

## IMPROVING CHILDREN'S FINE MOTOR SKILLS THROUGH CUTTING ACTIVITIES IN GROUP A AT TK AMANAH MANDIRI MATIRO DECENG

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### ABSTRACT

This study aims to develop fine motor skills in early childhood through cutting activities. Cutting activities are beneficial for training eye-hand coordination, hand muscle strength, and concentration. While cutting, children's fingers move according to the shapes being cut, which helps prepare them for writing, particularly in pencil grip. This research employs a Classroom Action Research (CAR) methodology consisting of two cycles: Cycle I and Cycle II. Each cycle involves several stages, including planning, implementation, observation, and reflection. The study was motivated by the fact that 7 out of 10 children in Group A at TK Amanah Mandiri Matiro Deceng experienced difficulties in cutting activities. The subjects of this study were 10 children aged 4 to 5 years in Group A at TK Amanah Mandiri Matiro Deceng. The data collection techniques used in this study included observation through direct monitoring, performance evaluation, and documentation. Improvement in children's fine motor skills was measured based on their accuracy in cutting according to patterns. The improvement was evident from the initial condition, where the average performance was 50%, increasing to 78% in Cycle I and reaching 85% in Cycle II. The findings of this research indicate that cutting activities effectively enhance the fine motor skills of children in Group A at TK Amanah Mandiri Matiro Deceng in 2024.

### ARTICLE INFO

#### Article History

Received: September 10, 2024

Revised: October 12, 2024

Approved: November 15, 2024

Published: November 20, 2024

**Keywords:** Fine Motor Skills,  
Cutting Activities

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### INTRODUCTION

Early childhood education represents the initial stage of formal education that children undergo before entering primary school. The purpose of early childhood education is to develop children's potential and skills while preparing them for primary education (Aisyah, 2017 in Dian, 2022:140). Early childhood refers to individuals as socio-cultural beings undergoing a fundamental developmental process that significantly influences their future life and is characterized by unique traits (Santoso in Adolph, 2016).

Early childhood is often described as the golden age, a critical period in human development. During this phase, children are highly sensitive to stimuli from their environment, ready to engage in various activities to understand and master their surroundings. This sensitive period is marked

by the maturation of physical and psychological functions, enabling children to respond to and achieve developmental milestones in their daily behavior. Early childhood education serves as a foundational stage since the future growth of a child is significantly influenced by the stimuli they receive at this age. Hence, it is known as the golden age, during which all aspects of development can be easily stimulated. Comprehensive early childhood development should encompass multiple aspects, including religious and moral, physical-motor, cognitive, socio-emotional, linguistic, and artistic development, as reflected in a balance of attitudes, knowledge, and skills to optimize holistic child development.

One crucial developmental aspect influencing children's learning is motor development, which consists of gross motor and fine motor skills. Gross motor movements involve large muscle coordination, while fine motor movements involve specific parts of the body, particularly small muscles like fingers and wrists (Ruth Donda Eleonora Panggabean, 2022:247). Fine motor skills require precise coordination between the eyes and small muscles, as well as persistence and accuracy. Activities such as cutting, tearing, drawing, writing, folding, threading, sewing, squeezing, gripping, building blocks, and other similar actions exemplify fine motor movements (M. Syarif Sumantri et al., 2023:1.13).

Fine motor skills involve small muscle movements that require minimal strength but demand precise hand-eye coordination and meticulousness (Susanto, 2011:164 in M. Syarif Sumantri et al., 2023:1.13). The development of fine motor skills focuses on specific bodily movements, such as writing, drawing, cutting, and folding (Suyanto, 2005 in M. Syarif Sumantri et al., 2023:1.13). Sumantri (2005 in Jasmine, 2014) defines fine motor skills as the organization of small muscle groups like fingers and hands, which often require precision and hand coordination.

