

# Exploring Early Childhood Interests and Talents Through Role-Play

## Methods

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### Abstract

Children's interests and talents are two very important things to develop from an early age. Both can be the foundation for children's future development, both in academic and non-academic fields. One effective method to explore children's interests and talents is through role-playing. This method is not only fun for children, but also full of educational benefits. Exploring children's talents and understanding their potential from an early age is the key to helping them grow and develop optimally. Children have their own world full of curiosity and uniqueness, through observation and deep understanding of their responses and behavior. We can find valuable clues about the interests and talents they are born with. Providing freedom to explore and the opportunity to try various activities is an effective way to help children find their own interests and talents. This process is not only about finding a particular talent but also about building self-confidence and the ability to adapt to various situations. In the role-playing method, the themes that can be given are themes that are close to the child's world, such as family and profession through these themes, role-playing will be more effective because children know and directly play the characters they will play and children will interact with other friends. So that social development can be honed to the maximum.

*Keywords:* Children's Interests and Talents; Early Childhood Development; School; Role Playing

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### Introduction

Early childhood is when an individual experiences a very rapid growth and development process. At this early age, it is a stage in developing the potential that exists in the child. According to Ningtiyasin Ilsa & Nurhafizah, 2020, early childhood is a child aged 0-8 years whose individual has their own uniqueness. In early childhood, children enter the golden age because at that time it is a period of sensitivity of children to the guidance given in developing intelligence in children by providing stimuli according to their developmental stage (Ariyanti, 2016; Latifah, 2020; QYH Sukatin et al., 2020). Early childhood is a very important center of attention to be given stimulation so that each child develops according to their level and stage of development by providing various stimulations that stimulate children in developing the potential they already have (Priyanto, 2014; Suryana, 2018; Khadijah et al., 2022).

Early childhood education is a basic process that is shown to early childhood in the formation, and development of personality optimization and integrated potential by providing stimulation according to the needs of child growth and development. So that later children can work together, with friends, easily express opinions in front of many people and easily interact (Widodo, 2020). Playing a very important role in life, it is necessary to know how it develops and influences personal and social adjustment (S. Sukatin et al., 2020). Basically, recognizing and appreciating children's interests from an early age is a long-term investment in forming a creative, enthusiastic generation that is ready to face future challenges. Every child carries unique potential and talents that can be developed from an early age (Lubis et al., 2022). It is important for us as parents and educators to understand the important role in supporting and exploring children's potential from the start (Rijkiyani et al., 2022; 2018; Son, 2023). Through a good approach, we can create an environment that stimulates and supports the development of their potential (Hasbullah & Nurhasanah, 2024). The role-playing method is a learning activity used by educators to improve the performance of students to gain experience in acting and is one of the efforts to develop children's self-confidence (Pertiwi & Zahro, 2018; Zandika, 2019).

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According to Zaini (2015) Early childhood education is often faced with various problems, both related to the field of development and social relations. Through role-playing, children try to explore relationships between humans by acting them out and discussing them so that together they can explore feelings, attitudes, values, and various problem-solving strategies. As a learning model, role-playing is rooted in personal and social dimensions. From the personal dimension, this model tries to help children find meaning in the social environment that is beneficial to them.

The role-playing method is a way for educators to present teaching materials and learning experiences in which students play various specific roles that are in accordance with the storyline being played, for example, children playing doctors, buying and selling vegetables, and so on (Mardiani & Yetti, 2020). The learning activities carried out will be more appropriate and smooth if educators can utilize this role-playing method correctly, which must first be adjusted to the conditions of the child who will play the role (Tenriana & others, 2024). The emphasis of this role-playing method is on the storyline, which causes children to think systematically so that children can interact, communicate, and socialize with their environment and friends (Diana & others, 2024).

Playing greatly influences a child's social and personality development. Playing is an activity that helps children to relate to their surroundings and shows the child's character Early (2020). Role-playing methods in early childhood education (PAUD) in Indonesia reveal both successes and challenges. While some institutions have implemented role-playing effectively (Hasanah, 2020), others face difficulties in maximizing its potential. Teachers often struggle with creating engaging activities and applying role-play across various themes. Factors supporting successful implementation include teacher creativity, appropriate media, and children's enthusiasm. However, obstacles such as limited teacher knowledge, inadequate facilities, and children's egocentrism can hinder effectiveness. To address these challenges, providing teacher training and workshops is recommended. Additionally, repeated application of role-playing methods across different themes can enhance children's language development. Overall, mastering various teaching methods is crucial for PAUD teachers to promote children's holistic development (Tanu, 2019). Therefore, in this study, the author raises the title *Recognizing the Interests and Talents of Early Childhood Through Role Playing Methods*.

