

## **Profile of Children's *Calistung* (Reading, Writing and Arithmetic Skills) in Early Childhood**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*The importance of reading, writing and arithmetic for early childhood has become a major concern for educators and parents. The calistung abilities (reading, writing and arithmetic) that children have from an early age will make it easier for them to take further education. The purpose of this study was to describe the ability to read, write, and arithmetic in early childhood. This research is a qualitative descriptive study that describes the ability to read, write and arithmetic in Keleton Senye Kindergarten, Central Aceh Regency. This research was conducted on 4 early childhood students, consisting of two boys and two girls. Data analysis techniques use data analysis techniques proposed by Miles and Huberman. The results showed that of the 4 children studied, AF and NF subjects did not meet the reading and numeracy indicators, NR subjects did not meet the reading and writing ability indicators and AM subjects did not meet the reading ability indicators. In principle, learning in early childhood is learning carried out by children through games that are given in stages that are fun and interesting for children.*

**Keywords:** *Arithmetic, Early Childhood, Profile, Reading, Writing*

### **ABSTRAK**

Pentingnya membaca, menulis dan berhitung pada anak usia dini menjadi perhatian utama bagi pendidik dan orang tua. Kemampuan calistung (membaca, menulis dan berhitung) yang dimiliki anak sejak dini akan memudahkan mereka dalam menempuh pendidikan lebih lanjut. Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk mendeskripsikan kemampuan membaca, menulis dan berhitung pada anak usia dini. Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian deskriptif kualitatif yang mendeskripsikan kemampuan membaca, menulis dan berhitung di TK Keleton Senye Kabupaten Aceh Tengah. Penelitian ini dilakukan pada dua siswa laki-laki dan dua siswa perempuan. Teknik pengumpulan data dalam penelitian ini menggunakan lembar tugas dan wawancara semi terstruktur. Teknik analisis data menggunakan teknik

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analisis data yang dikemukakan oleh Miles dan Huberman. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa dari 4 anak yang diteliti, subjek AF dan NF belum memenuhi indikator kemampuan membaca dan berhitung, subjek NR belum memenuhi indikator kemampuan membaca dan menulis dan subjek AM belum memenuhi indikator kemampuan membaca. Pada prinsipnya, belajar pada anak usia dini merupakan pembelajaran yang dilakukan oleh anak melalui permainan secara bertahap yang menyenangkan dan menarik bagi anak.

**Kata Kunci:** Anak Usia Dini, Berhitung, Membaca, Menulis, Profil.

## INTRODUCTION

Growth and development in children is a very important period because it is during the basic growth period that will influence and determine the next child's development. Child development patterns are complex because they involve biological, cognitive and socio-emotional processes (Gesell, 2021; Roostin, 2018). Child development is a process of changing behavior from immature to mature, from simple to perfect, a process from dependence to becoming a more independent person (Meadow, 2020; Ulfa, 2020). Early childhood education's main purpose is to assist a child's social-emotional, physical, cognitive, and language development (Head, 2016). This development is the basis for the next development. Likewise, moral development and the basics of personality were also formed during this period. These developments need to be stimulated from an early age, therefore early childhood needs to be introduced to *calistung* (reading, writing, and arithmetic). However, learning to read, write and count in early childhood is something that is considered more important in early childhood education by parents. Most parents want their children to be able to read, write and arithmetic at the age of early childhood, because for parents, children who can read, write and count faster are a matter of pride. Most parents believe that a child with academic skills will be able to read, write, and do basic math in order to remain in primary school (Dizon-Ross, 2019; Pertiwi & Djoehaeni, 2021).

The introduction of *calistung* which is three activities, reading-writing-arithmetic, including the introduction of letters for children is the initial process of learning to read, the introduction of numbers is the first step for children to be able to count. Children's early math and reading experiences are critical to their academic success in the future (Huntsinger et al., 2016; McClelland & Cameron, 2019). As a result, early childhood schools incorporate a variety of learning experiences across the curriculum by exposing children to hands-on projects that incorporate math, science, language, social studies, arts, and other subjects (Bers, 2018). Reading is a type of cognitive activity in which the visual receptors (eyes) receive stimulus in the shape of letters and other reading cues, which are subsequently transmitted to the brain (Surya, 2015). Writing is an important practice in early childhood classrooms because it helps children integrate important language and emerging literacy abilities that help them learn to read (Gerde et al., 2012). Mathematical skills learned in early childhood are extremely important for school success. Number recognition, number sequence, counting, ordinality, relative size, addition, and subtraction are among the arithmetic skills taught in early childhood (Vogt et al., 2018). Reading, writing, and arithmetic skills

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refer to a child's capacity to comprehend letters, words, and readings before learning to write and count numbers.