Fine motor development relates to physical skills, hand-eye coordination, wrist flexibility, and the ability to replicate shapes and use both hands in various activities (Hayatun, 2023). This development involves coordinating precise physical movements using small muscles, such as fingers and wrists, and includes actions like eating with a spoon, tying shoelaces, fastening buttons, opening and closing bottles, cutting, sewing, weaving, folding, coloring, and drawing (Ingkir et al., 2020). Motor development involves the progression of physical control and movement. This development, which depends on nerve and muscle maturity, includes both gross and fine motor skills (Nurhidayat et al., 2020). One activity that can enhance children's fine motor skills is cutting, which requires hand-eye coordination for intricate tasks. Cutting is a preparatory stage for writing, particularly in pencil grip. Cutting involves using scissors to cut objects, a skill essential for daily life (Berda Asmara, 2020).

Based on the definitions above, fine motor skills can be defined as movements involving specific body parts, performed by small or fine muscles, requiring precise hand-eye coordination and attention to detail. These include activities such as cutting, tying, sewing, folding, coloring, and drawing (Wahida Karmila, 2022).

Observations conducted by the researcher in Group A at TK Amanah Mandiri Mattiro Deceng in 2024 revealed low fine motor skill proficiency in cutting activities. Of the 10 children observed, 7 struggled to cut along patterns. The difficulties stem from underdeveloped fine motor skills, limited use of scissors, parental concerns about safety, and a lack of opportunities for children to use scissors at home. This was evident in the children's inability to follow patterns accurately and in the quality of their work. To address this issue, the researcher identified cutting as a simple activity to train children's patience, precision, and finger strength. Therefore, the researcher chose cutting activities to enhance the fine motor skills of children in Group A at TK Amanah Mandiri Mattiro Deceng.

Fine motor skills in early childhood are frequently studied because of their importance in physical and cognitive development. Previous studies relevant to this research include: Ida Farida et al. (2022): This study investigated the improvement of fine motor skills through cutting activities using varied media in TK IT Ar Rahman, Bogor. The results showed a significant improvement, with fine motor skills reaching 90% proficiency by Cycle II, emphasizing the importance of teacher creativity in selecting engaging learning media. Zulfa Ringan (2023): This qualitative descriptive study explored fine motor development through cutting activities at RA Jamiatul Khaer, Makassar. The findings highlighted how cutting activities helped teachers assess children's motor abilities, though some children required intensive guidance. Popy Rahayu (2017): This research focused on fine motor skills through folding activities for Group B kindergarten students in Wonosari. While 78.63% of children demonstrated good skills, many still required teacher guidance for optimal results.

While previous studies explored cutting activities or similar tasks to improve fine motor skills, most used varied media or focused on older age groups. Few studies have examined the effectiveness of cutting activities specifically for Group A children at TK Amanah Mandiri Mattiro Deceng, especially with a locally tailored approach. This research adopts an innovative approach by focusing on cutting activities as the primary method for improving fine motor skills without relying on additional media. It aligns the learning strategies with the cultural and social context of children at TK Amanah Mandiri Mattiro Deceng.

The main research question is: How can cutting activities enhance the fine motor skills of children in Group A at TK Amanah Mandiri Mattiro Deceng? The study aims to analyze the effectiveness of cutting activities in improving fine motor skills for this group. This research contributes significantly to early childhood education by offering practical insights for teachers, informing curriculum development, and emphasizing the importance of contextual approaches to optimize child development. It aims to meet the need for practical, relevant methods to enhance fine motor skills while enriching the literature on early childhood education strategies.

## METHOD

This study has used a Classroom Action Research (CAR) approach, which is a type of action research. Classroom Action Research is research conducted by teachers in their own classrooms through self-reflection, with the goal of improving their performance as teachers, thus enhancing student learning outcomes (Wardani and Kuswaya Wihardit, 2023: 1.7). Action research is a "systematic inquiry" that has been carried out by teachers, school principals, or school counselors to gather information about the practices they perform. This information is used to improve perceptions and develop "reflective practice," which has positively impacted various school practices, including improving student learning outcomes (Mills, 2000 in Wardani and Kuswaya Wihardit, 2023: 1.7).

Based on the above opinions, it can be concluded that Classroom Action Research is an action taken by the teacher, which has been considered as research within the classroom, conducted either individually or collaboratively (collaboration) by designing, implementing, and reflecting on actions in a collaborative and participatory manner. The aim has been to improve or enhance the quality and effectiveness of the learning process in the classroom through specific actions (treatments) in a cycle.

