



## IMPLEMENTATION OF GROUP GUIDANCE BASED ON MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCES TO DEVELOP EMOTIONAL AWARENESS AND INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION IN EARLY CHILDHOOD

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Received 4/03/2026, Accepted 16/04/2026, Published 30/04/2026

### *Abstract*

*This study aims to describe the implementation of Multiple Intelligences-based group guidance services in developing emotional awareness and interpersonal communication in early childhood. This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study design. A total of 12 children aged 5-6 years and 2 PAUD teachers in Banda Aceh were the subjects in this study. Data collection was carried out through observation, interviews, and documentation. Data analysis used the Miles and Huberman model. The results of the study indicate that the integration of interpersonal intelligence in group guidance activities helps children recognize and express emotions verbally and there is an increase in interpersonal communication skills in the form of active listening, empathy, and cooperation with peers. This study provides conceptual and practical contributions to the development of group guidance services based on developmental psychology theory in the context of early childhood education.*

**Keyword:** *Group Guidance; Multiple Intelligences; Emotional Awareness; Interpersonal Communication; Early Childhood.*

### INTRODUCTION

Early Childhood Education (PAUD) focuses not only on academic readiness but also on social-emotional development, which forms an important foundation for early childhood. When children are 5-6 years old, they begin to demonstrate the ability to recognize their own feelings, understand the feelings of others, and build relationships with their peers. However, in PAUD settings, children are still found to have difficulty expressing emotions verbally, become easily angered when fighting over toys, and are unable to listen to their peers when they speak. This indicates that emotional awareness and interpersonal communication have not yet developed optimally and require structured stimulation through appropriate educational services (Baharun et al., 2022; Denham, 2006).

Based on initial observations conducted by researchers at a preschool in Banda Aceh, several children aged 5-6 years old still exhibited social-emotional behaviors that were not yet optimally developed. During group play activities, some children were seen crying easily when their desires were not met or fulfilled, fighting over toys without verbal communication, and not being able to wait their turn to speak during simple discussions. Furthermore, some children were also seen to be quiet and withdrawn when experiencing conflict with peers. Teachers also stated that children still needed guidance in expressing their feelings and building positive social interactions during learning activities. These initial findings indicate that children's emotional awareness and interpersonal communication skills still require more targeted stimulation through activities that are appropriate to the developmental characteristics of early childhood.

In early childhood, emotional awareness is part of social-emotional development, encompassing a child's ability to recognize, understand, and express emotions appropriately. Previous research has shown that social-emotional skills in early childhood are positively correlated with academic success, social adjustment, and psychological well-being at subsequent levels of education (Blewitt, 2020; OECD, 2021). Meanwhile, interpersonal communication in early childhood is evident through children's ability to actively listen, share, collaborate, and show empathy toward their peers. These skills develop significantly when children engage in meaningful and enjoyable group interactions (Murni et al., 2023; Sapanca & Intentilia, 2025).

Group guidance is a relevant approach to developing emotional awareness and interpersonal communication in early childhood. In early childhood education (PAUD) settings, group guidance can be conducted through role-playing, simple discussions, storytelling, and collaborative activities that enable children to learn to understand themselves and others. Group guidance aligns with child development principles that emphasize learning through social interaction and direct experience (Gysbers & Henderson, 2020). Currently, PAUD research shows that structured group activities can increase empathy, cooperation, and the ability to express opinions simply in children aged 5-6 years (Fauziddin, 2016; Rizki et al., 2025).

However, most research on group guidance for early childhood has focused on the end result of behavioral change, without in-depth examination of the social interactions and emotional dynamics that occur during the activities. Previous research has generally used a general group learning approach without explaining how activity strategies help children recognize, understand, and communicate their emotions in real-life social situations.

Group guidance will be more optimal when implemented with Howard Gardner's Multiple Intelligences (MI) theory. This theory suggests that every child possesses different types of intelligence, including intrapersonal intelligence (the ability to understand oneself) and interpersonal intelligence (the ability to understand others). Both types of intelligence are closely related to emotional awareness and interpersonal communication in early childhood. Previous research has shown that a multiple intelligence-based learning approach can improve social engagement and emotional regulation skills in early childhood (Armstrong, 2020; Rasul et al., 2023). This means that combining both intelligences, intrapersonal and interpersonal intelligence, in group guidance activities is a good way to implement them in early childhood education.