## Method

The method used in this study is using the role-playing method. Role-playing is a method where children play certain characters, situations, or professions (Khoerunnisa, 2015; Agung & Asmira, 2018). For example, children pretend to be doctors, teachers, police officers, or even characters from fairy tales (Agustin, 2022). In this process, children use their imagination to play the role, while interacting with their environment and friends. Role-playing has various benefits in exploring children's interests and talents. First, this activity can stimulate children's creativity and imagination, encouraging them to create stories, solve problems, and think critically, which can lead to interest in art, literature, or science. In addition, role-playing also helps develop social and emotional skills, as children learn to interact, communicate, cooperate, and empathize with others, which are important for emotional intelligence. Furthermore, through role-playing, parents and teachers can discover hidden talents that may not be apparent in everyday activities, such as a child's tendency to teach or interest in science. In addition, success in playing a certain role also increases children's self-confidence, giving them the belief that they are able to overcome challenges. Finally, role-playing integrates learning holistically, where children gain cognitive knowledge, motor skills, and social, and emotional skills simultaneously (Widyasari, 2010; Sit et al., 2016; Sitepu, Marlina & others, 2019).

## Results and Discussion

This study involved 30 students aged between 6 and 8 years. Each student was observed during 10 role-playing sessions with the theme of family and profession. The assessment was carried out based on several indicators, such as enthusiasm, active involvement, and initiative in developing roles. The purpose of the study was to evaluate the student's ability to engage in role-playing activities and to assess their level of participation and creativity in portraying different family and professional roles. The findings of this research will provide valuable insights into the students' social and cognitive development through role-play activities.

Table 1. Distribution of student responses to the role-playing method

Category	Very Enthusiastic/Active/Initiative	Enthusiastic/Active/Initiative	Quite Enthusiastic/Active/Initiative
Enthusiasm	15 participants (50%)	10 participants (10%)	5 participants (17%)
Active Involvement	12 participants (40%)	13 participants (43%)	5 participants (17%)
Initiatives in Developing Roles	10 participants (10%)	15 participants (50%)	5 participants (17%)

Table 1 provides an overview of the distribution of student responses related to the role-play method as measured through three main aspects: enthusiasm, active involvement, and initiative. As many as 50% of participants showed very high enthusiasm, while 33% felt enthusiastic, and 17% were only quite enthusiastic. In terms of active involvement, 40% of participants were very active during the role-play, with another 43% active, and 17% quite active. In addition, in terms of initiative, 33% of participants were very proactive, while the majority (50%) showed good initiative, and 17% were quite proactive. Overall, most students gave positive responses to the role-play method, especially in terms of involvement and initiative.

Table 2. Distribution of interests, talent development, and social development of students

Category	Sub Category	Number of participants	Percentage (%)
Student Interests	Family Theme		
	Very High Interest	18	60%
	High Interest	9	30%
	Medium Interest	3	10%
	Profession Theme		
	Very High Interest	12	40%
Talent Development	High Interest	10	33%
	Medium Interest	8	27%
	Leadership	9	30%
Social Development	Creativity	12	40%
	Communication	8	27%
	Collaboration Ability	17	57%
	Social Interaction	20	67%

Table 2 presents the results of the distribution of interests, talent development, and social development of students during role-playing activities. In the theme of "family," 60% of participants had very high interest, while in the theme of "profession," 40% showed very high interest. Regarding talent development, 30% of participants showed leadership potential, 40% showed creativity, and 27% had good communication skills. In terms of social development, 57% of participants showed good cooperation skills, while 67% experienced an increase in social interaction. This table shows that the role-playing method is effective in exploring interests and talents and improving children's social development.