The procedures for the improvement and development activities in this study have been carried out over two cycles with a general procedure consisting of four stages: 1) planning, which

involves planning the actions to be taken; 2) implementation, which involves carrying out the plan; 3) observation, which involves observing the children's abilities; and 4) reflection, which involves analyzing the strengths and weaknesses of the learning improvement. The subjects of this study are the group A students at TK Amanah Mandiri Mattiro Deceng, Lau District, Maros Regency, aged between 4 and 5 years, with a total of 10 children consisting of 2 girls and 8 boys. The data collection technique in this study has included observation sheets and documentation.

## **RESULTS**

### **Pre-cycle**

In the pre-cycle phase, the learning outcomes of the Group A children at TK Amanah Mandiri Mattiro Deceng, based on observations, showed that 3 out of 10 children were able to cut paper according to a pattern, but many children were still unable to cut along a pattern. It can be said that the pre-cycle activity indicates that most children still need guidance to achieve their maximum ability. The results of each cycle's implementation can be stated as follows.

### **Cycle I**

#### **Planning**

The activity plan based on the improvement of learning in Cycle I highlights the learning issue, which is the children's skill in cutting activities at TK Amanah Mandiri Mattiro Deceng. This has been developed into an activity plan (Rencana Kegiatan or RK) and broken down into a daily activity plan (Rencana Kegiatan Harian or RKH). The learning was complemented with instruments with the following indicators:

1. Cutting paper edges
2. Cutting straight lines
3. Cutting zigzag lines
4. Cutting geometric patterns
5. Cutting images of sea transport

#### **Implementation**

The sequence of activities to improve children's fine motor skills in cutting activities for Group A at TK Amanah Mandiri Mattiro Deceng is as follows:

1. First meeting: Cutting paper edges

In the opening activity, the teacher asked the children to follow the movements and sing a song about "transportation tools." In the main activity, the children were asked to cut the edges of an A4 sheet of paper using the tips of the scissors. In the closing activity, the teacher recited a poem about "boats," and the children were asked to repeat the poem.

2. Second meeting: Cutting straight lines

In the opening activity, the teacher sang the song "transportation tools" in full, and then the children were asked to sing together. In the main activity, the children were asked to cut straight lines on A4 paper. In the closing activity, the children repeated the poem about "boats."

3. Third meeting: Cutting zigzag lines

In the opening activity, the teacher sang the song "transportation tools" in full, followed by individual singing from the children. In the main activity, the children were asked to cut zigzag lines. In the closing activity, the children were asked to mention the function of boats.

4. Fourth meeting: Cutting geometric patterns

In the opening activity, the teacher talked with the children about different types of transportation found in the sea. In the main activity, the children were asked to cut geometric

images. In the closing activity, the children were asked to mention types of vehicles found in the sea.

#### 5. Fifth meeting: Cutting images of sea transportation

In the opening activity, the teacher conducted a Q&A session with the children about the types of sea transportation. In the main activity, the children were asked to cut images of sea transportation. In the closing activity, the teacher demonstrated a full "vehicle clap" and then asked the children to follow the teacher in playing the "vehicle clap."

### Observation

The observation results from the application of the assignment method, learning, and learning outcomes are as follows:

#### 1. Cutting Activity

- a. The cutting activity proceeded smoothly.
- b. The children were able to follow the rules presented by the teacher.  
The teacher observed and provided guidance.
- c. The learning time to complete the tasks was conducive.