The *calistung* abilities (reading, writing and arithmetic) that children have from an early age will make it easier for them to take further education. *Calistung* ability that is possessed from a young age will show a child developing at a mature level, the child's ability to adapt to the surrounding community and environment, making it easier for children to get along with their peers or even more mature people, and children learn to respect others (Pratiwi, 2015). The world of early childhood is a world of play, by playing, children learn everything they want to know and need as provisions for tomorrow. Learning through play with engaging media is one of the concepts of early childhood education (Lisnawati, 2020). Therefore, early childhood education is based on the motto "*play while learning*". So that in an early childhood education institution the teacher can present learning with the play method. Through playing children can recognize the rules, socialize, place themselves, manage emotions, tolerance, cooperation, yielding, being sporty, and other positive attitudes. They have social characteristics that allow them to be friendly with only one or two people at a time and to easily switch friends and playmates in small groups. Depending on their socioeconomic class and gender, they play in different ways. Disagreements are common in early infancy and are simple to resolve (Istiyani, 2014). By the time children enter the age of 4, they will learn to read, write and count with great enthusiasm (Montessori et al., 2014). On the other hand, if children have to wait until they are six and seven years old, as is done in schools, this task will become difficult because the period of sensitivity to language has passed (Rahayu, 2018). Competence in reading, writing, and arithmetic as a basic lesson in an effort to equip early childhood to enter the level of education in elementary school. Reading and writing provide language development abilities for childhood, allowing them to express their wants and needs as well as absorb and share knowledge. Meanwhile, arithmetic helps childhood develop features of logical reasoning, particularly by maximizing the left hemisphere's function (Pratiwi, 2015).

Although several studies state that *calistung* has a positive impact, there are also studies that state that *calistung* also has a negative impact. The negative impact of *calistung* learning that does not take into account the psychological condition of early childhood will have a psychological impact, for example, children experience boredom in learning, their playing time is reduced by the density of their formal study schedule (Ghinta Wulansuci & Kurniati, 2019). Therefore, the presentation of *calistung* material must be adapted to the nature of early childhood learning, which is still in the stage of the world of play. Through playing children can learn many things, without the child realizing it and without feeling burdened. Presentation of *calistung* material using games that provide an enjoyable environment, allowing children to learn through simple activities (Lisnawati, 2020).

Based on observations of children aged 5-6 years at the Keleton Senye Kindergarten, Central Aceh Regency, it was still found that children with children's language skills were still not clear in conversing with their peers, what is conveyed by the teacher, the child still does not catch the teacher's conversation, the child cannot quickly catch the teacher's question, the child cannot repeat (imitate) the sentence said by the teacher. Therefore, researchers are interested in conducting research on the *calistung* profile (ability to read, write, and arithmetic) in early

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childhood. The purpose of this study was to describe the ability to read, write and arithmetic early childhood students at Keleton Senye Kindergarten. It is hoped that this research can be used as reference material and evaluation of children's reading, writing and arithmetic skills for teachers, parents and early childhood.

## **METHOD**

This research is a qualitative descriptive study that describes the ability to read, write and arithmetic in Keleton Senye Kindergarten, Central Aceh Regency. The first stage of this research is to conduct observations, interviews with teachers to find out the level of equal ability of students, and conduct pre-research in Keleton Senye Kindergarten. The second stage is designing and validating the research instrument. Next, group students with the same level of ability and give tests and interviews to research subjects. The population is 20 children, consisting of 13 girls and 7 boys. The sample selection was carried out by observation using an observation sheet so that four early childhood students were selected, namely two boys and two girls. Therefore, this study was conducted on 4 early childhood students consisting of two boys and two girls. Data collection techniques in this study used a task sheet and semi-structured interviews. The task sheet used is an assignment to describe the ability to read, write and arithmetic. Data analysis techniques use data analysis techniques proposed by Miles and Huberman which consist of data reduction, data presentation and conclusions. The researcher compiled a worksheet for reading, writing and arithmetic skills. Reading assignment sheets are arranged according to easy, medium and difficult criteria. The preparation of indicators on reading, writing and arithmetic skills was compiled based on the Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia Number 137 of 2014 concerning National Standards for Early Childhood Education (Standar Nasional Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini, 2014). Table 1 below describes the indicators of reading, writing and arithmetic skills that have been compiled by researchers:

**Table 1.** Indicators of Reading, Writing and Arithmetic Skills

<b>Reading</b>	<b>Writing</b>	<b>Arithmetic</b>
Pronounce the sound of the letters correctly and clearly	Write words neatly	Recognize the count of 1-10 in order
Distinguish letters correctly	Completeness of words	Pointing to the numbers 1-10 with the symbol of the number
Pronounce the word clearly	Write the name of the object correctly	Connecting numbers with objects 1 to 10

In reading skills, the assignment sheet given to students is divided into three criteria; easy criteria, medium criteria and difficult criteria.

