

Improving Children's Social Behavior Through Group Work Methods in Group B of Pertiwi Langko Kindergarten

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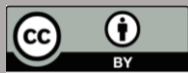
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ABSTRACT

The main problem underlying this research is the low social behavior of early childhood children, demonstrated by a tendency to be individualistic, reluctant to share, less willing to cooperate, dominate games, and minimal empathy and concern for friends. This condition emphasizes the importance of implementing learning methods that can encourage active involvement of children while honing their social skills. This research aims to improve children's social behavior by implementing group work methods. The research uses a qualitative descriptive approach with the type of Classroom Action Research (CAR). This was carried out in two cycles, where each cycle includes the stages of planning, implementation, observation, and reflection. The research subjects were early childhood group B consisting of 14 children. Data were obtained through observation, interviews, and documentation which were then processed through qualitative descriptive analysis supported by simple quantitative data. The research findings indicate an increase in children's social behavior, especially in the aspects of cooperation, sharing, and helping each other. In the pre-action stage, most children were in the underdeveloped category, while in the second cycle most children had reached the category of developing as expected to developing very well. The results of this study confirm that the group work method is effective in improving the social behavior of early childhood children. This research contributes to the development of collaborative learning strategies that focus on strengthening children's social-emotional aspects from an early age.

INTRODUCTION

Children's social behavior is an important aspect that needs to be developed from an early age because it helps them learn to cooperate, empathize, and build positive relationships with their surroundings. Behavior itself is a manifestation of personality that is evident through an individual's actions and how they interact with others (Fitri & Safitri, 2022). One form is social behavior experienced by every individual, including early childhood, because humans are essentially social creatures who cannot be separated from society (Annisa & Djamas, 2020). From an early age, children need to be introduced to social behavior so they can develop a positive personality (Putri, Dhieni, & Hapidin, 2020). The development of social behavior not only helps children manage their emotions but also serves as an important foundation for future academic success and social interactions. Social development is a process of maturing relationships, where children's social skills are formed through experiences interacting with their surroundings (Dewi, Mayasarokh, & Gustiana, 2020). This aligns with the goals of Kindergarten education, which are to encourage children's

psychological and physical growth and development, encompassing moral, spiritual, religious, social-emotional, cognitive, linguistic, motor, independence, and artistic skills as preparation for entering the next level of education. Early childhood social-emotional development is a crucial foundation for future well-being and success, which can be strengthened through experiences in kindergarten and adult support as preparation for further education (Risya, Aslamiah, & Novitawati, 2024). Of these various aspects, social behavior is seen as a crucial aspect that must be improved because it relates to children's skills in fostering harmonious relationships with peers, teachers, and parents as a form of positive interaction. Under these conditions, the role of teachers is needed optimally in assisting children through various strategies, one of which is implementing group work methods. Considering the differences in children's social-emotional development, teachers are required to design activities that can support children who experience difficulties in controlling their emotions (Suriati, Hasan, & Ramadhan, 2025). Social behavior relates to a child's interactions with others through various daily activities and activities. Thus, social behavior will influence how a child relates to others (Putri et al., 2020). In early childhood, emotional management is essential so that children are able to establish harmony with the rules that apply in society (Salsabila & Wulandari, 2023).

Observations at Pertiwi Langko Kindergarten also revealed similar problems. During play and learning activities, many children still exhibited underdeveloped social behavior. During group activities, some children appeared unable to wait their turn, fought over toys, and had difficulty accepting the opinions of their peers. This situation resulted in suboptimal group work, as some children tended to prefer to work alone without involving other group members. Furthermore, children were found to withdraw or play alone when faced with activities that required collaboration, thus hindering optimal social interaction. When minor conflicts between friends arose, such as fighting over toys or misunderstandings, some children were unable to express their feelings or resolve the problem appropriately. Teachers often had to intervene, as children's emotional management and communication skills were still weak. This situation suggests that social behaviors such as sharing, collaborating, expressing opinions, and understanding the feelings of peers still require reinforcement through more structured learning strategies centered on interactions between children. Empathy itself grows from self-awareness; the more a child is able to recognize their own emotions, the more adept they are at understanding the feelings of others (Dwi Handini, 2020).

This empirical situation underscores the need for learning strategies that bridge theory and practice, so that children have the opportunity to learn socially in a meaningful way. This finding aligns with research Saimun (2022) This shows that social and emotional development is greatly influenced by the quality of interactions, so teachers need to understand children's individual differences. Furthermore, educators are also required to be creative in selecting learning methods that provide space for children's active involvement, making the learning process easier to understand (Umam & Musayyadah, 2023). One approach considered effective is the group work method, which involves collaborative learning in small groups to complete a shared task or project. Through this activity, children can learn to share roles, negotiate, interact, and resolve conflicts that arise during the process.