#### 2. Learning Outcomes

The learning outcomes regarding the children's skills in cutting activities can be summarized in the following table:

**Table 1. Development Achievements in Cycle I**

No	Type of Indicator / Assessment	Observation Results	Total	Average Value	%
1	Cutting paper edges	0, 2, 5, 3, 10	3.1	78%	
2	Cutting straight lines	0, 1, 5, 4, 10	3.3	82%	
3	Cutting zigzag lines	1, 2, 3, 4, 10	3.0	75%	
4	Cutting geometric patterns	1, 1, 4, 4, 10	3.1	78%	
5	Cutting images of sea transportation	1, 2, 4, 3, 10	3.0	75%	
<b>Average</b>			<b>3.1</b>		<b>78%</b>

### Note:

- 1 = Not Developed (BB)  
 2 = Beginning to Develop (MB)  
 3 = Developing as Expected (BSH)  
 4 = Developing Very Well (BSB)

Based on the results from **Table 1**, the children's skill in cutting paper edges achieved an average percentage of 78%. Their skill in cutting straight lines had an average percentage of 82%, while cutting zigzag lines averaged 75%. Their skill in cutting geometric patterns was at 78%, and cutting images of sea transportation was at 75%. The overall average percentage of the children's cutting skills in Cycle I was 78%, which is considered adequate. The implementation of Cycle I with five meetings showed improvement compared to the pre-cycle results.

### Reflection

Based on the research results about children's skills in cutting activities, the researcher reflected on the actions taken in Cycle I. An evaluation was conducted for improvements in Cycle II. The challenges encountered during the learning process included:

1. Some children were still afraid and hesitant to use scissors.
2. The activities of cutting paper edges, cutting straight lines, and cutting zigzag lines were less engaging for the children.
3. The images provided for cutting geometric patterns and transportation tools were too small.

## **Cycle II**

### **Planning**

The activity plan for improving learning in Cycle II clarified the learning issue, which is the children's skill in cutting activities at TK Amanah Mandiri Mattiro Deceng. This was developed into an activity plan (Rencana Kegiatan or RK) and detailed into a daily activity plan (Rencana Kegiatan Harian or RKH). The learning was complemented with instruments, and the following indicators were included:

1. Cutting images of life jackets
2. Cutting images of rubber boats
3. Cutting images of canoes
4. Cutting images of fishermen's boats
5. Cutting images of sailboats

### **Implementation**

The sequence of activities to enhance the fine motor skills of children in cutting activities for Group A at TK Amanah Mandiri Mattiro Deceng is as follows:

1. First meeting: Cutting images of life jackets

In the opening activity, the teacher asked the children to follow the movements and sing a song about "transportation tools." In the main activity, the children were asked to cut images of life jackets. In the closing activity, the teacher recited a poem about "boats," and the children were asked to repeat the poem.

2. Second meeting: Cutting images of rubber boats

In the opening activity, the teacher sang the song "transportation tools" in full, and then the children were asked to sing together. In the main activity, the children were asked to cut images of rubber boats. In the closing activity, the children repeated the poem about "boats."

3. Third meeting: Cutting images of canoes

In the opening activity, the teacher sang the song "transportation tools" in full, followed by individual singing from the children. In the main activity, the children were asked to cut images of canoes. In the closing activity, the children were asked to mention the function of boats.

4. Fourth meeting: Cutting images of fishermen's boats

In the opening activity, the teacher talked with the children about the different types of sea transportation. In the main activity, the children were asked to cut images of fishermen's boats. In the closing activity, the children were asked to name the types of boats.

5. Fifth meeting: Cutting images of sailboats

In the opening activity, the teacher conducted a Q&A session with the children about the types of boats and their uses. In the main activity, the children were asked to cut images of sailboats. In the closing activity, the teacher demonstrated a full "boat clap," and the children were asked to follow the teacher in playing the "boat clap."

### **Observation**

The observation results from the application of the assignment method, learning, and learning outcomes are as follows:

1. Cutting Activity
  - a. The cutting activity proceeded smoothly.
  - b. The children were able to follow the rules presented by the teacher.
  - c. The teacher observed and provided guidance.
  - d. The learning time to complete the tasks was conducive.
2. Learning Outcomes

The learning outcomes regarding the children's skills in cutting activities can be summarized in the following table:

**Table 2. Development Achievements in Cycle II**

No	Type of Indicator / Assessment	Observation Results	Total Average Value	%
1	Cutting images of life jackets	0, 1, 5, 4, 10	3.3	83%
2	Cutting images of rubber boats	0, 1, 4, 5, 10	3.4	85%
3	Cutting images of canoes	0, 2, 4, 4, 10	3.2	80%
4	Cutting geometric patterns	1, 2, 2, 5, 10	3.1	78%
5	Cutting images of sea transportation	1, 1, 3, 5, 10	3.2	80%
<b>Average</b>			<b>3.2</b>	<b>81%</b>

