

Optimization of Educational Play Methods to Enhance Children's Concentration at TK Qur'ani Darul Muhsinin NW Gerantung, Embung Kandong Village

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ABSTRAK

This study aims to examine the optimization of educational play methods in improving early childhood concentration at TK Qur'ani Darul Muhsinin NW Gerantung, Embung Kandong Village, during the 2024/2025 academic year. The core issues explored in this research include how teachers design and implement educational play strategies, the extent to which these strategies enhance children's ability to concentrate, and the various supporting and inhibiting factors that influence their effectiveness in classroom practice. This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach to gain an in-depth understanding of the learning processes occurring in natural settings. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and documentation. Informants consist of Group A and Group B teachers, the school principal, and selected parents, all chosen purposively based on their relevance to the research focus. The findings reveal that the use of educational play methods—such as puzzles, building blocks, movement-and-song games, storytelling, and role-playing—significantly enhances children's concentration. These activities help young learners focus their attention, maintain concentration for longer periods, and reduce distractions that commonly occur during learning. Supporting factors include teachers' creativity in selecting and modifying educational play tools, strong support from the school principal, and the availability of learning media that encourage active participation. On the other hand, inhibiting factors consist of limited learning time, insufficient variation of educational play tools, and differences in children's developmental levels, particularly related to attention span. Overall, the study underscores the importance of integrating educational play strategies into early childhood learning to create an enjoyable, effective, and child-centered environment that supports optimal concentration development.

INTRODUCTION

Early childhood education holds a crucial place in supporting children's holistic development, particularly in cognitive, socio-emotional, and behavioral domains. At this developmental stage, children require learning experiences that are meaningful, engaging, and aligned with their unique characteristics. Given that play is the natural context through which children learn, teachers must structure learning activities that stimulate curiosity while nurturing foundational skills such as focus, attention, and self-regulation (Puspita Sari et al., 2022). In this

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regard, the role of teacher strategy becomes central. Strategy is defined as a plan for utilizing resources to increase the effectiveness of an activity (Yusri, 2020), and in learning, it reflects the overall pattern of teacher–student interactions. Teachers must therefore select and apply appropriate methods to assist young learners in understanding material effectively and systematically (Haryani et al., 2023).

Education in Indonesia is guided by national objectives outlined in the Law on the National Education System (UU No. 20 Tahun 2003), which emphasizes developing learners who are faithful, knowledgeable, creative, and responsible (Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan Republik Indonesia, 2003). Early childhood education (PAUD) is specifically tasked with providing stimulation that supports children’s growth across all developmental domains from birth to age six. National PAUD standards require that learning activities reflect children’s developmental needs and characteristics (Khasanah & Fitri, 2021; Linta Auliasany & Komalasari, 2023). The overall quality of education is thus shaped by improvements in input, process, and output (R. Rahmawati et al., 2024). In fulfilling these demands, teachers must serve as planners, curriculum designers, managers, evaluators, and researchers who master both what to teach and how to teach (Sanjaya, 2007; Nur Kumala et al., 2023). Teacher innovation is therefore essential in selecting strategies that support early childhood development (Suaidah et al., 2023).

A central approach relevant to PAUD is the use of educational play. Play serves as a medium for young children to explore, communicate, and express ideas (Findiarani, 2013). Educational play integrates learning objectives into playful activities designed to support cognitive, language, emotional, and motor development. Through constructive play, exploratory activities, role-play, and physical games, children practice creativity, problem-solving, communication, and coordination. Research indicates that learning through play increases children’s interest and develops positive learning habits (Ecobrick et al., 2023). Nevertheless, its implementation faces challenges such as limited teacher creativity, insufficient materials, and time constraints, even though educational materials can be made from simple or recycled items (Rohmatul et al., 2024).

Concentration is also a crucial component in shaping children’s learning success. In today’s environment, many children experience overstimulation and dense routines that affect their focus (Liberty Barokah et al., 2022). Concentration involves directing attention toward specific tasks over a sustained period, which is essential for cognitive and socio-emotional growth. Teachers must therefore provide environments that support concentration through effective classroom management, adjusting activity duration, providing engaging learning media, and offering emotional support (Nuraida et al., 2024; Afifah et al., 2023). Educational play can serve as a medium that enhances children’s engagement and attention without pressure. Meanwhile, physical activities help manage children’s energy levels and increase readiness to learn. However, when learning demands exceed children’s developmental capacity, attention may decrease, requiring teachers to design flexible and supportive strategies (Fitri et al., 2021; Amalia & Aulina, 2024).

