

Harmonizing Indigenous Insights: Early Childhood Disaster Preparedness Curriculum in Indonesia

Sean Marta Efastri,^{1,2}  Ribut Wahyu Eriyanti,¹ Diah Karmiyati,¹ Marwa Marwa²

1. Department of Doctor of Education, Postgraduate Program, Universitas Muhammadiyah Malang, Indonesia
2. Department of Master of Pedagogy, Postgraduate Program, Universitas Lancang Kuning, Riau, Indonesia

Correspondence:

Sean Marta Efastri
Universitas Lancang Kuning
Jln Yos Sudarso Km.8 Rumbai Pekanbaru
Ekambar 28265
Indonesia
E-mail: seanmarta@unilak.ac.id

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Dear Editors,

An article written by Pohan, et al entitled “Disaster Preparedness and Safety Curriculum for Early Childhood Education in Indonesia” claims that a disaster preparedness and safety curriculum in early childhood education developed according to the potential and characteristics of the school area can be used as one of the strategies to prevent many casualties due to various disasters.¹ We believe that integrating local wisdom in the disaster preparedness curriculum for early childhood is important because it creates more relevant and meaningful learning. Local wisdom includes knowledge, values, and practices that have been acquired and passed down from generation to generation by local communities in dealing with natural threats.

Indonesia is a country that is highly vulnerable to natural disasters.² Apart from being located on the Pacific Ring of Fire, Indonesia also has a very diverse topography, including high mountains, lowlands, and wide-spread islands. This has led to various types of disasters in various regions, such as floods in Demak in 2024, landslides in Cianjur in 2022, earthquakes in Sukabumi in 2002, volcanic eruptions in Yogyakarta in 2010, and the Aceh tsunami in 2004. The significant impacts are not only physical but also psychological.³ These disasters take their toll regardless of social status, economy, cultural background, or age. Even children were not spared.

Young children are a vulnerable group in disasters⁴ due to their limited ability to understand and respond to threats, dependence on adults, physical and emotional vulnerability, limited communication, and accessibility to information and resources. Specialized protection and planning are needed to ensure the safety and well-being of young children in emergency situations. Indonesia has great potential in local wisdom due to its cultural diversity, natural environment, and rich traditions.

Recognizing the importance of integrating local wisdom in disaster preparedness education is a revolutionary initiative. This approach not only accommodates children's cultural context and environment in preparing children for disasters,⁵ but also strengthens their cultural and community identity.⁶ The Disaster Preparedness Curriculum for Early Childhood includes an understanding of natural disasters, preparedness actions, survival skills, and the importance of social cooperation and support. Through this curriculum, children are given the knowledge and skills to act effectively in emergency situations while maintaining solidarity. Various local wisdom-based strategies can be applied, such as traditional game-based learning, local folklore involving myths and legends, role play, traditional art, and music to make learning more interesting and relevant to children.

The Disaster Preparedness Curriculum for Early Childhood represents a paradigm shift in disaster education, emphasizing proactive action and cultural relevance over traditional approaches. It provides children with the tools they need to not only survive, but thrive in the midst of adversity, while instilling a sense of responsibility towards their community and environment. As Indonesia continues to struggle with the ever-present threat of natural disasters, initiatives like this offer a ray of hope for a more resilient future, where local wisdom and modern knowledge coexist harmoniously.

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