**Note:**

1 = Not Developed (BB)

2 = Beginning to Develop (MB)

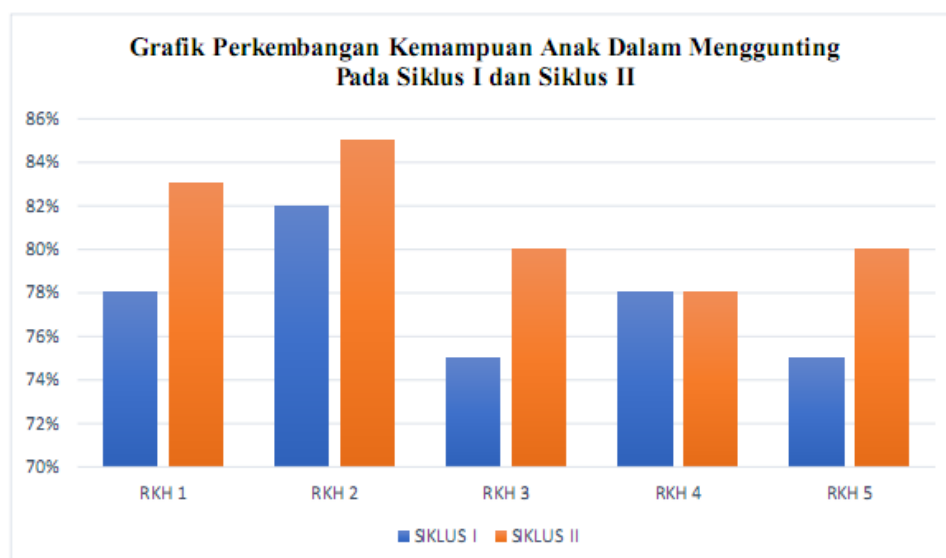
3 = Developing as Expected (BSH)

4 = Developing Very Well (BSB)

Based on the results from Table 2, the children's skill in cutting images of life jackets achieved an average percentage of 83%. Their skill in cutting images of rubber boats reached an average of 85%, while cutting images of canoes achieved an average of 80%. Their skill in cutting geometric patterns was at 78%, and cutting images of sea transportation was at 80%. The overall average percentage of the children's cutting skills in Cycle II was 81%, which is categorized as "good" for Group A. The implementation of Cycle II with five meetings showed improvement compared to the results in Cycle I. A summary of the percentage calculations for the pre-cycle, Cycle I, and Cycle II is shown in Table 3 below.

**Table 3. Summary of Percentage Calculation for Cycle I and Cycle II**

NO	Daily Activity Plan (RKH)	Cycle I	Cycle II
1	Daily Activity Plan 1	78%	83%
2	Daily Activity Plan 2	82%	85%
3	Daily Activity Plan 3	75%	80%
4	Daily Activity Plan 4	78%	78%
5	Daily Activity Plan 5	75%	80%
<b>Average</b>		<b>78%</b>	<b>81%</b>



The chart above shows that the children's skills in cutting improved gradually. In Cycle I, the percentage increased from 78% (categorized as “adequate”) to 81% (categorized as “good”) in Cycle II. These results demonstrate that the success indicator, with a percentage of 81%, was achieved.

### **Reflection**

Based on the research findings on children's skills in cutting activities, the researcher reflected on the actions taken in Cycle II. Evaluation was conducted to assess the achievement of indicators. During the learning process in Cycle II, the following reflections were made:

1. The provision of character scissors, with bright colors and blunt edges, helped the children feel enthusiastic and made cutting easier for them.
2. Providing larger images facilitated the cutting activities.
3. The variety and coloring of the images were able to attract the children's interest.

### **DISCUSSION**

Classroom action research was based on the low fine motor skills of children, and the purpose of this study was to improve children's fine motor skills through cutting activities in Group A. One of the learning activities that can improve children's fine motor skills is cutting. The cutting activity aims to train hand-eye coordination, muscle strength in the hands, and concentration.