Although numerous studies have examined educational play and children’s concentration, most focus on specific skills and do not address the comprehensive integration of educational play as a strategy to improve concentration. Research on puzzles, for example, highlights fine motor development (Rahmawati, 2015), while studies on brain gym activities emphasize the physical dimension of concentration enhancement (Ningsih & Khotimah, 2018). These studies do not analyze teacher strategies or classroom contexts holistically. Furthermore, there is still limited empirical research on how educational play is optimized in real classroom settings to address low concentration levels, particularly in early childhood institutions with varied resources and learning environments.

Beyond the limited integration of educational play in concentration-related research, there is also a contextual gap in understanding how teachers adapt play activities to situational challenges such as student overcrowding, classroom dynamics, differing student temperaments, or varying developmental readiness. These contextual factors play a significant role in determining whether educational play successfully enhances concentration. This is especially relevant in rural or semi-urban early childhood institutions where teachers often face constraints in media preparation, time allocation, and pedagogical support. This highlights the need for research that not only examines the techniques of educational play but also the obstacles and supports surrounding its implementation in authentic classroom situations.

The preliminary observations at TK Qur'ani Darul Muhsinin illustrate this gap clearly. Children were observed to have low concentration levels during learning activities, particularly during tasks requiring sustained attention. Students were easily distracted, shifted rapidly between activities, and often engaged in behaviors unrelated to teacher instructions. These patterns indicate that traditional learning strategies may not fully meet the developmental needs of children in this context, and there is a need to optimize strategies that align more closely with children's natural modes of learning. Educational play offers a promising alternative, yet its implementation requires careful planning, adaptation, and teacher competence.

To address these issues, this study investigates how teachers at TK Qur'ani Darul Muhsinin optimize educational play methods to enhance children's concentration. The novelty of this research lies in its holistic analysis of educational play—not merely as a playful activity, but as a structured pedagogical strategy embedded within the learning process. The study also explores supporting and inhibiting factors that influence the effectiveness of educational play, providing a comprehensive understanding of how play-based strategies contribute to improving concentration.

This research is guided by the following questions: (1) How do teachers implement educational play methods to enhance children's concentration? (2) How does the optimization of educational play contribute to improving concentration levels? and (3) What supporting and inhibiting factors influence the implementation of educational play at TK Qur'ani Darul Muhsinin? Thus, the objectives of this study are to identify teacher strategies, analyze the effects of educational play on concentration, and examine contextual factors that support or hinder its implementation.

The significance of this study lies in its theoretical and practical contributions. Theoretically, it enriches the literature on early childhood learning by linking educational play with concentration development in a classroom context. Practically, the findings provide guidance for teachers in designing and implementing effective play-based learning strategies that align with children's developmental needs. Furthermore, the study offers implications for early childhood education institutions seeking to improve learning quality through developmentally appropriate and engaging methods. Strengthening concentration in early childhood not only supports immediate learning outcomes but also contributes to long-term academic success and lifelong learning readiness.

METHOD

1. Research Type and Approach

This study employed a qualitative research design with a descriptive approach. This approach was selected because the study aimed to provide an in-depth understanding of teachers' strategies in optimizing educational play methods to improve children's concentration. Qualitative research allowed the researcher to explore the phenomenon holistically within its natural context (Sugiyono, 2018). The descriptive approach was used to portray the processes, behaviors, and experiences of

teachers and young learners during the implementation of educational play activities (Creswell, 2014).

2. Research Setting

The study was conducted from May to June 2025 at TK Qur'ani Darul Muhsinin NW Gerantung, located in Dusun Gerantung, Embung Kandong Village, Terara District, East Lombok Regency, West Nusa Tenggara. This early childhood education institution was selected because it consistently implemented educational play methods to support the cognitive, social, emotional, and spiritual development of young learners. The school's strong emphasis on Islamic-based learning and its active use of play-based strategies made it a relevant setting for investigating the optimization of teaching practices.

3. Research Informants

The informants consisted of teachers and the school principal who were directly involved in the planning and implementation of educational play activities. The main informants included:

- a. Sulmini, the homeroom teacher of Group A (ages 4–5), who was responsible for designing instructional strategies and selecting developmentally appropriate play media.
- b. Ikhwani, the homeroom teacher of Group B (ages 5–6), who developed variations of educational play methods tailored to the characteristics of older early childhood learners.
- c. Widiawati, the principal of TK Qur'ani Darul Muhsinin NW Gerantung, who provided insights regarding school policies, facilities management, and institutional support for innovative play-based learning.