Research on emotional awareness and interpersonal communication in early childhood indicates that both aspects develop through meaningful social experiences and ongoing interactions (Murni et al., 2023). However, research on Multiple Intelligences in early childhood is largely focused on classroom learning and cognitive development, while the integration of Multiple Intelligences into group guidance services for children's social-emotional development is still limited. Furthermore, there is limited research explaining contextually how activities based on interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligence can facilitate the emergence of emotional awareness and interpersonal communication in children during the activity process

Strengthening the character and social-emotional development of early childhood has been a focus in the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum in Early Childhood Education (PAUD) units in Banda Aceh. However, group guidance activities specifically designed based on Multiple Intelligences are still limited and have not been discussed or studied in depth using a qualitative approach. Meanwhile, a case study approach allows researchers to understand the process of implementing group guidance contextually, including the dynamics of child-teacher interactions during the activities (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

However, there is little research explicitly mapping how Multiple Intelligences-based group guidance services are implemented in real-life classroom settings and how the dynamics of child interactions are shaped during these activities. Based on this, a research gap exists in the integration of approaches, implementation processes, and in-depth analysis of children's learning experiences.

Based on the explanation above, this study aims to describe the implementation of Multiple Intelligences-based group guidance in developing emotional awareness and interpersonal communication in early childhood in Banda Aceh. This research is expected to increase insight into the development of group guidance according to the child's developmental stage and serve as a practical guide for PAUD teachers in designing activities that support children's social-emotional development in a more targeted and appropriate manner.

This research presents a novel approach to integrating group guidance services with Multiple Intelligences theory in early childhood education (PAUD) settings through a case study design. The findings not only focus on the final outcome but also deeply examine the social interaction process and children's emotional experiences during the activity, providing a more contextualized experience for developing emotional awareness and interpersonal communication in early childhood.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study design to describe in depth the implementation of Multiple Intelligences-based group guidance services in developing emotional awareness and interpersonal communication in early childhood. The qualitative approach was chosen because this research focuses on understanding the process, interaction dynamics, and meanings that emerge during activities within the natural context of early childhood education units. The case study design was used to explore phenomena contextually at one research location, thus obtaining a comprehensive picture of the implementation of group guidance services in a real-life early childhood education setting.

This research was conducted at one of the PAUD units in Banda Aceh City that has implemented group-based learning activities. The subjects in this study consisted of 12 children aged 5-6 years and 2 PAUD teachers in Banda Aceh who were selected based on purposive sampling techniques with characteristics including: (1) children who are active in social interactions, (2) children who show variations in abilities in expressing emotions and interacting socially and (3) teachers who are directly involved in implementing group guidance activities.

Group guidance is conducted over 4-6 sessions, each lasting approximately 30-45 minutes, integrated into learning activities. Each session consists of an opening, core activities, and a closing. Activities begin with an introduction to emotions through emotion cards, sharing experiences, role-playing, and simple collaborative activities.

The researcher acted as the primary instrument directly involved in this study. She was present at each activity session, observing children's behavior, recording interactions that occurred during the activity, and interacting with teachers to gain a deeper understanding of children's development during the activity.

Data collection techniques included participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and documentation. Observations were used to identify children's behavior related to emotional awareness and interpersonal communication during the activities. Observation instruments included observation guide sheets containing indicators of emotional awareness (recognizing, understanding, expressing, and regulating emotions) and interpersonal communication (active listening, empathy, cooperation, and taking turns). Interviews were conducted to obtain in-depth information from teachers regarding the service implementation process, and documentation was used as supporting data (Miles et al., 2021).

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with PAUD teachers using interview guidelines prepared based on the research focus. The aspects to be explored include: (1) the social-emotional conditions of children before group guidance activities were carried out, (2) the process of implementing Multiple Intelligences-based group guidance, (3) children's responses during the activities, (4) changes in children's emotional awareness and interpersonal communication behavior and (5) obstacles faced by teachers during the implementation of the activities.

This study analyzed data through three stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. This process was carried out systematically. Data reduction was carried out by grouping observation and interview data based on the theme of emotional awareness and interpersonal communication. Data presentation was carried out in the form of descriptive narratives and tables. Conclusions were drawn by identifying patterns of behavioral changes that emerged during the activity. To maintain data validity, source triangulation and technical triangulation techniques were used. In addition, data validity was also strengthened through direct researcher involvement in the field and rechecking interview data with informants. The following is a presentation of the stages of research implementation in the form of a research flowchart that illustrates the research process from problem identification to conclusion drawing.



