enter elementary school related to cognitive aspects, namely observation and ability to discriminate, understanding of size, number and comparison, critical observation, concentration, fine motor skills and understanding stories are aspects that have reached a fairly optimal level of maturity. While aspects related to the ability of sharp observation aspects, aspects of assessing situations and pictures of people whose level of readiness is not optimal.

Children's school readiness can be developed through stimulation received as a result of collaboration with the child's closest environment, including: *First*, the family. Children's readiness for school cannot be separated from family readiness. Family readiness focuses on the attitude and involvement of parents or other primary caregivers in a child's early learning and development and transition to school. Children's daily lives, which spend a lot of time with their families, can be filled with meaningful activities that can facilitate children to be ready for school. Parents who are supportive and diligent in providing various educational stimulation activities from birth are factors that play a very important role in the readiness of children to go to school. All of these activities should be carried out in a safe and comfortable situation in the form of play activities. Families are expected to develop positive interactions with children. This interaction is a form of support to prepare children to enter school. Various positive supports that can be provided by the family include attitude, support, and stimulation. Attitude includes behavior, expression, and understanding of parents towards children who show warmth (affection) and sensitivity to children's needs. This attitude can also be reflected in the way parents communicate with children and the way parents respond to children's behavior. Support is an

effort made by parents through daily activities so that children develop fully in aspects of child development, such as physical-motor, cognitive, language, social-emotional, where religious and moral values form the basis of activities, including artistic activities. Stimulation in this case is the involvement of parents in fostering a love of learning (love of learning) through daily activities at home, as well as aligning activities carried out at school with at home. *Second*, School. School readiness focuses on the school environment as well as the habits or practices that encourage and support a child's smooth transition into primary school. The point is that school readiness includes adequate availability of support that is important and needed by children, as well as quality teaching and learning. This can be seen from the adequacy of time dedicated to learning in class, the provision of learning materials such as books and study aids, and effective teaching, pedagogical practices, and teacher competence. All of this can be planned in a curriculum that is implicitly or explicitly aimed at training children's school readiness. Kindergarten's ability to provide facilities and support (both in the form of programs and facilities) for the development of children's learning readiness is needed so that the transition period and the learning process in general at the elementary school level can be passed optimally (Direktorat PAUD, 2020).

Child transition period is a critical period in which many changes occur. Especially in learning situations from kindergarten to elementary school. There will be many problems that teachers will find in preparing children to enter elementary school both in the process until the end of the transition. The following are some of the obstacles that the teacher found based on the results of the interviews, including: *First*, there are elementary school demands that require children to have the ability to read, write, and count. *Second*, there is a lack of understanding about school readiness and a desire for children to enter their favorite elementary school, encouraging parents to intervene in kindergartens so that they can provide learning to read, write, and count for their children. *Third*, there are children who do not have complete readiness at a mature age.

CONCLUSION

Kindergarten teachers have various perceptions of school readiness. Whereas school readiness is about age maturity, achievement of the development of 6 aspects (cognitive, language, social-emotional, physical-motor, religious and moral values, and art), as well as the ability to read, write and count. The existence of this diversity of perceptions has an impact on the stimulation provided in preparing children to enter elementary school. The teacher provides learning programs in developing 6 aspects of development through a variety of fun games and habituation. Apart from that, it also provides additional programs for reading, writing and arithmetic which are integrated in the learning process as well as in the form of additional tutoring. The perception and stimulation of kindergarten teachers is based on the problem that elementary school demands require that children have the ability to read, write, and count. In addition, there is a lack of understanding about school readiness and the hope of enrolling children in their favorite schools, encouraging parents to intervene in kindergartens so that they can teach reading, writing and arithmetic to their children. It is hoped that some of these conditions can become a reference for further research on school readiness, for example efforts that can be made to increase the understanding and skills of teachers and parents as an effort to optimize children's readiness to enter a next level.

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