To enrich the data, several parents of learners from Groups A and B were also included as supporting informants. They were selected based on their active involvement in school activities and willingness to provide information. Parental perspectives offered additional insights into behavioral changes observed at home, particularly regarding children's concentration and engagement following educational play activities.

Informants were selected through purposive sampling, which allowed the researcher to choose individuals who possessed the most relevant and in-depth information aligned with the research objectives (Miles & Huberman, 2014). This ensured that the data collected were rich, meaningful, and directly supportive of the study's focus.

4. Data Collection Techniques

Data were collected using three primary techniques:

- a. In-depth interviews with teachers, the principal, and parents to gather information on instructional strategies, experiences, and observed changes in children's concentration.
- b. Participant observation during classroom learning activities, particularly when educational play methods were carried out. This allowed the researcher to capture authentic interactions and classroom dynamics.
- c. Documentation, including teachers' daily notes, lesson plans (RPPH), photographs of learning activities, and children's developmental reports related to concentration and engagement.

5. Data Trustworthiness

Data trustworthiness was ensured through source triangulation and method triangulation to verify the consistency and credibility of findings (Moleong, 2017). Source triangulation was carried out by comparing information obtained from teachers, the principal, and parents, while method triangulation compared data from interviews, observations, and documentation. In addition, member checking was conducted by presenting summaries of findings to the informants to confirm their accuracy and to strengthen the validity of the data.

6. Data Analysis Techniques

The data were analyzed using the interactive model developed by Miles and Huberman, which consisted of three stages:

- a. Data reduction, involving the selection, simplification, and organization of raw data into meaningful categories relevant to the study.
- b. Data display, presented in the form of descriptive narratives, diagrams, or tables to facilitate the interpretation of patterns and relationships.
- c. Conclusion drawing, in which the researcher interpreted the displayed data to understand how teachers optimized educational play methods to enhance children's concentration (Santosa, 2020).

RESULTS

1. Educational Play Methods to Improve Children's Concentration

The findings of the study indicated that educational play methods were implemented adaptively and flexibly by teachers at TK Qur'ani Darul Muhsinin NW Gerantung, in accordance with the characteristics and developmental stages of the children. This approach reflects a non-rigid learning strategy that is centered on the needs of early childhood learners.

In Group A, teacher **Sulmini** implemented number- and letter-arranging games, colored building blocks, and picture puzzles. Meanwhile, in Group B, teacher Ikhwani utilized professional role-play activities, letter flannel boards, and movement-based song activities such as “*Color Jump*” and “*Symmetrical Movement*.” These activities were conducted daily, particularly during core instructional hours from 08:00 to 10:00 WITA, with each session lasting approximately 20–30 minutes. (*Field observations conducted by the researcher in Groups A and B, TK Qur'ani Darul Muhsinin NW Gerantung, 15–28 May 2025.*)

The teachers' strategies extended beyond simply providing a variety of play activities; they also demonstrated strong situational awareness regarding children's engagement levels. For example, when students began showing signs of fatigue or loss of focus, the teachers immediately shifted to more dynamic, movement-oriented activities. This was observed on 15 May 2025, when Sulmini transitioned from a number-arranging activity to a movement and song game after 15 minutes to help restore the children's concentration. (*Researcher's observation notes in Group A, documenting teacher Sulmini's adjustment of play activities due to children's disengagement, 15 May 2025.*)

The teachers also demonstrated active involvement throughout the play sessions. They not only provided instructions but also participated in the activities, offered verbal encouragement such as “*Great job, try again!*”, and organized small groups to maintain children's focus during play. Such engagement was essential for creating meaningful learning experiences.

The educational play methods implemented by the teachers embodied the principles of guided play, in which play is intentionally directed toward specific learning goals while remaining enjoyable. This approach aligns with the theoretical perspective of Hirsh-Pasek et al. (2022), who emphasize that playful, context-rich, and participatory learning environments can stimulate multiple domains of children's development, including cognitive, motor, linguistic, and socio-emotional abilities.

To further illustrate these findings, Figure 1 presents a horizontal bar chart, and Table 1 provides the frequency distribution of the educational play activities employed.

