

## Early childhood peace education curriculum

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### Abstract

Initially, peace was defined as a way of ending conflict and being free from violence and war. Currently, the concept of peace is shifting into a need, such as happiness, health, and justice. Because peace is essential for individuals, a culture is formed, namely a culture of peace. Compared to other ages, early childhood is the best time to develop a culture of peace. However, peace education for early childhood in Indonesia has not been developed systematically. This study explores the core values of a culture of peace that can be included in the peace education curriculum for early childhood. This study uses a literature study with an integrative review design. The study results found eight core values of a culture of peace that can be included in the components of peace education for early childhood, namely (1) self-awareness; (2) understanding of differences; (3) positive relationships with peers; (4) pro-social behavior; (5) listening and speaking skills, (6) understanding feelings, and expressing them, (7) conflict resolution skills; (8) relationships with community, and nature.

**Keywords:** culture of peace, early childhood, peace education curriculum, peace education framework

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### INTRODUCTION

Peace is a topic that is often discussed in the social sciences, such as philosophy, anthropology, sociology, psychology, and education (Ilfiandra et al., 2021; Shehi et al., 2018). The concept of peace from wartime to the present has shifted in meaning. According to Ilfiandra et al. (2021), during world wars, the idea of peace was the way to end conflict and war. After world wars, peace is the absence of war or violence. Then a consensus emerged among scholars that peace is separate from the context of war and violence because peace is a necessity such as happiness, health, and justice. Peace is good things such as happiness, order, good relations, welfare, and respect for human rights. Kartadinata (2020) calls this situation a state of mind. Refers to the concept of development of thinking, behavior, value orientation, and efforts to improve the situation (Kartadinata et al., 2015). This concept makes peace an essential thing for individuals to have. Then peace is developed through a culture of peace. (Ilfiandra et al., 2021).

Education has a vital role in developing a culture of peace in individuals and society (United Nations, 1999). Education to create a culture of peace is commonly called peace education (Harris, 2008). Peace education forms a culture of peace in individuals and influences society and the state (Castro & Nario-Galace, 2008). The results of Özkutlu research (2018) reveal the urgency of providing peace education in schools. The results of this study are in line with the United Nations peace culture program, which calls for teachers to be promoters of a culture of peace in schools (United Nations, 1999). This program also implies that everyone has the right to peace education from early childhood to late adulthood.

Early childhood is the best time to develop a culture of peace (Angelica Ponguta et al., 2018; Hostetler, 1990; Salah, 2018). Early childhood recognizes the concept of violence at the age of 4 years and recognizes the concept of peace at the age of 6 years (Covell et al., 1994; Hakvoort & Oppenheimer, 1998). Thus, the child will first resolve the conflict with violence rather than peacefully. Then early childhood also has developmental tasks related to a culture of peace, such

as empathy, tolerance, cooperation, regulation of impulsive behavior, and negotiation (communication) (UNICEF, 2014). Early childhood is an important stage because of the rapid growth of synapses (connections of one neuron to another), physical, socio-emotional, and cognitive development. (Shonkoff et al., 2012; Sinno et al., 2013). This reason triggers an understanding among peace education researchers that developing a culture of peace at an early age is the best investment that can be made (Angelica Ponguta et al., 2018; Hostetler, 1990; Salah, 2018; Sunar et al., 2013).

The development of peace education in Indonesia focuses on the developmental age of children (Buchori et al., 2021), adolescents (Dwiputri, 2017; Nadhirah, 2015), and adults (Supriyanto & Saputra, 2021). Peace education for early childhood in Indonesia has not been developed systematically. This can be characterized by several indicators, such as no specific program, not yet part of the competence of prospective teachers, and rarely developing teacher capacity in this field. This situation is different from the development of peace education abroad, such as in some Lebanese kindergarten schools (Montessori schools), which include peace education in the curriculum (Kotob & Antipa, 2020).

In fact, there is a correlation between peace education and the practice of peaceful values in early childhood, which impacts the possibility of reducing conflict in society by 37% (Affolter et al., 2020). Early childhood also has the highest potential for aggressive behavior (Saputra & Rohmadheny, 2018). Aggressive behavior is dangerous because aggressive behavior is associated with peaceful thoughts (Saputra et al., 2021). According to van Ryzin & Dishon (2013), violent behavior in adulthood is often overshadowed by aggressive behavior in childhood and early adolescence. So aggressive behavior in early childhood will affect the development of a culture of violence in children as adults. In addition, early childhood quickly imitates the behavior they see in everyday life (PEiA, 2019). When the adults who care for them show good behavior, they will show the same qualities. If adults exhibit violent actions to solve problems, children will imitate those actions. This situation is dangerous because children will normalize acts of violence and foster a culture of violence (Bacchini & Esposito, 2020; Saripudin & Sunarya, 2022).