Group work also fosters discipline, mutual assistance, and responsibility (Hente & Said, 2021). as well as being an effective medium for instilling cooperation from an early age (Sulaeman, Novianti Yusuf, & Suryani, 2023). In fact, research by Wahyuni, Syukri, and Miranda (2020) confirms that group assignments can improve children's social and emotional development. However, there is limited research specifically examining the application of group work methods to improve the social behavior of early childhood in rural early childhood education settings, particularly at Pertiwi Langko Kindergarten. This research gap indicates the need for more in-depth studies on how group work methods can be implemented effectively in classrooms with varying social dynamics.

Based on the problems identified during the observations, this classroom action research aims to examine and implement group work methods as a solution for developing children's social behavior in Group B of Pertiwi Langko Kindergarten. The teacher's role is crucial in this process, not only as a provider of material but also as a facilitator and mediator who creates an active and interactive learning environment so that children can be directly involved in the learning experience. Active learning is necessary so that activities are not teacher-centered and provide opportunities for children to communicate, collaborate, manage emotions, and understand the feelings of their peers through real interactions. The selection of group work methods is based on their effectiveness in stimulating interactions between children, because through group activities they can learn to share roles, negotiate, collaborate, and resolve conflicts constructively. This is in line with the findings of Wahyuni, Syukri, and Miranda (2020) which show that giving group assignments can improve children's social and emotional development. Therefore, this study specifically aims to identify the initial conditions of children's social behavior, apply group work methods as an active learning strategy, and examine the improvement of children's social skills, especially in aspects of cooperation, communication, empathy, and involvement during the activities.

METHOD

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach with Classroom Action Research (CAR) to improve children's social behavior through group work. The model used is the model proposed by Kemmis and McTaggart, with each cycle encompassing four main stages: planning, acting, observing, and reflecting.

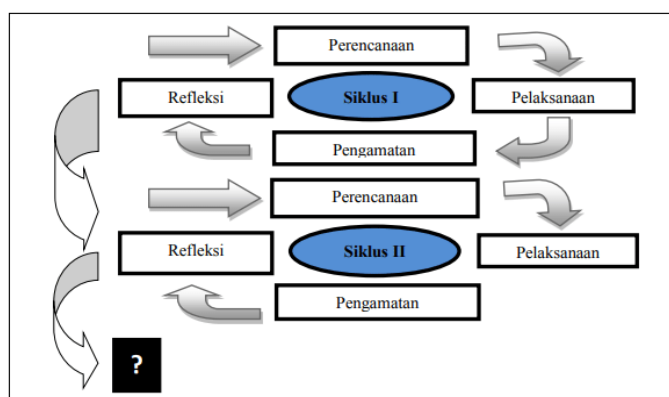


Figure 1. Kemmis and Mc Taggart Model PTK Design

The research subjects consisted of 14 children (7 boys, 7 girls) of Group B at Pertiwi Langko Kindergarten, Sigi Regency, Central Sulawesi, in the 2025/2026 academic year. The research was conducted for two weeks in two cycles, each including planning including the preparation of RPPH, provision of collaborative tools and materials, and social behavior observation sheets, implementation of actions in the form of heterogeneous group-based learning with teachers as facilitators, observations focused on cooperation, sharing, helping each other, empathy, and communication, and reflection to improve subsequent actions. The research instruments included social behavior observation sheets classified into categories Not Yet Developing (BB), Starting to Develop (MB), Developing According to Expectations (BSH), and Developing Very Well (BSB), then converted to a score of 1-4 for simple quantitative analysis, semi-structured interview guidelines to gather information from teachers, and documentation. Data validity was guaranteed through triangulation of techniques and triangulation of sources. Data were analyzed using descriptive qualitative and quantitative approaches in the form of percentages, including data reduction, presentation, and drawing conclusions based on changes in social behavior between cycles. The success of the research was determined if $\geq 75\%$ of children showed increased social behavior, reflected in active interaction, cooperation, sharing tools/tasks, as well as attitudes of helping and empathy.

RESULTS

1.1. Pre-Action

The research began with initial observations at Pertiwi Langko Kindergarten to assess the children's social behavior before the intervention. The observations showed that almost all children were underdeveloped in sharing, cooperation, and helping each other.