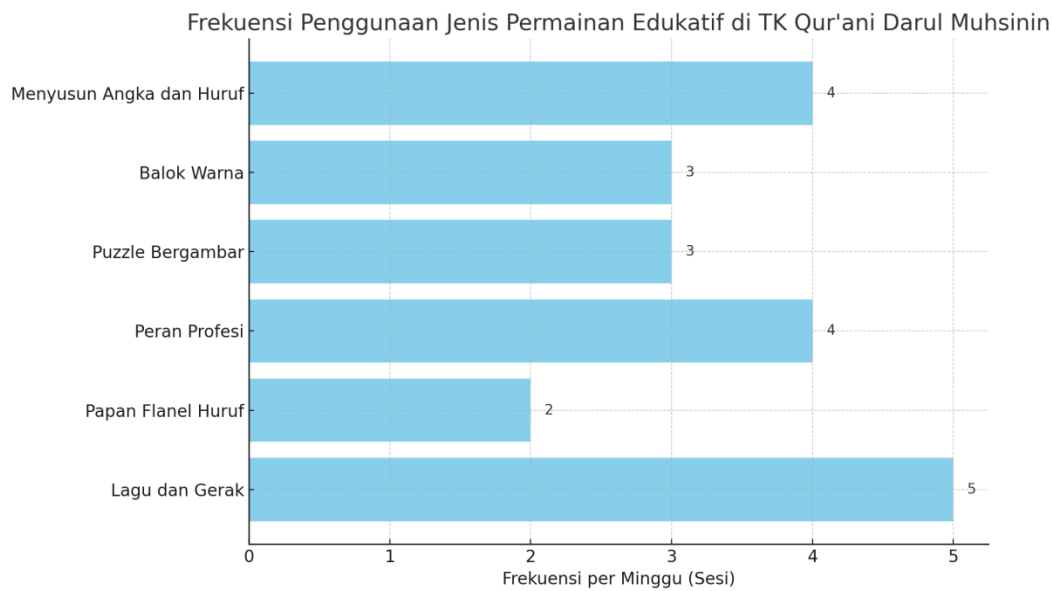


Figure 1. Horizontal Bar Chart of the Frequency of Educational Game Use at TK Qur’ani Darul Muhsinin

Figure 1 presents a horizontal bar chart illustrating the weekly frequency of various types of educational games used at TK Qur’ani Darul Muhsinin, based on the research findings. The chart shows that *Song and Movement Activities* are the most frequently implemented, occurring 5 times per week. *Role-Playing Professions* and *Number and Letter Arrangement Games* follow with 4 sessions each per week, indicating that these activities are also among the preferred instructional strategies used by teachers. Both *Color Blocks* and *Picture Puzzles* are utilized 3 times weekly. Meanwhile, the game with the lowest application frequency is the *Flannel Board Letters*, used only twice per week. These findings highlight that teachers tend to select games involving motor activities and high social interaction to enhance children’s concentration and engagement during the learning process.

Table 1. Weekly Frequency of Educational Game Use

No.	Type of Educational Game	Group	Frequency per Week	Description
1	Song and Movement	A & B	5 times	Used when children become fatigued; effective for restoring concentration
2	Role-Playing Professions	B	4 times	Children pretend to be doctors, teachers, police officers, etc.
3	Number and Letter Arrangement	A	4 times	Trains focus and recognition of symbols (numbers/letters)
4	Color Blocks	A	3 times	Develops visual coordination and color recognition
5	Picture Puzzles	A	3 times	Children assemble images according to sequence
6	Flannel Board Letters	B	2 times	A medium for letter recognition through attach-and-detach activities

Source: Field observations and interviews with teachers Sulmini and Ikhwani, May–June 2025.

Table 1 outlines the types of educational games used at TK Qur’ani Darul Muhsinin along with their primary benefits for improving children’s concentration. Song and Movement Activities are routinely implemented to restore students’ focus when they begin to feel tired or lose attention. This activity also supports the development of gross motor skills and overall body coordination.

Role-Playing Professions encourages the growth of imagination, vocabulary expansion, and children's social understanding. Children show high enthusiasm when acting as familiar figures.

Furthermore, Number and Letter Arrangement Games serve as a concentration-training medium through classification and symbolization tasks, where children are challenged to arrange numbers or letters according to instructions. Color Blocks support visual–motor development by helping children identify colors, categorize objects, and construct simple structures using basic logic. Picture Puzzles stimulate problem-solving abilities, hand-eye coordination, and patience as children work to complete an image. Lastly, Flannel Board Letters provide a learning experience combining visual and tactile elements. The attach-and-detach letter pieces draw children's attention and support early literacy development.