**Figure 1. Research Flow of Multiple Intelligences-Based Group Guidance**

Based on the research flow chart above, this research was conducted through the stages of problem identification, literature review, research design, subject determination, implementation of Multiple Intelligences-based group guidance activities, data collection, data analysis, and triangulation, resulting in research findings. This research received approval from the school and parents prior to implementation and maintained the confidentiality of the subjects' identities throughout the research process.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Implementation of Multiple Intelligences-Based Group Guidance in Early Childhood Education (PAUD)

Based on the research that has been conducted, this study shows that the implementation of Multiple Intelligences-based group guidance in the context of early childhood education is carried out systematically through 3 stages: opening, core activities, and closing. This is in line with the stages in group guidance activities (Cheung et al., 2024; Ilhamuddin et al., 2024). In the opening stage, the teacher creates a positive emotional atmosphere through ice breaking and introducing basic emotions such as anger, happiness, sadness, and fear. This stage aims to stimulate the initial building of children's emotional readiness before entering the main activities. In the core stage, activities are designed by integrating intrapersonal and interpersonal intelligence, such as the use of emotion cards, activities telling personal experiences, role-playing, and collaborative activities in groups. Meanwhile, the closing stage is filled with simple reflection activities that allow children to express the emotional experiences they felt during the activity.

During observations, researchers found that each stage of the activity elicited different social-emotional responses from the children. In the opening stage, almost all children began to show attention and engagement when the teacher showed emotion cards depicting facial expressions. Children began to show emotion pictures that matched their feelings that day. Teachers also reported that the opening activities helped children become more prepared to participate in group activities. Interviews with one teacher revealed:

*"The children calmed down more easily and began to talk when asked about their feelings through emotion pictures."*

These findings suggest that visual stimuli and simple interactions in the initial stage help build children's emotional readiness before entering the main activity.

### Development of Emotional Awareness in Early Childhood

Research findings indicate that implementing these activities has an impact on increasing emotional awareness in early childhood. Children who previously tended to express emotions impulsively, such as crying and anger without explanation, after the activities began to recognize, understand, and express emotions verbally. The following shows the children's emotional states before and after the activities.

**Table 1. Emotional Development of Early Childhood Before and After Multiple Intelligences-Based Group Guidance Activities**

No	Indicator	Conditions Before Activities	Conditions After Activities	Qualitative Findings
1	Get to know emotions	Children only recognize basic emotions to a limited extent, such as anger and crying	Children have begun to be able to recognize various emotions	Children have begun to be able to express emotions spontaneously (verbally)
2	Understand the causes of emotions	Children cannot yet explain the reasons for the emergence of emotions	Children have begun to be able to explain the causes of emotions in simple terms	Sentences like "I'm angry because..." have started to appear
3	Expressing emotions	Emotional expressions tend to be non-verbal (crying or anger)	Children begin to express emotions verbally	There is a shift from impulsive to verbal behavior
4	Emotion regulation	Children get angry easily and have difficulty controlling their emotions	Children are able to control their emotions in social situations	Children begin to appear to calm themselves without the teacher's help

Based on the table above, it is clear that children's development indicates an increase in their ability to regulate emotions more adaptively, as well as qualitative changes in their behavior before and after implementing Multiple Intelligences-based group guidance. This is in line with research findings that indicate that early childhood emotional awareness is a crucial component of child development and contributes to various aspects of development, including social, cognitive, and learning behavior (Lin et al., 2025; Rahmaniya et al., 2025).

### The Shift in Emotional Expression from Non-Verbal to Verbal

The first theme explored in this study was the shift in emotional expression from non-verbal to verbal. Before the activity, many children displayed emotional responses through crying, screaming, or aggressive behavior such as grabbing a friend's toy without being able to explain their feelings. Based on observation notes, out of 12 children, 8 children more frequently displayed emotions through non-verbal behavior during conflicts during play or learning. After

several group guidance activities, the children began to demonstrate the ability to express their emotions verbally with simple sentences, such as:

"I'm angry because my toy was taken, I'm sad because I wasn't invited to play, I like playing with my friends."

In addition to these visible behaviors, interviews with teachers also supported this, which revealed that before the activity, children tended to immediately cry or remain silent when they felt disturbed. However, after the activity, children began to try to express their feelings first. The teachers reported that now the children are starting to talk before crying or getting angry. Simple expressions like these demonstrate a change in early childhood.

Furthermore, changes were also evident from non-verbal to verbal expression, indicating the development of emotional language, which plays a crucial role in building more adaptive communication. This ability enables children to reduce aggressive behavior because emotions can be channeled through more structured language. These findings are also supported by recent research showing that improved emotional language in early childhood contributes significantly to children's self-regulation skills and the quality of their social interactions in the learning environment (Wei, 2024).