The above explanation shows the importance of peace education in early childhood. However, some things have not been studied in early childhood peace education. Such as the concept of peace in early childhood and teachers, a peaceful classroom climate in early childhood education, an early childhood peace education curriculum that includes peaceful values that need to be developed from an early age, and the development of peaceful competence for early childhood education teachers. This statement follows the research results of Cremin et al. (2017), which reveal that peace education is at a crisis stage, has not yet theoretical and conceptual clarity, and requires a solid research base. There is a need to develop new, untapped directions. So, this study aims to examine peace education in early childhood by starting a study of the cultural values of peace that can be used as a peace education curriculum for early childhood. The curriculum discussed in this study is limited to the content component or the core value of the culture of peace because what distinguishes peace education in early childhood from other ages is the core value or culture it develops. The concept of a culture of peace is also different in each particular region or culture (Brenes-Castro, 2004) because it is influenced by community ties, norms, geographical characteristics, and economic context (Hakvoort & Oppheimer, 1998; Selman, 1980). The concept of peace for early childhood in Indonesia will be different from other countries. So, the research question is, what are the values of peace culture that can be used as components of the peace education curriculum in early childhood?

## RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a literature review method with an integrative review design. The integrative review aims to assess, criticize, and synthesize literature on the topic under study to generate new concepts or theories (Snyder, 2019). The integrative review in this study aims to review the

curriculum for peace education in early childhood and re-conceptualize it into a curriculum suitable for implementation in Indonesia. Based on Snyder (2019), the integrative review procedure consists of four stages: 1) design, determining the early childhood education curriculum using research and conceptual articles and books. To search for journals and books using the keywords early childhood peace education curriculum and early childhood peace education framework on Scopus and Google Scholar data sources. 2) conduct, based on predetermined keywords, 12 articles, and two books were found that discussed the peace education curriculum. These sources were then selected according to the objectives set using the inclusion criteria of the appropriateness of the content. Six sources were selected, which then entered the analysis stage. 3) analysis the selected data sources are then analyzed by comparing the essence of each study source. Then it is synthesized by considering the suitability if applied in Indonesia. 4) structuring and writing the review, the ultimate goal of this research is to find an early childhood peace education curriculum to develop a culture of peace.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Results

The analysis results showed that six figures and one institution had ideas about an early childhood peace education curriculum by adopting universal values adapted to Indonesian education. Only two have been directly implemented among the seven early childhood peace education curricula. That is the concept promoted by McFarland and Schimet & Friedman. McFarland's peace education materials have been implemented in several Montesorri kindergartens (Kotob & Antippa, 2020). In comparison, the concepts of Breadkamp, Yusem, Alfonso, Ferber, and ACCE have not been tested (Alfonso, 2014; Ferber, 2018; Stomfay-Stitz & Hinitz, 1995; Vakfi, 2012). The values in Table 1 can be adopted as content or material for early childhood peace education.

**Table 1.** Analysis of the content components of the early childhood peace education curriculum

Schmidt & Friedman (1993)	Breadkamp (Stomfay-Stitz & Hinitz, 1995)	Yusem (Stomfay-Stitz & Hinitz, 1995)	AÇE-Vakfi (2012)	Alfonso (2014)	Ferber (2018)	McFarland (Kotob & Antippa, 2020)
Development of listening, speaking, and cooperative skill	Self-awareness and self-concept	Respect yourself and others	Skills to be an active and democratic citizen	Value and respect for self	Have the awareness to know yourself and others.	Self-awareness
Accept and enjoy similarities and celebrate differences.	Awareness of others	Fostering cooperation	Develop pro-social behavior	Awareness of interconnectedness	Have positive relationships with peers	Community-awareness
Understanding feelings and how to express them	Conflict resolution and problem-solving	Appreciate diversity		Sense of fairness and justice	Connections with the wider community and world	Culture awareness
	Love of nature and science			Appreciation of diversity		Environmental-awareness
Development of conflict resolution skill	Global care and multicultural education					
	Stimulation of the child's imagination with creative art					

## Discussion

### *Early childhood peace education*

Peace education is a process that includes acquiring values, knowledge, and development of a person's attitudes, skills, and behavior to live in harmony with himself, with others, and with his environment (Salomon, 2002). According to Deutsch (2015), peace education is primarily a question of developing skills; the main goal here is to cultivate nonviolent character and acquire conflict resolution skills. Peace education is learned formally, informally, and non-formally, which can be taught in the family, school, peers, environment, and the media (Ilfiandra et al., 2021). According to Schmidt & Friedman (1993). Peace education for early childhood is holistic. It promotes children's physical, emotional, intellectual, and social development based on fundamental human values. It is built on a philosophy that fosters love, compassion, trust, fairness, cooperation, and appreciation for all species on our beautiful planet.