Kriteria Mudah:		Kriteria Sedang:		Kriteria Sulit:
POHON	TAMAN	ADA JAKA	SAYA BISA BACA	PADA MALAM KAMIS LALU
PENSIL	PERMEN	ADA MAMA	IBU BAWA CUKA	TIBA-TIBA LAMPU PADAM
JERUK	CINCIN	INI PAPA	KITA SATU NUSA	ADAM JUGA ADA DI SANA
TANGAN	BUKU	SAYA BACA	SAYA SUKA YULI	DI MANA-MANA ADA LIMBAH
KURSI	GELAS	ITU IBU SAYA	AYU DARI SURABAYA	IBU BELI MADU JUGA CABE
				WAKTU PUKUL TUJUH MALAM

**Figure 1.** Reading skill assignment sheet with easy, medium and difficult criteria

In writing skill, the researcher gave a picture and students were asked to write the name of the picture.



**Figure 2.** Writing skills worksheet

In arithmetic skills, the researcher gave pictures of objects and the children were asked to relate numbers to pictures, show numbers and add up.

Penjumlahan:

Bilangan		Benda benda
2	..	
4	..	
7	..	
9	..	
1	..	
8	..	
10	..	
3	..	

**Figure 3.** Arithmetic skills worksheet

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Research conducted on 4 children through reading, writing and arithmetic skills task sheets and interviews obtained the following results, AF subjects, on reading skills children are able to pronounce the sounds of letters correctly and clearly, children are able to distinguish letters correctly, but children are not able to pronounce words clearly. In writing skills, children are able to write words neatly and cleanly, children are able to complete words correctly and children are able to write names of objects correctly. In arithmetic skills, children recognize numbers 1-

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10 in sequence, children are able to point to numbers 1-10 with number symbols but children are not able to connect numbers with objects 1 to 10.

NF subject, on reading skills, children are not able to pronounce the sounds of letters correctly and clearly, children are not able to distinguish letters correctly and children are not able to pronounce words clearly. In writing skills, children are able to write words neatly and cleanly, children are able to complete words correctly and children are able to write names of objects correctly. In arithmetic skills, children are not able to recognize numbers 1-10 in sequence, but children are able to point to numbers 1-10 with number symbols, children are able to connect numbers with objects 1 to 10.

NR subject, on reading skills children are not able to pronounce letter sounds correctly and clearly, children are not able to distinguish letters correctly, children are not able to pronounce words clearly. In writing skills, children are able to write words cleanly and neatly, children can complete words correctly but children cannot write names of objects correctly. In arithmetic skills, children are able to recognize numbers 1-10 in sequence, children are able to point to numbers 1-10 with number symbols and children are able to connect numbers with objects 1 to 10.

AM subject, on reading skills, the child is able to pronounce the sounds of the letters correctly and clearly but the child is not able to distinguish the letters correctly, the child is able to pronounce the words clearly. In writing skills, children write words cleanly and neatly, children are able to complete words correctly, children write names of objects correctly. In arithmetic skills, children recognize numbers 1-10 in sequence, children are able to point to numbers 1-10 with number symbols, children are able to connect numbers with objects 1 to 10.

The reading skills of the 4 children studied, 2 children namely NF and NR subjects who have not been able to read. This can be seen from the non-fulfillment of the reading indicators. Meanwhile, the subject of AM just hasn't been able to distinguish letters correctly. Based on Ministerial Regulation Number 137 of 2014 on the scope of literacy development for children aged 4-5 years, namely children are able to recognize symbols, recognize the sounds of animals/objects around them, make meaningful scribbles, imitate (write and pronounce) the letter A -Z So that indicators for children aged 4-5 years in early reading abilities should be able to recognize symbols/symbols of letters, explore various writings, even pictures, and recognize the sounds of animals/objects around them. Early reading skills in children will grow and develop effectively if they are stimulated utilizing ideas based on early childhood development (Artini et al., 2019). Mentioning the symbols of known letters, recognizing the sound of letters from the names of objects around them, mentioning groups of pictures that have the same sound or letter, and comprehending the relationship between sounds and letter shapes are all examples of children's development in the area of reading (Cilaudia et al., 2018; Imran & Suryani, 2018; Trisnayanti & Pura, 2018).

One of the causes contributing to these issues is that when it comes to teaching reading, teachers are more likely to provide students merely instructions or lectures during the learning process. This causes children who are unable to read to just recall what the teacher says, rather than paying attention to the existing letter sequence. Furthermore, the usage of learning media in schools is still insufficient; teachers tend to just write letters on the chalkboard, after which

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the students pronounce the sounds of the symbols/symbols written. This is undoubtedly less engaging, and it causes children to get bored and sluggish as a result of their inability to keep up with the learning process. The role of parents is also very important in growing children's reading skills. The role of parents is a very influential input in reading skills that lead to positive cognitive development for children (Price & Kalil, 2019).