Table 1. Pre-Action Observation Results

No	Category	Observed Aspects			%
		Sharing Behavior	Cooperative Behavior	Helping Behavior	

		F	%	F	%	F	%	
1	Developing very well	-	0	-	0	-	0	0
2	Developing as expected	1	7.14	2	14.29	1	7.14	7.14
3	Starting to grow	2	14.29	2	14.29	1	7.14	9.52
4	Not yet developed	11	78.57	10	71.42	12	85.71	73.81
Amount		14	100	14	100	14	100	100

The table above shows that the majority of children are in the underdeveloped category, with an average of 78.57% in all three aspects of social behavior. Sharing behavior was only 7.14% in the developing category as expected and 14.29% were beginning to develop, cooperative behavior was 14.29% in the developing category as expected and 14.29% were beginning to develop, while helping behavior was 7.14% in the developing category as expected and 7.14% were beginning to develop. These results indicate that the condition of children's social behavior before the intervention was still low, so intervention in Cycle I was needed to improve the development of social behavior.

1.2. Cycle I

Cycle I was conducted through two meetings at Pertiwi Langko Kindergarten, with the researcher as the teacher and fellow teachers as observers. The learning used a group work method based on the developed RKH, which demonstrated an improvement in children's social behavior compared to the pre-treatment period.

Table 2. Results of Observation of Cycle I Actions

No	Category	Observed Aspects						%
		Sharing Behavior		Cooperative Behavior		Helping Behavior		
		F	%	F	%	F	%	
1	Developing very well	2	14.29	2	14.29	1	7.14	11.90
2	Developing as expected	4	28.57	3	21.43	2	14.29	21.43
3	Starting to grow	2	14.29	1	7.14	1	7.14	9.52
4	Not yet developed	6	42.85	8	57.14	10	71.43	57.14
Amount		14	100	14	100	14	100	100

The results of the observations show that Sharing behavior was found in 14.29% of students at the very well developed level, 28.57% at the expected development level, 14.29% at the beginning development level, and 42.85% at the undeveloped level. Cooperation

behavior was found in 14.29% of students at the very well developed level, 21.43% at the expected development level, 7.14% at the beginning development level, and 57.14% at the undeveloped level. Helping behavior was found in 7.14% of students at the very well developed level, 14.29% at the expected development level, 7.14% at the beginning development level, and 71.43% at the undeveloped level. Thus, the percentage achievement of the results of the first cycle observations was not in accordance with the specified success indicators.

The researchers and colleagues first reflected on the actions taken before proceeding to Cycle II. Reflection on the results of the actions identified several weaknesses, including children's reluctance to share, lack of cooperation, and a lack of friendly behavior. Contributing factors included individual child attitudes, the effectiveness of group work methods, and a lack of examples of social behavior from teachers. Suggested improvements included fostering a habit of sharing, fostering more effective group work, and providing assignments that encourage caring and positive interactions among children. The findings from this reflection served as a reference for planning Cycle II actions to further optimize children's social behavior.

1.3. Cycle II

The Cycle II action was carried out in two meetings with the researcher as the teacher and accompanied by fellow teachers as observers. Learning used a group work method based on the RKH which had been adjusted from the Cycle I reflection. The observation results showed a significant improvement in children's social behavior compared to pre-action and Cycle I, with almost all children included in the development level according to expectations or at a very good level.

Table 3. Results of Observation of Cycle I ActionsI

No	Category	Observed Aspects						%
		Sharing Behavior		Cooperative Behavior		Helping Behavior		
		F	%	F	%	F	%	
1	Developing very well	3	21.43	4	28.57	3	21.43	23.81
2	Developing as expected	6	42.85	5	35.71	5	35.71	38.09
3	Starting to grow	3	21.43	3	21.43	4	28.57	23.81
4	Not yet developed	2	14.29	2	14.29	2	14.29	14.29
Amount		14	100	14	100	14	100	100

From the table, sharing behavior is 21.43% at the very well developed level, 42.85% at the level of developing according to expectations, 21.43% at the level of beginning to develop and 14.29% at the level of not yet developed. Cooperation behavior is 28.57% at the

very well developed level, 35.71% at the level of developing according to expectations, 21.43% at the level of beginning to develop and 14.29% at the level of not yet developed. Helping behavior is 21.43% at the very well developed level, 35.71% at the level of developing according to expectations, 28.57% at the level of beginning to develop and 14.29% at the level of not yet developed. Thus, the percentage results in the observation cycle II have met the specified completeness indicators.

