

## ARTICLE INFORMATION

Received: March 15, 2025

Revised: March 18, 2025

Available online: March 23, 2025

at: <https://e-jurnal.iphorr.com/index.php/mchc>

## The effect of finger painting on socio-emotional development of preschool children aged 5-6 years

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### Abstract

**Background:** Social-emotional development is an important aspect of early childhood development because it helps children interact and adapt to their environment. Appropriate stimulation is needed to support optimal social-emotional development in preschool children. One form of stimulation that can be given is finger painting activities which can encourage creativity, emotional expression, and social interaction among children.

**Purpose:** To determine the effect of finger painting on the socio-emotional development of preschool children aged 5–6 years.

**Method:** This study used a quantitative method with a pre-experimental design using a one-group pretest-posttest approach. The population in this study were children aged 5–6 years at PAUD Al Barokah Labuhan Ratu, East Lampung. The sample consisted of 20 children using a total sampling technique. The instrument used was a social-emotional development observation sheet adapted from the child development achievement standards based on Permendikbud No. 137 of 2014. Data analysis was carried out using univariate and bivariate analysis with the Wilcoxon test at a significance level of 95% ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ).

**Results:** The results showed that the average score of children's socio-emotional development before the intervention was 2.20 and increased to 3.80 after the finger-painting intervention, with a mean difference of 1.60. The statistical test results obtained a p-value of 0.000 ( $<0.05$ ), indicating that there was a significant effect of finger painting on the socio-emotional development of preschool children aged 5–6 years.

**Conclusion:** Finger painting has a significant effect on improving the socio-emotional development of preschool children aged 5-6 years.

**Suggestion:** Parents and teachers are encouraged to provide creative stimulation activities such as finger painting regularly to support children's socio-emotional development.

**Keywords:** Finger Painting; Preschool Children; Socio-emotional Development.

### INTRODUCTION

Early childhood is a critical period in the process of growth and development. During this stage, children experience rapid development in various aspects including physical, cognitive, language, and socio-emotional development. Socio-emotional development plays an important role because it helps children interact with others, control emotions, and adapt to their environment (Agustina, Nasution, Gunansyah, Mariana, & Puspita, 2025; Wardany, 2016).

Preschool children aged 5–6 years are expected to demonstrate the ability to interact with peers, express emotions appropriately, and develop independence. However, not all children achieve optimal socio-emotional development due to limited stimulation from the surrounding environment (Selaras, 2019; Patilima, Rahayu, Zakiyah, Sugiansih, Gustini, & Ekaningrum, 2024).

One method that can be used to stimulate socio-emotional development is play activities. Play is a natural learning process for children and can help them develop social interaction, creativity, and emotional expression. One form of play activity that can stimulate children's development is finger painting (Parwoto, Ilyas, & Salwiah, 2024).

Finger painting is an art activity that involves painting using fingers directly on paper (Restian & Amelia, 2019). Through this activity, children can express emotions, increase creativity, and improve social interaction with peers. Finger painting activities also provide opportunities for children to develop confidence and independence (Waty, Hasanah, Putri, Nengsih, & Alvi, 2024).

Previous studies have shown that creative art activities can improve children's emotional expression, cooperation, and social interaction (Evivani & Oktaria, 2020; Saputra & Susilowati, 2023). Therefore, providing stimulation through finger painting activities is expected to help improve children's socio-emotional development.

Social development can be defined as the achievement of social relationships through learning activities to adapt and follow norms and procedures according to prevailing cultural customs. Meanwhile, emotional development relates to development, where emotions are a primary factor in driving each individual's behavior and attitudes. Thus, social-emotional development can be defined as the activity of learning to adapt and understand each situation and feelings when interacting with others in one's environment. These social-emotional skills can be acquired through observation, listening, and observing. At an early age, social-emotional development is limited to socialization. During this period, children learn attitudes and values from those around them (Avandra, Neviyarni, & Irdamurni, 2023).

Social and emotional development for early childhood is an inseparable unity because both are related and influence emotional development such as expressions when interacting with others, wisdom in making decisions, and the ability to solve problems. Therefore, children who have good emotional skills will be easier to adapt in their social environment.

Early childhood will usually feel a variety of emotions such as anxiety, fear, anger, joy, jealousy, curiosity, and affection. Emotional disorders are very common in early childhood so that this can hinder the development of social emotional intelligence. Therefore, recognizing emotions is very important to be done early so that individuals can build relationships, socialize, and build good interactions with their surroundings such as parents, friends, teachers, and the community (Handayani & Kurniawaty, 2022).

A common problem in the field is inappropriate responses from teachers or adults around the child. Children need scaffolding from adults to gain knowledge and experience, and to foster emotional maturity. Early childhood requires the involvement of parents, teachers, and other adults in their environment to provide scaffolding (Maisarah, Siregar, Adawiyah, Nasution, & Sari, 2021; Mulyadi, 2004; Rahmawati & Kurniawati, 2010; Vygotsky, 1978).

## RESEARCH METHOD

This research used a quantitative approach with a pre-experimental design using one group pretest-posttest. The study was conducted at PAUD Al Barokah Labuhan Ratu, East Lampung Regency. The population in this study were all preschool children aged 5–6 years at PAUD Al Barokah. The sampling technique used was total sampling, with a total sample of 20 children.