2. Improvement of Children's Concentration

The improvement of children's concentration at TK Qur'ani Darul Muhsinin NW Gerantung was clearly evident through direct observations and in-depth interviews with teachers and parents. The children demonstrated significant progress in attention span, task completion ability, and responsiveness to instructions during educational play activities.

For example, Muhammad Sopian Aziz (Group A), who at the beginning of the observation period often left an activity before completing it, showed remarkable improvement. During the observation session on 4 June 2025, he successfully completed a picture puzzle with sustained effort and full concentration. (*Field Observation of Muhammad Sopian Aziz, Group A, TK Qur'ani Darul Muhsinin, 4 June 2025*).

His success indicates that structured play activities can gradually facilitate the development of attention endurance.

Similarly, Aqila Oktavia (Group B), who was initially easily distracted, demonstrated increased ability to follow instructions during a color-based activity. During the color-card and movement game on 10 June 2025, Aqila not only followed the teacher's directions but was also able to repeat the instructions to her peers. (*Direct Observation of Aqila Oktavia, Group B, 10 June 2025*).

This suggests that children were not only absorbing information but also beginning to internalize activity patterns and demonstrate independent initiative.

Teacher Ikhwani explained that most children now show strong interest in remaining engaged in play activities. "The children can sit longer and stay enthusiastic; they even ask to continue playing even after the time is over," (*Interview with Ikhwani, Group B Teacher, TK Qur'ani Darul Muhsinin NW Gerantung, 10 June 2025*).

Teachers also reported that children had become more capable of managing distractions in the classroom—such as noise or movements from peers—and were able to complete assigned tasks more consistently.

To assess this improvement, teachers used several key indicators: (1) the ability to listen to instructions without requiring repetition, (2) perseverance in completing activities without stopping midway, and (3) documentation of children's development through daily classroom journals that record behavior, interests, and focus duration during activities. (*Interview with Sulmini, Group A Teacher, 10 June 2025*).

These assessments were conducted continuously every week and reported periodically to parents. In addition to teacher reports, evidence from parents also strengthened the observational findings. Mahuni, the parent of Khaila Zahira Pitri, stated that her child's concentration at home improved after consistently participating in educational play activities at school. "Khaila can now sit longer to read letters and complete number games at home because she has become

accustomed to learning through play at school,” (*Interview with Mabuni, Parent of Khaila Zahira Putri (Group A), 13 June 2025*).

These findings align with Weisberg et al. (2021), who concluded that guided play approaches enhance children’s engagement, extend concentration duration, and create a more inclusive and effective learning environment for early childhood education. Structured play supported by teachers, along with a conducive home environment, serves as a key factor in strengthening children’s focus and attention during learning activities.

To clarify the research findings on the improvement of children’s concentration following the implementation of educational play methods, Figure 2 and Table 2 are presented below.

