

## Building Social Character in Early Childhood through Music and Movement Activities

Prihma Sinta Utami<sup>1\*</sup>, Luluk Ismayanti<sup>2</sup>, Jaymar M. Cabañeles<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Pendidikan Sejarah dan Sosiologi, FIS, Universitas Insan Budi Utomo, Malang.

<sup>2</sup>Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini, Universitas Terbuka, Jakarta.

<sup>3</sup>Faculty of Education, Mindanao State University - General Santos City, Phillipines.

\*corresponding author [prihmasintautami@uibu.ac.id](mailto:prihmasintautami@uibu.ac.id)

Received: 2026-March-15

Rev. Req: 2026-May-09

Accepted: 2026-July-24

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**ABSTRACT:** *This study aims to examine the contribution of music and movement activities to improving selfconfidence and expressive abilities in early childhood. A descriptive qualitative method was employed. The research was conducted at KB Kartini Lembahijau in April 2026, involving 23 children aged 4–5 years. Observation, interviews, and documentation served as data collection techniques. The findings reveal that music and movement activities can enhance children's self-confidence, as evidenced by their courage to perform, active participation, and peer interaction. Furthermore, these activities strengthen children's expression through body language, facial changes, and creativity in following musical rhythms. Hence, music and movement can be implemented as an effective learning method to support early childhood social-emotional aspects.*

**ABSTRAK:** Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji kontribusi kegiatan musik dan gerak terhadap peningkatan rasa percaya diri serta kemampuan ekspresi pada anak yang berada di fase awal pertumbuhan. Metode yang dipakai adalah kualitatif deskriptif. Lokasi penelitian di KB Kartini Lembahijau pada bulan April 2026. Subjek berjumlah 23 anak dengan rentang usia 4–5 tahun. Observasi, wawancara, dan dokumentasi digunakan sebagai teknik pengumpulan data. Berdasarkan hasil penelitian, diketahui bahwa kegiatan musik dan gerak mampu meningkatkan kepercayaan diri anak, yang tampak dari keberanian tampil, partisipasi aktif, serta interaksi dengan teman. Di samping itu, aktivitas ini juga memperkuat ekspresi anak melalui bahasa tubuh, perubahan mimik wajah, dan orisinalitas dalam mengikuti irama musik. Dengan demikian, musik dan gerak dapat diimplementasikan sebagai metode pembelajaran yang efektif untuk menunjang aspek sosial emosional anak usia dini.

**Keywords:** *music and movement, self-confidence, expression, early childhood*

### I. INTRODUCTION

Nowaday, early childhood education is increasingly oriented toward student-centered learning models grounded in authentic experience. Early childhood is widely regarded as a critical period in human development, requiring appropriate stimulation to support social, emotional, and cognitive aspects (Creswell, 2020; Moleong, 2021). During this phase, children exhibit strong curiosity and typically learn through joyful, active activities that involve direct, everyday

experience. For this reason, creative and interactive learning approaches are essential to maximize children's developmental potential.

One approach that can be applied in early childhood education is art-based activity, particularly one that integrates music and movement. Activities that combine sound, rhythm, and bodily movement in an integrated manner are referred to as music and movement activities. Through such activities, children develop not only cognitively but also socio-emotionally, motorically, and creatively (Kunwardani et al., 2025). Music and movement provide children with opportunities to express themselves freely while fostering self-confidence when interacting with their surrounding environment (Kusuma et al., 2022a; Luthfillah et al., 2024). In addition, these activities can enhance children's participation in learning and create a more enjoyable and less monotonous learning atmosphere (Hasibuan & Khadijah, 2024a; E. Kurniawati et al., 2023a).

From a theoretical perspective, music and movement activities align with constructivist theory, which holds that children construct their knowledge through direct experience (Moleong, 2021). Young children remain at the pre-operational stage, so they require concrete and visual activities in the learning process. In this context, music and movement serve as an effective medium because they engage many of the child's senses simultaneously. The social interaction that emerges during such activities also plays an important role in children's development, particularly in building self-confidence and communication skills (Miles et al., 2020). Learning that incorporates physical and social activities such as music and movement is therefore highly appropriate for early childhood education.