Table 3. Average score of student responses

Category	Average Score (Scale 1-5)
Enthusiasm	4.2
Active Involvement	4.1
Initiative	3.8
Interest in Family Themes	4.5
Interest in Profession Theme	4.0

Table 3 shows the average score of students' responses to the role-play method measured based on several main aspects: enthusiasm, active involvement, initiative, and interest in two themes, namely family and profession. The average enthusiasm score reached 4.2 on a scale of 1 to 5, indicating a fairly high level of enthusiasm among participants. Active involvement obtained an average score of 4.1, which also reflects significant participation from students. Initiative in developing roles obtained an average score of 3.8, indicating that most participants tried to develop their roles well, although some needed more encouragement. Meanwhile, interest in the family theme was higher with an average of 4.5

compared to interest in the profession theme which received a score of 4.0. Overall, these scores indicate that the role-play method was well received by students and was effective in encouraging their participation and developing their potential.

Every individual certainly has different and unique characteristics. Likewise with the abilities and potentials they have, of course, they are also different. As with early childhood, they have different talents and interests with all their respective shortcomings and advantages (Suryana, 2016; Surya, 2021). This is an important factor that can help them achieve their goals and success in their future lives. Regarding children's interests and talents, both are interrelated. However, both have different meanings. The definition of talent itself is an innate ability that has existed since an individual was born and still needs to be trained and developed. In order to be realized and implemented properly, talent must be supported by interests, exercises, knowledge and experience (Magdalena et al., 2020; Murray, 2020).



Figure 1. Atmosphere during the teaching and learning process at the PAUD unit

Games that can develop children's social skills are games that children play in groups or cooperative games. According to Sherman's opinion in Perlina & others (2020), cooperative games are games that are played by children in groups and work together to achieve common goals. This is also in line with According to Fadlillah & others (2019), a cooperative play activity will involve children in play activities with their friends which are marked by the division of tasks or division of roles to achieve a goal in play activities, as well as with the existence of cooperation activities. The role-playing method is a learning activity used by educators for students' performance skills in terms of gaining experience in their roles and one of the efforts to develop children's language, social, and self-confidence (Fauliani, 2022; 2019; Ghoziyah & Lessy, 2023).



Figure 2. Atmosphere during role play in PAUD units

Role-playing activities are evidence of behavior carried out by children and are characterized by stories about objects and repeating fun actions that are remembered by children (Yunita et al., 2022). Children's involvement in role-playing activities and moving towards a higher stage than other children is said to be collective symbiosis and oral conversations that children do themselves, namely idiosyncratic soliloquies (Putri, 2018; Amal et al., 2019). According to Jamilah (2019) The role-playing method is a method used to imitate someone's behavior in a drama. The behavior emphasized in the role-playing method is related to social relationships. That the role-playing method utilizes kinesthetic or movement influences because the subject is asked to play a certain role. This method is used to develop interpersonal skills or the ability of individuals to interact with others. So in playing activities, a child has a fairly large role in developing his social skills before the child starts making friends. Playing activities prepare children to face their social experiences. Role-playing is where children in this game are actively involved in playing a certain role (Wardana & Nurfuadi, 2023; Harianja et al., 2023).

According to Maghfiroh et al., (2020) Role-playing is very important for the cognitive, social, and emotional development of children aged 3-6 years". Role-playing is divided into two, namely macro and micro roles, so through role-playing children can develop social-emotional, namely children's self-confidence. According to Febriani & others, (2019) the role-playing method can build children's social skills and sympathy, where children are placing themselves in the experience of being someone else", will be able to help children to appreciate other people's feelings and develop empathy. In developing the social skills of early childhood can be done through the role-playing method so that children are more accustomed to being enthusiastic and showing empathy, respecting others, and following the applicable rules.

## Conclusions

Role-playing is an effective and fun method to explore children's interests and talents. By giving children the opportunity to explore and imagine through this game, parents and teachers can help direct their development in a positive direction. More than just entertainment, role-playing can be a powerful tool in preparing children for a successful and happy future. Early childhood is an individual who is in the most important early period of life because the development process is developing very rapidly at this time. Early childhood has unique characteristics, has different potential, interests, and talents, and has its own characteristics that are in line with the age stage. The role-playing method is a method that supports the development of various aspects, especially in the learning and social development of children. These results are based on the use of the role-playing method, children will develop greatly through playing together, and children will interact with each other, so that children are interested and active in participating in learning, in addition to being accustomed to training and increasing a sense of helping each other, creating different activities at each meeting in the classroom so that later the learning process is more fun for children and more visible desire to help in playing together. this method will be very meaningful for children and can improve children's social development. Therefore, educators need to create activities related to activities to improve children's social development so that their development can be honed as optimally as possible.

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