Based on the observations obtained from the pre-cycle, it was shown that children's ability to cut was still lacking and needed to be stimulated with new activities. Meanwhile, the observations in Cycle I indicated an improvement in fine motor skills, although children's cutting skills were still at a moderate level. The insufficient success of Cycle I became a reference for improvements in Cycle II. In this improvement phase, the researcher provided more varied images to cut, making the activity more engaging for the children. The learning outcomes from Cycle II showed significant improvement compared to the pre-cycle and Cycle I, which leads to the conclusion that there was an increase in fine motor skills. This improvement occurred because children were enthusiastic about doing the cutting activities, as the difficulty level of cutting gradually increased from easy to more challenging. Initially, children cut along the edges of paper, then along straight lines, followed by zigzag lines, and eventually cutting geometric patterns or varied images, which helped increase their interest in the cutting activity.

Thus, the improvements made in Cycle II showed results that met the researcher's expectations, with an average percentage of 81%, indicating that children had developed the ability to cut following patterns. Therefore, no further improvements are needed for the next cycle. The improvements in learning activities from the pre-cycle, Cycle I, and Cycle II demonstrate a very good increase in learning outcomes.

Based on the research results, the cutting activity proved effective in enhancing the fine motor skills of Group A children at TK Amanah Mandiri Mattiro Deceng. In the pre-cycle, only 3 out of 10 children were able to cut according to the pattern, indicating that most children's fine motor skills were still low. However, after the intervention involving gradual cutting activities in Cycle I, the children showed improvement. They were able to follow more complex patterns, such as zigzag lines and images of sea transportation. This aligns with the aim of the research, which was to analyze the effectiveness of cutting activities in enhancing children's fine motor skills.

These findings are consistent with the research of Ida Farida et al. (2022), which showed that media-based activities can improve fine motor skills up to 90%. Although this study did not use



additional media, the results showed a similar significant improvement. Additionally, Zulfa Ringan (2023) emphasized the importance of cutting activities in helping teachers recognize children's motor abilities, even though intensive guidance is needed. Compared to previous studies, the contextual approach in this research provides uniqueness, particularly in adapting strategies to meet the local needs of children at TK Amanah Mandiri Mattiro Deceng.

The results of this study contribute significantly to the development of learning strategies in early childhood education. Practically, teachers can use cutting activities as a simple yet effective method to train children's fine motor skills. Furthermore, this research highlights the importance of providing children with opportunities to practice using tools like scissors, which parents often worry about. The theoretical implication strengthens the literature on the relationship between simple motor activities and the development of fine motor skills.

This study has some limitations. First, the sample only involved Group A children at TK Amanah Mandiri Mattiro Deceng, so generalizing the findings to a larger population should be done carefully. Second, this study did not use a variety of media or other supporting tools that might accelerate the improvement of fine motor skills. Third, this study did not fully control external factors, such as parental support at home, which could influence the results.

Overall, this research shows that structured cutting activities can significantly improve children's fine motor skills. Progress from the pre-cycle to Cycle I indicates that this activity trains children's precision, patience, and hand-eye coordination. This leads to the conclusion that simple learning strategies tailored to the characteristics of early childhood can positively impact their development, while also opening opportunities for further research with a broader scope and more diverse media variations.

## CONCLUSION

The researcher concludes that at TK Amanah Mandiri Mattiro Deceng, Group A children's fine motor skills can be improved through cutting activities involving varied and engaging images. In the pre-cycle, the percentage increased from 50% in the "poor" category to 75% in the "adequate" category in Cycle I and 81% in the "good" category in Cycle II. These results show the achievement of the success indicator, with a percentage of 81%. This research aims to improve the quality of learning methods, particularly children's skills in cutting activities, and to expand teachers' knowledge of media development in line with learning objectives. Based on the findings, the researcher recommends that educators be able to facilitate and stimulate children's development according to their developmental stages. Teachers must enhance the quality of children's learning by using varied images during cutting activities to make children more interested in developing their fine motor skills.

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