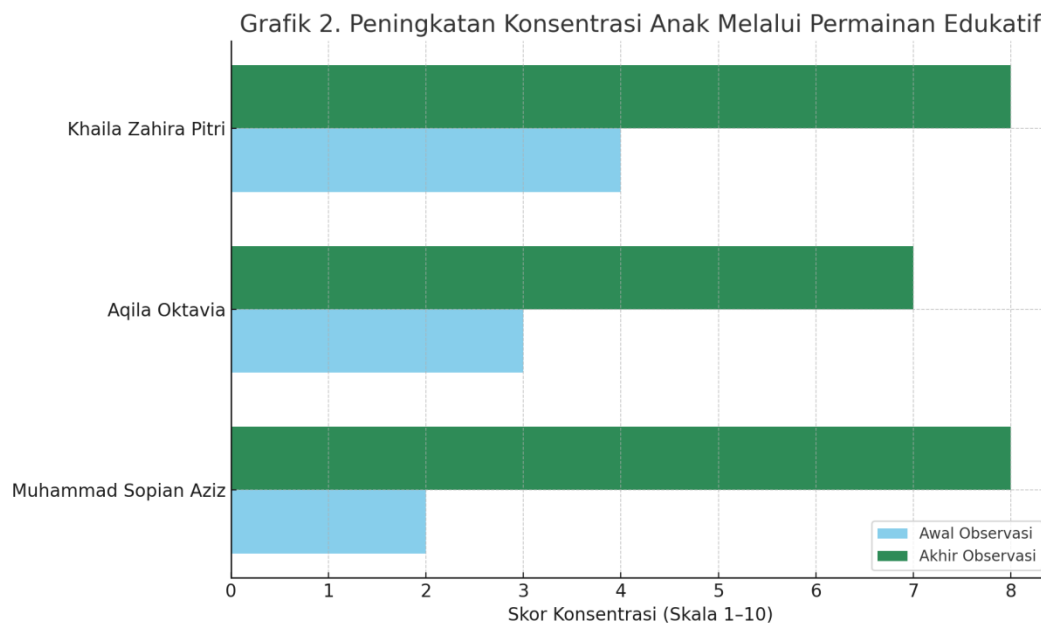


Figure 2 illustrates the improvement in concentration scores among the three observed children.

Muhammad Sopian Aziz showed a significant increase from an initial score of 2 to 8 after the implementation of the educational play method. Aqila Oktavia also demonstrated improvement, rising from a score of 3 to 7, while Khaila Zahira Putri improved from 4 to 8. These increases indicate that the educational play method is effective in helping children become more focused and actively engaged in classroom learning activities.

Table 2. Changes in Children’s Concentration Before and After Educational Play

No.	Child’s Name	Class Group	Initial Concentration Score	Post-Intervention Score	Observed Changes
1	Muhammad Sopian Aziz	A	2	8	Initially easily distracted; now able to independently complete a full picture puzzle.
2	Aqila Oktavia	B	3	7	Shows greater focus in following color-instruction games and able to sit for longer periods.
3	Khaila Zahira Putri	A	4	8	Demonstrates persistence when working with letters and numbers,

No.	Child's Name	Class Group	Initial Concentration Score	Post-Intervention Score	Observed Changes
					both at school and at home.

Table 2 presents changes in children's concentration behavior based on teacher observations and evaluations. Muhammad Sopian Aziz (Group A), who previously struggled to complete tasks, is now able to finish picture puzzles independently. Aqila Oktavia (Group B) exhibited improved focus during color-instruction games. Meanwhile, Khaila Zahira Pitri (Group A) became more persistent in letter-learning activities, both in class and during parent-guided learning at home. The concentration scores were assessed on a scale of 1 to 10, based on indicators such as attention duration, task-completion persistence, and ability to follow teacher instructions. These data were obtained through field observations, entries in children's developmental journals, and interviews with teachers and parents.

3. Supporting and Inhibiting Factors in the Implementation of the Educational Play Method

Based on observations and interviews conducted at TK Qur'ani Darul Muhsinin NW Gerantung, several factors were identified as supporting as well as inhibiting the implementation of the educational play method.

a. Supporting Factors

First, adequate facilities and infrastructure significantly contributed to the successful implementation of the method. The classroom, measuring 7×6 meters, is equipped with natural lighting and proper ventilation. Additionally, the availability of basic educational play materials—such as colored blocks, puzzles, flannel boards, and hand puppets—allows children to engage in play comfortably and safely.

Second, the support of the school principal plays an essential role. The principal, Widiawati, explained that the school routinely allocates BOS (School Operational Assistance) funds for procuring play materials and encourages teachers to participate in professional development programs related to play-based learning as part of the school's vision for holistic early childhood character education (Interview with Widiawati, Principal of TK Qur'ani Darul Muhsinin NW Gerantung, June 5, 2025).

Third, parental involvement also serves as a crucial supporting factor. In an interview, Mahuni, the parent of Khaila Zahira Pitri, stated that she continued literacy-based play activities at home with her child (Interview with Mahuni, Parent of Khaila Zahira Pitri, June 13, 2025). Similarly, Adniah, the mother of Aqila Oktavia, mentioned that information provided by teachers regarding the types of games used in school was helpful in guiding her child's learning activities at home (Interview with Adniah, Parent of Aqila Oktavia, June 14, 2025).

b. Inhibiting Factors

Despite the presence of strong supporting factors, several barriers were identified. First, the limited number of educational play materials requires children to take turns, which at times reduces the effectiveness of learning activities. For example, in Group A, only two sets of color puzzles were available for more than a dozen children.

Second, the limited instructional time—only 2 to 3 hours per day—does not always allow for optimal exploration of various educational play activities. Teachers must divide this time between routine activities, breaks, and core learning sessions.