Based on the research, these changes in children emerged because the emotion card activity and simple reflection helped them recognize the connection between their experiences and their emotions. When children were asked to choose an emotion card and then explain its cause, they began to learn to identify and name their own emotions. At this stage, the process of simple reflection became a medium for building self-awareness in children.

These findings also demonstrate that Multiple Intelligences-based group guidance activities not only play a role in improving emotional identification skills but also encourage the internalization of emotional experiences through meaningful social interactions. Children began to develop simple reflective skills, such as linking emotional experiences to natural situations, which is an early indicator of the development of metacognitive competence in the social-emotional aspect. This development shows that children are not only able to express emotions, but are also able to understand the context and consequences of the emotions being felt (Peceguina et al., 2022).

### **The Emergence of Negotiation Language in Early Childhood Social Interactions**

The second theme in this study is the emergence of negotiation language in children's social interactions. During role-playing and group activities, children began to demonstrate initiative in verbally expressing their wishes or refusals before conflicts arose. Based on observations, some children began using expressions such as "Can I take turns?", "I haven't finished playing yet, I'll borrow it later." Before the activities, these expressions were almost non-existent, and children often grabbed or took toys directly without any such expression.

Furthermore, during group guidance and role-playing activities, children began to demonstrate initiative in expressing their feelings before conflicts arose. This indicates that developing emotional language skills impact not only self-expression but also more adaptive interpersonal communication skills. Thus, the shift from non-verbal to verbal expression in this study not only demonstrates language development but also reflects children's increased ability to manage emotions through more constructive communication in social interactions.

From the data interpretation perspective, role-playing and collaborative activities provide opportunities for children to practice interpersonal communication directly. Children not only learn to recognize their own emotions but also understand the responses of their peers in certain social situations. This activity demonstrates that structured group interactions can help children develop simple negotiation skills, self-control, and healthy and appropriate conflict resolution.

### Interpersonal Communication Development in Early Childhood

The results of the study indicate that in addition to development in emotional awareness, the results also indicate an increase in the interpersonal communication skills of early childhood children. The children's interpersonal conditions before and after the activity are presented in the following table

**Table 2. Development of Children's Interpersonal Communication**

No	Indicator	Conditions before the activity	Condition after activity	Qualitative Findings
1	Active listening	Children often interrupt their friends' conversations	Children start to listen to their friends until they finish	Children show attention when friends are talking
2	Empathy	Children show less concern for their friends	Children begin to show empathy (helping, calming)	The child says "it's okay, yes" to a friend
3	Cooperation	Children tend to play alone or fight over things	Children are able to work together in groups	Group activities run more conductively
4	Take Turns Together	Children do not yet understand the concept of turns	Children begin to wait for their turn to speak	There is a more orderly interaction

Based on the table above, children's interpersonal communication skills also experienced visible development, as evidenced by increased empathy, listening skills, and group cooperation. These changes demonstrate that the learning experiences gained through group guidance activities have a tangible impact on children's social-emotional development. These findings reinforce the principle that, in a qualitative case study approach, changes in children's behavior can be understood through the patterns of interaction and experiences that occur during the activities.

### Improved Turn-Taking and Active Listening Skills and the Emergence of Empathy Toward Peers

The third theme in the study was improved turn-taking and active listening skills. In the initial stages, children tended to frequently interrupt their peers and had difficulty waiting their turn during group discussions. However, after several activities, children showed changes, such as being able to listen to their peers thoroughly before responding. Based on observation notes, most children began to show attention when their peers were speaking by looking at the speaker and not immediately interrupting

This was also supported by interviews with teachers, who reported that the group atmosphere was more conducive than before the activity. One teacher stated that *"the children are starting to learn to wait their turn and not immediately rush to speak."* This finding suggests that simple discussion activities and group reflection help children understand social rules in interpersonal communication.

The next step is the emergence of empathetic responses toward peers. During collaborative activities, children began to demonstrate behaviors of helping and supporting friends who were experiencing difficulties. For example, when a child cried because their toy was broken, another child immediately took the initiative by saying, *"It's okay,"* while approaching their friend. This type of response was rarely seen during regular learning activities

### **Analysis of the Implementation of Multiple Intelligences-Based Group Guidance**

The findings of this study indicate that the integration of a Multiple Intelligences-based group guidance approach functions not only as a learning strategy but also as a contextual and effective form of social-emotional development intervention. In early childhood education (PAUD) settings, structured social interactions through group guidance activities have been shown to provide meaningful learning experiences for children in recognizing and managing their emotions. This is further supported by research findings confirming that child development is strongly influenced by interactions occurring in the school or learning environment, both with teachers and with peers. Therefore, social experiences are a crucial factor in developing empathy, emotional regulation, and collaboration skills (Defaza & Vitaloka, 2025; Hasnah et al., 2024; Yuliana et al., 2025).