On the ability to write, only 1 child, namely the subject of NR who has not been able to write the names of objects correctly. Writing is an important practice in early childhood classrooms because it helps children integrate important language and emerging literacy abilities that help them learn to read (Gerde et al., 2012). For children's writing development, it's crucial to understand the relationship between oral and written language (Bingham et al., 2018). Writing skills in early childhood are also inseparable from the important role of a teacher. Teachers' encouraging, modeling, and scaffolding activities in a variety of instructional routines should be developmentally appropriate (i.e., whole group, small group, and free choice; Gerde et al., 2015; Guo et al., 2012). When writing and play are integrated, teacher will be able to encourage and engage children in writing teaching that is relevant to their interests and development. Furthermore, children can shape and enhance nascent conceptions and understandings of writing and how it works by including writing into their play (Bingham et al., 2018).

Writing is a crucial emergent literacy ability that builds the groundwork for later literacy abilities and reading proficiency in children. Encourage children to read what they have written in order to help them understand the crucial link between reading and writing: reading what you have written (Gerde et al., 2012). Writing must be clearly and meaningfully included into early childhood programs because it is a skill that substantially improves reading ability. Children will benefit from writing opportunities as they acquire and build emergent literacy skills necessary for reading readiness skills (Gerde et al., 2012).

Furthermore, in arithmetic skills, there is only 1 child, namely the NF subject who has not been able to recognize numbers 1-10 in sequence. Early childhood math skills are extremely important for school learning outcomes. In early childhood, children's arithmetic abilities vary significantly, according to variances in the home learning environment (Anders et al., 2012; Sonnenschein & Galindo, 2015). Engel examined the relationship between time spent on maths as reported by teachers and children's math achievement and found no correlation. They came to the conclusion that teachers focus on curricular subject that isn't demanding enough for most children, such as counting and shapes (Engel et al., 2016). Despite evidence and advocacy for the importance of mathematics education for young children, mathematics in early childhood is underemphasized, particularly when compared to reading (Engel et al., 2013).

What kind of maths education would this be? First, children should engage in mathematical play. Their non-cognitive skills will improve as a result, and their cognitive skills will improve as well as they gain experience with mathematics (Watanabe, 2019). Furthermore, the role of parents at home is also very important in the child's learning process. Parents can do simple math games to develop children's cognitive skills and non-cognitive skills (Watanabe, 2019). Role-play or board and card games, could be used to develop innovative methods teaching early mathematics (Vogt et al., 2018). Play-based approaches to mathematics in

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early childhood education must have four aspects: (i) the mathematical material must be integrated into the game's mechanics; (ii) it must be presented appropriately; (iii) it must be necessary for further learning; and (iv) the game must be suited for the child's specific learning needs (Gasteiger, 2015). Therefore, learning mathematics becomes very interesting for early childhood.

The ability to read, write and arithmetic which is built in children must be in accordance with the development of the child. If these abilities are demanded in early childhood, it will cause academic stress at an early age (Ghina Wulansuci, 2021). Early childhood does not have to be forced to learn to read, write, or count; instead, letters, numbers, and simple concepts are introduced gradually (Dian Pertiwi et al., 2021; Ghina Wulansuci, 2021). The role of teachers and parents is highly recommended and needed in building reading, writing and arithmetic skills in early childhood. The ability of teachers to manage learning at an early age in schools is an important concern that must be seriously considered. Parents should be given simple examples in developing early children reading, writing, and arithmetic skills, such as writing on sand or soil, counting through games, or reading through letter or number cards, in addition to material provided by teachers at school. Parents can practice basic techniques to promote children's reading, writing, and arithmetic skills in addition to learning new knowledge on reading, writing, and arithmetic for early childhood (Putri et al., 2020). Therefore, the ability to read, write and arithmetic in early childhood is allowed but must be in accordance with the rules and stages of child development so as not to make children burdened. The suggestion that is highly expected to be carried out in the future is the suitability of the early childhood learning model with the child's developmental stage so that the expected abilities do not interfere with the child. This research is only limited to describing children's reading, writing and arithmetic skills, it is hoped that in the future it can be expanded with other abilities or learning models that can accommodate children's abilities at an early childhood.

## CONCLUSION

Based on research findings that are in accordance with the research objectives, AF and NF subjects have not met the indicators of reading and arithmetic skills, NR subjects have not met the indicators of reading and writing skills and AM subjects have not met the indicators of reading skills. In principle, learning in early childhood is learning carried out by children through games that are given in stages that are fun and interesting for children. The ability to read, write, and count in early childhood is allowed, so future recommendations for educators and parents must be carried out in accordance with the principles and stages of child development so as not to disturb or burden children. Therefore, reading, writing and arithmetic skills for early childhood can encourage a comprehensive understanding for children in the learning process.

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