Several scholars and institutions believe that peace education should be taught in schools, including early childhood education (Lasi et al., 2017; Özkutlu, 2018; UNICEF, 2014). The strategy for implementing peace education in schools can be included in the curriculum in subjects (Spandek, 1993) or integrated with other subjects (Ritchie et al., 2011). The peace education curriculum has at least four components such as 1) goals that contain the expected results; 2) the content or material contains learning experiences that students must have; 3. Strategy, namely plans, methods, and tools of activities needed to achieve goals; and 4) evaluation, is used to see the achievement of goals by evaluating the process and results (Ilfiandra et al., 2021).

The purpose of peace education in early childhood is to form peaceful thoughts and views in children (Alfonso, 2014). Ritchie et al. (2011) stated that the purpose of providing peace education in early childhood is to instil the perception that conflicts must be resolved peacefully. Alfonso sees peace education as a way to create peace through ways of thinking such as developing an understanding of oneself, harmony formed from an understanding of differences, feeling part of society, and being connected to nature. At the same time, the objectives of Raitche et al. are more oriented toward inculcating the ability to resolve conflicts peacefully. The two opinions can be combined because establishing peace in individuals requires two approaches to peace, namely negative peace (the peace paradigm is oriented to conflict) and positive peace (the peace paradigm is oriented to thoughts, attitudes, and behavior) (Galtung, 1967).

### *Early childhood peace education curriculum*

Based on Table 1, the contents of the peace education curriculum for early childhood have similarities that can be synthesized into materials that are implemented in Indonesian early childhood education. Like self-awareness, almost all sources include it as a core value of a culture of peace that must be developed in early childhood. Self-awareness in early childhood is seen as a way for children to perceive themselves based on what they see in other people. Children develop self-image based on observations of others and interpret it into themselves (Rochat, 2004). Self-awareness helps children achieve inner peace and reflects relationships with others (Kotob & Antippa, 2020). Perception and the way children value themselves can be included in the material on self-awareness. Building peace skills in early childhood can start by developing self-love and respect. Children who have self-awareness will create the fairest way for themselves and others (Alfonso, 2014). Furthermore, Alfonso (2014) explains that people can defend themselves and the injustices they experience by having strong self-esteem and a positive self-identity. In addition, love and respect for yourself will gradually grow love and respect for others. The early years of childhood are critical in developing this sense of self because the sense of self is rapidly expanding.

Other materials that can be given to developing a culture of peace in early childhood are understanding differences and building respect for those differences. When children make a self-concept, children begin to identify their differences from others, such as gender differences, race, culture, age, ability level, economic status, family structure, and sexual orientation (Alfonso, 2014; Stomfay-Stitz & Hintiz, 1995). Because early childhood is in the pre-operational stage of development which acquires knowledge based on factual information, children sometimes misunderstand differences (Crain, 1980). For example, children who misperceive skin differences assume this difference is caused by exposure to sunlight. According to Galtung in Kartadinata et al. (2015), if children do not have an understanding of differences, children have the potential to commit indirect violence such as racism and discrimination. Alfonso (2014) and Ferber (2018) argue that introducing gender differences in early childhood as the beginning of providing material about differences is the first way to be taken. Reardon (1988) understands gender differences are the first lesson in diversity. People who tend to tolerate gender will be more tolerant of other differences.

Peace education for early childhood can also incorporate material building positive relationships with peers into the curriculum content. Building relationships with friends will help early childhood develop autonomy and independence (Ferber, 2018). Autonomy and independence will build democratic values in children and shape children as active citizens AAÇE-Vakfi (2012). The development of positive relationships with peers also encourages sharing and collaboration or collaboration behavior (Alfonso, 2014; Ferber, 2018; AAÇE-Vakfi, 2012).

The development of pro-social behavior can also be included in the focus of the content of the peace education curriculum in early childhood. Pro-social behavior tends to form a culture of peace in children. Pro-social behavior will emerge with encouragement from teachers and parents and positive relationships with peers. Forms of peaceful behavior based on pro-social behavior include children willing to cooperate with their friends, sharing toys, helping others, and playing together (Alfonso, 2014; Ferber, 2018; AAÇE-Vakfi, 2012).