Observations during the implementation of cycle II showed that the percentage of children at the very good development level, developing as expected, starting to develop, and not yet developing had met the specified success indicators. Therefore, the next research cycle was not conducted. Reflection with peers revealed that children no longer hide their belongings from friends, indicating an increase in sharing attitudes encouraged by the implementation of group work methods. Children were also more enthusiastic about working together because the methods used were effective and encouraged collaborative interactions. In addition, children's friendly behavior increased both during learning and playing, as a result of concrete examples provided by teachers and group assignments that fostered concern for friends who were struggling. The results of this reflection emphasize the importance of teacher support in facilitating group work and the development of children's social skills.

DISCUSSION

The results of the study showed that children's social behavior before the intervention was low, as evidenced by the majority of children's underdevelopment in the areas of sharing, cooperation, and mutual assistance. In Cycle I, the implementation of group work methods began to have a positive impact, but not yet significant. Children still exhibited individualistic tendencies, interactions were uneven, and teachers did not optimally model prosocial behavior.

In Cycle II, the majority of children had achieved the expected development category and had developed very well in all aspects of social behavior. They were no longer reluctant to share, were more active in cooperation, and demonstrated spontaneous mutual assistance behavior. These significant changes indicate that when social interactions are effectively facilitated through group work, children's social behavior improves optimally. This finding can be explained by Bandura's theory, which states that children learn through observational learning, imitating the behavior of teachers and peers in groups. Furthermore, according to Vygotsky's theory, group learning provides scaffolding that allows children to develop social skills through interactions within the zone of proximal development (ZPD).

The research findings revealed that the use of group work methods significantly improved children's social behavior, including sharing, cooperation, and helping each other. This finding is consistent with previous research that found that group work methods improve the social skills of early childhood (Upe, 2023). However, this improvement is not only understood as a result of the use of certain methods, but as a consequence of increased structured social interaction within groups, so that children have wider opportunities to practice prosocial behavior directly.

Research conducted (Prayoga, 2023; Loka & Robiah, 2024; Kanza, 2025) also stated that group-based learning can foster a sense of social responsibility and concern for peers. Rahmadani (2024) and Sadaruddin (2025) emphasized that collaboration in small groups is

effective in increasing children's active participation and communication skills. Melinda & Izzati (2021) emphasized that learning experiences with peers shape more adaptive social skills.

The improvement in children's social behavior through the use of group work methods can be interpreted as a result of social interactions that occur within the group. These interactions enable children to learn to share, cooperate, and help each other in completing common tasks. This supports Vygotsky's theory, which emphasizes the importance of social relationships in children's cognitive and social development. Furthermore, the application of group work methods also aligns with the principles of early childhood education, which emphasize the important role of learning through social experiences and collaboration (Amanullah, 2023).

However, despite improvements, some children still exhibit social behaviors that need improvement. This suggests that the implementation of group work methods needs to be accompanied by an individualized approach that takes into account the needs and characteristics of each child. Research by Upe (2023) also showed that although group work methods were effective, additional strategies were needed to address individual differences in children's social development.

When compared to the results of each cycle, the condition of children in Cycle I, who were still mostly in the developing and not yet developed categories, reinforces the view that group work methods require support in the form of habituation, guidance, and consistent examples of social behavior. Meanwhile, significant improvements in Cycle II indicate that when social interactions are optimally facilitated and accompanied by models of prosocial behavior, children are able to achieve the desired social development.

The implication of these findings is the importance of implementing group work methods in early childhood learning to optimize their social skills. However, it's important to note that each child has different needs and characteristics, requiring a more personalized and adaptive approach. Further research is needed to explore additional strategies that can support the improvement of children's social behavior, such as project-based approaches or educational games that involve social interaction.

Limitations of this study include its focus on one educational institution and a specific age group, so the results may not be generalizable to a broader context. Future research should involve a wider variety of educational institutions and age groups to obtain a more comprehensive picture of the application of group work methods to improve the social behavior of early childhood.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study revealed that the implementation of group work methods significantly improved the social behavior of early childhood children at Pertiwi Langko Kindergarten, particularly in the aspects of sharing, cooperation, and familiarity. The results of observations showed an increase in the percentage of children who demonstrated positive behavior from pre-action to cycle II. These results also confirm that social interactions facilitated through group work are a proven mechanism to support the improvement of children's social and prosocial skills. This study also emphasizes the crucial role of teachers

in guiding children to build social interactions with peers. Thus, the group work method contributes more than just improving children's social skills, but also strengthens their ability to adapt, cooperate, and interact positively in the learning environment, making it an appropriate and sustainable learning strategy for early childhood education.

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