The instrument used to measure socio-emotional development was an observation sheet of socio-emotional development, adapted from previous research and developed based on the Child Development Achievement Standards. Data analysis was carried out in two stages: Univariate analysis to describe the characteristics and average scores of socio-emotional development and uivariate analysis using the Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test to determine the effect of finger painting on children's socio-emotional development with a confidence level of 95% ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ).

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## RESEARCH RESULTS

Table Univariate Analysis Results (N=20)

| Variable                                                        | Results            | P-value |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|---------|
| <b>Socio-emotional Development Before Intervention (n/%)</b>    |                    |         |
| Very well developed                                             | 0/0                |         |
| Developed as expected                                           | 5/25.0             |         |
| Beginning to develop                                            | 14/70.0            |         |
| Not yet developed                                               | 1 / 5.0            |         |
| <b>Socio-emotional Development After Intervention (n/%)</b>     |                    |         |
| Very well developed                                             | 16/80.0            |         |
| Developed as expected                                           | 4/20.0             |         |
| Beginning to develop                                            | 0/0                |         |
| Not yet developed                                               | 0/0                |         |
| <b>Normality Test (Shapiro–Wilk)</b>                            |                    |         |
| Before intervention                                             | 08.00              | 0.000   |
| After intervention                                              | 14.05              | 0.000   |
| <b>Effect of Finger Painting on Socio-emotional Development</b> |                    | 0.000   |
| Before                                                          | Mean = 08.00 (1–3) |         |
| After                                                           | Mean = 14.05 (3–4) |         |
| Mean Difference                                                 | 1.60               |         |

Based on the table above, the socio-emotional development of children before the finger-painting intervention was mostly in the beginning to develop category (70.0%), followed by developed as expected (25.0%), and not yet developed (5.0%), while none of the children were categorized as very well developed. After the finger-painting intervention, most children showed improvement in socio-emotional development, where 80.0% of children were categorized as very well developed and 20.0% were developed as expected, while none were categorized as beginning to develop or not yet developed.

The normality test using Shapiro–Wilk showed a significance value of 0.000, indicating that the data were not normally distributed. Therefore, the Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test was used for further analysis. The results of the Wilcoxon test showed that the mean score increased from 08.00 before the intervention to 14.05 after the intervention, with a mean difference of 1.60. The statistical test obtained a Z value of -4.021 and a p-value of 0.000 ( $p < 0.05$ ). This indicates that finger painting has a significant effect on the socio-emotional development of children aged 5–6 years.

## DISCUSSION

The results of this study indicate that finger painting activities have a significant effect on improving children's socio-emotional development. Finger painting allows children to express their feelings and emotions freely through colors and

shapes. During the activity, children interact with their peers, share tools, and communicate with teachers and friends, which helps improve social interaction skills (Agustina et al., 2025).

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In addition, creative activities such as finger painting can increase children's self-confidence and independence. Children feel happy and enthusiastic when participating in fun learning activities Parwoto (2024). Play-based learning methods are highly recommended in early childhood education because they help children learn naturally Through finger painting, children can learn cooperation, patience, and emotional control (Restian & Amelia, 2019).

These findings are consistent with several previous studies which state that art-based activities can improve children's emotional expression, creativity, and social interaction (Evivani & Oktaria, 2020). Therefore, providing stimulation through creative activities such as finger painting is important in supporting children's socio-emotional development (Saputra & Susilowati, 2023).

Early childhood social-emotional skills encompass various skills related to children's interactions with others, emotional management, and understanding their own feelings and those of others. Developing social-emotional skills is crucial because it contributes to a child's overall well-being and success in school and daily life. Children with strong social-emotional skills tend to be better able to face challenges, form healthy relationships, and demonstrate a positive attitude toward learning and life (Indriyani, 2024).

In accordance with development, social-emotional development is defined as the ability to experience, manage, and express feelings, as well as to develop social relationships. Social-emotional development is enhanced by encouraging children to express emotions and interact with their peers through finger-painting activities applied in everyday life. These changes involve behavior, emotional control, and progress in social-emotional development toward a more positive direction (Aneka, Kurniasih, & Regiana, 2022).

Previous research has shown that finger painting activities at Hidayatul Muhtadiin Kindergarten are implemented in three stages: the initial stage, the implementation stage, and the final stage. These activities foster independence, create an active classroom atmosphere, foster interaction, and foster empathy, cooperation, and solidarity, all of which are closely related to social and emotional development (Novitasari & Mursid, 2025).

The findings conducted by explain that from finger painting activities, children can learn to recognize emotions such as high focus in children, able to express various things, imagine, explore, can tell the meaning of each student's work, and can control emotions that have an impact on their social interactions (Suzanti, Riyani, Istiqomah, & Ihtiar, 2014). Other findings also produce research that finger painting activities are very useful for developing creativity in children, making children more independent, imaginative, and can hone talents. Finger painting is also an interesting activity to foster enthusiasm and activeness in children (Siregar & Ismet, 2021).

## CONCLUSION

The average score of children's socio-emotional development before the finger-painting intervention was 2.20, and after the intervention increased to 3.80. The statistical test results showed a p-value of 0.000 (<0.05), which indicates that finger painting has a significant effect on the socio-emotional development of preschool children aged 5-6 years.

## SUGGESTION

Teachers and parents are expected to provide creative stimulation activities such as finger painting regularly in order to support and improve children's socio-emotional development. Creative learning activities can help children develop social interaction skills, emotional control, and self-confidence.

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DOI: 10.56922/mchc.v4i12.2844