Third, the lack of teacher training in designing and utilizing digital-based educational games poses a challenge in the current technological era, even though interactive digital media could serve as an effective complementary tool for Generation Z learners.

These findings align with the study by Nikolopoulou and Gialamas (2023), which emphasizes that the effectiveness of educational play methods is strongly influenced by the availability of sufficient resources and teacher competence in developing innovative learning media.

Table 3. Supporting and Inhibiting Factors in the Implementation of the Educational Play Method

No.	Category	Factor	Description
1	Supporting Factors	Facilities Infrastructure	& Permanent classroom (7 × 6 m), adequate lighting, availability of basic play materials.
2		Principal Support	BOS funds allocated for play materials and teacher training.
3		Parental Involvement	Parents assist with home-based play activities, reinforcing learning.
4	Inhibiting Factors	Limited Play Materials	Children must take turns due to the small number of available materials.
5		Limited Instructional Time	Daily learning time of 2–3 hours is insufficient for comprehensive exploration.
6		Lack of Teacher Training	Not all teachers are proficient in designing innovative digital-based educational games.

Table 3 illustrates that supporting factors such as adequate facilities, strong administrative support, and active parental involvement play important roles in enhancing the effectiveness of the educational play method at TK Qur’ani Darul Muhsinin. The availability of a comfortable classroom environment, appropriate play materials, and close collaboration between teachers and parents provides a strong foundation for creating an engaging learning environment that fosters children's concentration.

However, several barriers were also identified, including the limited number of play materials, restricted instructional time of only 2 to 3 hours per day, and the lack of teacher training in developing digital-based educational play innovations. These challenges need to be addressed to optimize the implementation of the educational play method.

Overall, the educational play method implemented at TK Qur’ani Darul Muhsinin has proven effective in enhancing young children’s concentration. Teachers applied flexible and contextual strategies aligned with children’s developmental needs. The support of the school principal and parents further strengthened the implementation of this method. Despite several technical constraints, the educational play approach remains highly promising and should continue to be optimized in early childhood education.

DISCUSSION

1. Analysis of Research Findings

The findings of this study demonstrate that the educational play method is an effective strategy for improving concentration among early childhood learners at TK Qur’ani Darul Muhsinin NW Gerantung. These findings comprehensively address the three research questions, namely the forms of implementation, the effectiveness of the method in enhancing concentration, and the supporting and inhibiting factors influencing its application.

a. Teacher Strategies in Implementing the Educational Play Method

Teachers at TK Qur'ani Darul Muhsinin apply the educational play method in adaptive and contextual ways. Rather than relying on a single type of activity, they combine motor, symbolic, and imaginative play, such as number and letter arrangement games, professional role-play, picture puzzles, flannel board activities, and songs with movement. This strategy reflects a flexible learning approach tailored to the developmental needs of early childhood learners.

As explained by Puspita Sari et al. (2022), teaching strategies are concrete actions taken by teachers in implementing instruction using methods considered the most effective and efficient. Without well-planned strategies, the learning process may lose direction and purpose. In this context, teachers have adopted play strategies as a systematic guideline to direct the learning process while also creating an enjoyable and interactive classroom environment.

This aligns with the perspective of Haryani et al. (2023), who assert that instructional strategies encompass the teacher's efforts to select appropriate teaching methods to achieve learning objectives. In practice, teachers adjust the play activities according to the children's psychological conditions—shifting to movement and song activities, for instance, when children appear fatigued or lose focus.

b. Effectiveness of the Educational Play Method in Improving Concentration

This study also confirms that the educational play method directly improves children's concentration. Children who were initially easily distracted, such as Muhammad Sopian Aziz and Aqila Oktavia, demonstrated substantial improvement in concentration scores after several weeks of guided play activities. They became more attentive in following instructions, were able to sit for longer periods, and completed tasks more consistently.

These findings support the view of Nuraida et al. (2024), who argue that learning concentration is not solely innate but can be developed through training. Children engaged in enjoyable and meaningful activities, such as educational play, tend to experience increased focus. Afifah et al. (2023) further emphasize that managing learning concentration helps children focus their attention, reduce distractions, and enhance comprehension.

Moreover, this form of guided play aligns with the findings of Findiarani (2013), who noted that play is an effective means for children to learn. Therefore, early childhood educators must design learning systems that are both engaging and meaningful through play-based learning patterns.

c. Supporting and Inhibiting Factors

The effectiveness of this method is strongly influenced by several supporting factors, including adequate facilities and infrastructure, principal support in providing play materials and teacher training, and active parental involvement at home. As noted by Ecobrick et al. (2023), the use of educational play tools must be optimized as learning media in early childhood settings, as they contribute to developing positive learning habits.