However, evidence from the field indicates that music and movement activities in early childhood education (PAUD) institutions have not always been implemented optimally. Many activities are carried out without systematic planning and are not directed toward specific developmental goals (E. Kurniawati et al., 2023b; Yudi Santi & Darnis, 2024). This condition means that the substantial potential of music and movement activities has not been fully utilized to support children's development. In addition, insufficiently varied teaching methods can cause children to lose interest and become passive. As a result, children's self-confidence remains low, particularly regarding the courage to perform and to interact with peers (Hasibuan & Khadijah, 2024b).

Another common problem is children's limited ability to express themselves. Children are often not yet able to articulate their feelings, ideas, or responses to their surrounding environment. Yet expressive ability is a vital part of socio-emotional development. Children who are able to express themselves well tend to have better communication skills and greater self-confidence in relating to others. Therefore, a learning method is needed that provides children with space to express themselves freely and enjoyably.

Previous studies have shown that music and movement activities bring broad benefits to early childhood development. However, most research has focused on motor and cognitive aspects (Idrianty et al., 2024; Rismayani et al., 2023; Winarni et al., 2025). Research specifically addressing children's self-confidence and expression remains limited, particularly in classroom-learning contexts. This indicates a need for more in-depth research on the role of music and movement activities in developing children's socio-emotional aspects.

Based on the discussion above, it can be concluded that music and movement activities have substantial potential to enhance self-confidence and expression in early childhood. However, suboptimal implementation and the scarcity of research on certain aspects are important reasons for conducting this study. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the role of music and movement activities in enhancing self-confidence and expression among early childhood children at KB Kartini Lembahijau.

## II. METHOD

This study employed a qualitative approach with a descriptive design (Creswell, 2020; Moleong, 2021). The research was conducted at KB Kartini Lembahijau in April 2026. The research subjects were 23 children aged 4–5 years. Data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation (Creswell, 2020). Observations were conducted over four sessions to examine children's behavior during music and movement activities. Interviews were conducted with the teacher and several children to determine their responses to the activities undertaken. Documentation was used to reinforce the data in the form of photographs and daily activity logs (Dewi Fitria, 2022). The research instrument consisted of an observation guide covering indicators of self-confidence and expression, as presented in the following table.

Table 1. The Data of self confidence and expression

| Aspect          | Indicator                                    |
|-----------------|----------------------------------------------|
| Self-Confidence | Willingness to perform in front of the class |
|                 | Willingness to interact with peers           |
|                 | Active participation in activities           |
|                 | Not hesitant to try                          |
| Expression      | Facial expression                            |
|                 | Body movement                                |
|                 | Movement creativity                          |
|                 | Response to music                            |

Data analysis was conducted through the stages of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing (Miles et al., 2020). To ensure the validity of the data, the researcher employed source and method triangulation.

## III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The findings show that music and movement activities had a positive impact on the development of early childhood self-confidence. Based on observations conducted over four sessions, a shift in children's behavior was evident, from initially passive to more active and courageous. The children began confidently following movements, singing, and performing in front of the class. This indicates that music and movement activities can create an enjoyable learning atmosphere, making children more comfortable engaging in the activities (Kusuma et al., 2022b; Luthfillah et al., 2024). The increase in children's self-confidence was also reflected in greater participation in

group activities. Children who had previously tended to remain quiet began to interact more confidently with peers and follow the teacher's instructions. This suggests that music and movement activities affect not only individual development but also children's social abilities. This finding is consistent with studies indicating that art-based activities can enhance children's engagement and social interaction in learning (Amalia Hasibuan & Khadijah, 2024; L. Kurniawati et al., 2023).

In addition, interview results with the children also indicated a positive response to the activities. One child stated:

*"I like it when there is a song, so I want to join in the movement."*

This response indicates that the musical element can enhance children's motivation to participate in the activities. Music provides an engaging stimulus, making it easier for children to become actively involved in the learning process.