Peace education in children also develops listening and speaking skills. Listening skills help children get to know each other and their environment, which helps develop a sense of community. Learning to talk to each other with respect forms constructive communication. These abilities support communication skills (Schmidt & Friedman, 1993). Communication skills are one of the crucial things in building a culture of peace. The absence of communication between the two parties causes ignorance, and ignorance causes misperceptions and unrest (Kartadinata, 2018).

Children should also be taught how to understand feelings and express them. Because feelings shape human behavior, children learn to express feelings from their parents. Some families enjoy solid emotional expressions, while others encourage more reserved expressions. To be encouraged to accept and express their feelings and empathize with the feelings of others. A peaceful classroom environment lets children know that their emotions are good, bad, and necessary. The feelings they feel are common and felt by all human beings. Activities that can be done so that children receive and express their emotions are 1) talking about the child's feelings; 2) familiarizing children with making mistakes, talking, making new friends, and learning new skills; 3) letting the child cry; 4) teach children to accept anger as a natural emotion and tell how to express it (Schmidt & Friedman, 1993).

Teaching a culture of peace cannot be separated from developing conflict resolution skills. It is also essential for children to have conflict resolution skills to deal with conflict constructively. Conflict resolution in children can be developed through teaching children to 1) say clearly what they want; 2) listen to what other people have to say; 3) let others know how they feel; 4) understand how other people feel; 5) overcome shame and speak up for their rights; 6) respect the rights of others; 7) control impulses and irrational behavior; 8) develop strategies for taking

turns, sharing and compromising; 9) take responsibility for their behavior (Schmidt & Friedman, 1993).

Connection with community and nature is the final content of the peace education curriculum that can be applied in Indonesia. The community will encourage early childhood to develop and understand a more meaningful life. For Children in early childhood education, the larger community after the family is the class. At the beginning of the child's relationship with this community, the child's task is to understand himself as part of the class. This task will affect emotions and provide a positive understanding of the environment and how others act. Indirectly, children will also understand a sense of justice from their relationship with society. In addition to community, early childhood should also be given an understanding of nature. Their life is related to nature. Their behavior can affect nature and impact humans and other life on earth (Alfonso, 2014; Ferber, 2018; Kotob & Antippa, 2020).

### *Strategy for implementing peace education*

Peace education strategies for early childhood consist of various ways. According to Kartadinata et al. (2018), peace education requires multi-channel and multi-strategy and has a holistic and collaborative nature. Teacher creativity and school climate determine the implementation of peace education (Kartadinata et al., 2018). Peace education strategies can be implemented through learning methods, guidance and counselling services, extracurricular activities, classroom management, teacher competency development, and school leadership support.

Peace education strategies in early childhood education are more oriented towards learning while playing. So, the method used can be a child stimulus through creative art (Stomfay-Stitz & Hinitz, 1995). More specifically, the development of self-awareness can use the strategies of speaking in front of the class, making choices, experiencing events firsthand, and making choices (Alfonso, 2014). The value of understanding differences can use role-playing, drama, costume parties, foreign food exploration, foreign festivals, and audiovisuals (Feng in Kotob & Antippa, 2020). Building positive and pro-social relationships can use mixed classroom strategies, collaboration, teaching sharing, and free chat classes with friends (Kotob & Antippa, 2020; Laal et al., 2012). The peaceful value of community connections can be developed by giving a sense that their class is very open, making them part of the family, and creating a sense of togetherness (Alfonso, 2014; Ferber, 2018; Kotob & Antippa, 2020). Meanwhile, connecting children with nature can be done using the field trip method (Alfonso, 2014; Ferber, 2018; Kotob & Antippa, 2020).

The strategy for developing a culture of peace in early childhood does not only create a culture of peace in children. Children learn from adult examples, so teachers as role models in schools must internalize the value of peace and develop the competence of a culture of peace (Kartadinata et al., 2018). In addition, the classroom climate can also encourage the successful development of a culture of peace (Kartadinata, 2020; National School Climate, 2007). So, it is necessary to create a classroom climate that can support the optimal development of children. One of the supports is the development of peaceful competence of early childhood education pre-service teachers and teachers.

## **CONCLUSION**

The core values of a culture of peace that can be used in the peace education curriculum to cultivate a culture of peace in early childhood consist of eight core values of a culture of peace: self-awareness, understanding differences, positive relationships with peers, pro-social behavior, listening and speaking skills, understanding feelings and expressing them, conflict resolution skills, relationships with community, and nature. Curriculum implementation can be done by using learning while playing strategies and stimulating children through creative arts. This curriculum

framework needs further research to determine whether or not it is suitable for early Indonesian childhood. In addition, research on a peaceful classroom climate and the concept of peace in teachers and early childhood is fundamental because it can expand the study of developing a culture of peace in early childhood.

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