Based on the explanation above, Multiple Intelligences-based group guidance activities provide a space for children to learn through various experiences that align with their developmental characteristics. The emotion card activity also facilitates children's intrapersonal awareness, while role-play and group activities facilitate interpersonal intelligence through direct social experiences. The combination of these two activities can help children understand their own emotions as well as understand the social responses of others in group interactions and other social activities.

### **The Relationship Between Interpersonal Communication and Early Childhood Social Emotional Development**

This study also found a relationship between interpersonal communication skills and early childhood social-emotional development. Children who actively participate in group interactions tend to demonstrate improved abilities in expressing feelings, building positive social relationships, and understanding others. This aligns with previous research showing that interpersonal communication has a significant relationship with the development of social behavior and language skills in early childhood, as through communication, children learn to express themselves and understand their social environment (Prasasti & Romadona, 2025; Ramadhani & Soedjarwo, 2022; Salsabilla & Setiawati, 2025). These findings and previous research confirm that interpersonal communication development is inseparable from the social-emotional learning process in the context of Early Childhood Education (ECE).

### **Implications of Multiple Intelligences-Based Group Guidance in Early Childhood Education**

Related to this, the approach used in this study also demonstrates novelty because it integrates group guidance services with Multiple Intelligences theory in a systematic and structured activity design. This approach enables children to develop one of their intelligences, namely interpersonal intelligence, through reflective and collaborative activities. This aligns with the view that children's social-emotional development is not only influenced by internal factors but also by the quality of interactions and stimuli provided by a supportive and participatory learning environment (Fikriyah et al., 2025; Laura et al., 2025; Umairi, 2025). Therefore, activities designed based on social experiences and active interactions are crucial in supporting

optimal early childhood development. Implementationally, the results of this study provide an easy alternative for Early Childhood Education teachers to design learning activities that are not only oriented towards cognitive aspects but also focus on social-emotional strengthening through a varied and contextual approach. Activities such as role-playing, group discussions, and simple reflection have been shown to increase child engagement and encourage prosocial behaviors such as empathy, cooperation, and emotional management. This is supported by research showing that appropriate stimuli through media and learning activities can optimize children's social-emotional development from an early age (Fitriyah, 2025).

Overall, the findings of this study confirm that Multiple Intelligences-based group guidance is an effective and relevant approach for implementation in early childhood education (ECE) settings. This approach not only helps children recognize and express their emotions but also improves the quality of their social interactions in a more adaptive manner. Therefore, integrating this approach into early childhood learning practices can be an innovative strategy to support the holistic development of early childhood

### **Research Limitations**

This study has several limitations that should be considered by future researchers. First, the limited number of research subjects within a single PAUD unit means the results cannot be generalized more broadly. Second, this study used a qualitative case study approach, placing greater emphasis on data depth than quantitative measurements. Third, the relatively limited duration of the activities does not fully reflect the long-term impact on early childhood social-emotional development. Based on these limitations, future research is recommended to use a more diverse approach with a wider number of subjects and a longer intervention period.

### **CONCLUSION**

Based on the research results, it can be concluded that the implementation of Multiple Intelligences-based group guidance indicates the development of emotional awareness and interpersonal communication in early childhood within the context of the case study. The integration of interpersonal intelligence into group guidance activities provides meaningful learning experiences for children in recognizing, understanding, and verbally expressing emotions, and demonstrates the development of social interaction skills such as active listening, empathy, and cooperation.

Furthermore, the activities designed in this study, implemented through the opening, core, and closing stages, demonstrated the creation of a participatory learning environment conducive to the socio-emotional development of early childhood. Therefore, it can be interpreted that Multiple Intelligences-based group guidance has the potential to be an innovative approach in early childhood education that can support children's holistic development. This research confirms that Multiple Intelligences-based group guidance is a relevant innovation for implementation and further development in early childhood education (PAUD) settings.

However, the results of this study should be interpreted with limited scope because the research was conducted in a single PAUD unit with a relatively small number of subjects and used a qualitative case study approach. Therefore, the findings emphasize understanding the process and dynamics of children's socio-emotional development during the program rather than measuring the program's effectiveness broadly.

Based on the limitations of this study, it is recommended that future research use a longitudinal design with a longer intervention period to allow for more in-depth and sustainable observation of children's socio-emotional development

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