In terms of expression, the children were able to express themselves through body movement, facial expressions, and responses to musical rhythm. They did not merely imitate demonstrated movements but also began to display creativity by devising their own movements. This indicates progress in children's expressive and imaginative abilities. This finding aligns with research suggesting that movement-based art can serve as an effective medium for channeling emotion while enhancing children's creativity (Ariska, 2024; Rismayani et al., 2023).

Children's developmental progress was also assessed using developmental categories as a reference for observing behavioral changes during the activities. Overall, most children demonstrated development in the categories of "Developing as Expected" (BSH) to "Developing Very Well" (BSB), particularly in the aspects of courage to perform and active participation.

Table 2. Observation of Children's Developmental Outcomes

| Aspect          | Findings                                                                                                                  |
|-----------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Self-Confidence | Most children began to display courage in performing and actively participating in activities to support their characters |
| Expression      | Children were able to express themselves through movement and facial expressions and build strong characters              |
| Participation   | Children were more enthusiastic and engaged in the activities                                                             |

Further analysis indicates that the success of music and movement activities is influenced by the teacher's role in managing the learning process. Teachers who are active, creative, and able to create an enjoyable atmosphere find it easier to engage children in the activities. This shows that the success of the method depends not only on the type of activity but also on how it is delivered (Kurniawati et al., 2023a; Yudi Santi & Darnis, 2024).

From a theoretical standpoint, the findings of this study support constructivist theory, which holds that children learn through direct experience. Music and movement activities provide children with opportunities to experience, try, and interact directly in the learning process

(Moleong, 2021). Furthermore, the social interaction that occurs during these activities also reinforces the development of children's self-confidence (Miles et al., 2020).

Compared with previous studies, the results of this study indicate that music and movement activities affect not only motor and cognitive aspects but also play an important role in socio-emotional aspects, particularly self-confidence and expression (Idarianty et al., 2024; Rismayani et al., 2023; Winarni et al., 2025). This demonstrates that art-based approaches offer broader benefits in early childhood learning.

Overall, music and movement activities can serve as an effective learning strategy because they integrate various aspects of children's development. These activities not only make learning more enjoyable but also provide children with space to develop optimally according to their individual characteristics..

#### **IV. CONCLUSION**

This study concludes that music and movement activities play a significant role in enhancing self-confidence and expression among early childhood children at KB Kartini Lembahijau. The results of observations and interviews indicate an increase in children's courage to participate, such as willingness to perform in front of the class, engaging in activities without hesitation, and actively interacting with peers. Music and movement activities also created an enjoyable learning atmosphere, making children feel more comfortable expressing themselves.

These findings confirm that art-based learning, particularly music and movement, is effective in supporting children's socio-emotional development. Children's self-confidence develops through direct experience that provides opportunities to try and express themselves without pressure.

Furthermore, music and movement activities have proven effective in enhancing children's expressive abilities through body movement, facial expressions, and responses to musical rhythm. Children not only followed instructions but also demonstrated creativity in devising their own movements. This indicates that music and movement serve as an effective medium of expression for early childhood.

Accordingly, this study offers a practical contribution, showing that music and movement activities can be adopted as an effective learning strategy to optimally support the development of self-confidence and expression in early childhood.

#### **Suggestions for PAUD Educators:**

Educators are advised to integrate music and movement activities in a planned and sustained manner within the learning process. Teachers need to develop creativity in designing activities that are engaging and appropriate to the characteristics of young children. The use of varied songs, movements, and supporting media can enhance children's engagement in activities. In addition, teachers need to provide sufficient space for children to explore and express themselves freely to support the development of self-confidence.

### Suggestions for Educational Institutions:

Institutions should provide adequate facilities and support for the implementation of art-based activities. Institutions also need to provide training for teachers on innovative learning methods such as music and movement so that implementation can proceed more optimally.

### Suggestions for Future Researchers:

Future researchers are encouraged to develop studies using a more in-depth approach or a mixed-methods design to obtain more comprehensive results. Further research could also examine other variables such as creativity, communication, or emotional intelligence to broaden the scope of research in early childhood education.

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