On the other hand, several inhibiting factors were also identified, such as the limited number of play materials, short learning hours (only 2–3 hours per day), and the lack of teacher training in digital game-based innovations. These challenges align with the findings of Liberty Barokah et al. (2022), who highlight that today's children face numerous distractions and activity pressures that can reduce their focus and concentration during learning.

The study by Nikolopoulou and Gialamas (2023) further reinforces that the success of play-based learning methods depends on resource readiness, professional training, and systemic support from educational institutions.

Based on the findings and data analysis, the educational play method is proven to enhance concentration among early childhood learners when implemented consistently and adaptively. Its

effectiveness is supported by contextual teacher strategies, parental participation, and institutional support. Although certain technical obstacles exist, such as limited materials and instructional time, the method remains relevant and should be integrated into early childhood learning curricula to foster concentration and build positive learning behavior.

2. Comparison of the Present Study with Previous Research

This study examines teachers' strategies in implementing educational play methods to improve young children's concentration at TK Qur'ani Darul Muhsinin NW Gerantung. When compared to previous studies, several similarities and differences emerge in terms of focus, approach, findings, and contributions.

a. Similarities in Focus and Method

The present study shares methodological similarities with the studies conducted by Suaidah et al. (2023) and Aulia and Gery (2024), both of which employed a descriptive qualitative approach. All three studies highlight the role of teachers and the importance of play-based approaches in early childhood learning. While Suaidah et al. focus on fostering creativity, and Aulia and Gery emphasize enhancing learning interest, this study specifically centers on improving children's concentration as a crucial indicator of learning readiness.

The strategies identified in this study align with the "learning through play" approach reported by Suaidah et al. (2023) and the creative play strategies explored by Aulia and Gery (2024), such as role-playing, motoric games, and educational play. All studies underline the importance of enjoyable, participatory, and developmentally appropriate learning activities.

b. Differences in Focus and Findings

Unlike the quasi-experimental approach used by Rahmawati et al. (2024), this research relies on qualitative observations and in-depth interviews. Debora's study, which examines the influence of puzzle play on fine motor skills, uses a quantitative design with statistical testing; meanwhile, the present study employs a descriptive qualitative approach to explore the process of implementation and behavioral changes in children.

Nevertheless, the findings of this study reinforce the results of both preceding studies. For example, puzzle-based activities used in Debora's research were also implemented at TK Qur'ani Darul Muhsinin and showed effectiveness in enhancing visual-motor focus and sustained attention. Similarly, the findings of Ningsih and Khotimah regarding the importance of body movement in improving concentration are relevant, as this study demonstrates that activities such as songs with movement and gross motor games effectively recapture children's attention when they begin to lose focus.

c. Strengths and Contributions of the Present Study

This research provides several noteworthy contributions, including the integration of perspectives from teachers, the school principal, and parents in understanding the implementation of educational play strategies. Furthermore, the study systematically outlines supporting and inhibiting factors—an aspect that has received limited attention in previous research.

The study is also more contextual, presenting real classroom practices in which teachers actively respond to children's learning dynamics. For instance, teachers modify or switch the type of play activities when children begin to show signs of boredom. This flexibility enriches the understanding of how adaptive teaching strategies support children's concentration development.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study conducted at TK Qur'ani Darul Muhsinin NW Gerantung, several conclusions can be drawn. First, the educational play method proved effective

in enhancing young children's concentration. The children demonstrated improved abilities to focus their attention, follow instructions, and complete learning activities with greater concentration. Second, teachers' strategies in implementing this method involved the use of varied play activities, such as puzzles, building blocks, movement-and-song games, and role-play simulations. Teachers also adapted the types of play to the children's interests and developmental stages, ensuring that learning remained enjoyable and meaningful. Third, the supporting factors contributing to the success of this method included strong support from the principal, the availability of sufficient play materials, and the enthusiasm and creativity of teachers in designing learning activities. In contrast, the inhibiting factors included limited instructional time, suboptimal facilities, and differences in children's concentration abilities. Fourth, the implementation of the educational play method not only improved cognitive aspects but also strengthened children's social and emotional skills, making it a holistic and valuable strategy in early childhood education.

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