KINDERKAIZEN: EXPLORING THE LEVEL OF PLAY AMONGST CHILDREN OF 4 TO 6 YEARS OLD IN MALAYSIA

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Background:
In 2003, the Malaysian government implemented a new policy in the national education system: Mathematics, Science, and Technology subjects in primary and secondary schools are to be taught in English. This has created a great concern among parents and educators nationwide because all this while, these subjects have been taught in Malay (National language of Malaysia).

This then caused a rising factor among parents to look for preschools that offer English as a medium of instruction. Another factor rose was parents wanted preschools that can make sure their children will be able to read, write, and count fluently in Malay as well as English by the time they entered primary school because national primary schools and some private and international schools in Malaysia have entrance examination for streaming purposes. This is an onerous burden on teachers in preschools to perform. So, some preschools teach primary syllabus to 5 and 6 years old. During this time, one can observe a growing trend of parents choosing preschools that can give academic based curriculum to their children.

KinderKaizen uses a Play-based Learning approach that transpires from experiences living abroad. Kinder means children in German. Kaizen means “Continuous Improvement” in Japanese. We believe that children will continuously improve and nobody is the best. The KinderKaizen started its first centre in July 2014, expands its ideas late 2015 and has 39 branches to date. The Founder Dr. Putri Afzan Maria Zulkifli believes that the play system works within this multicultural community in MALAYSIA.

Theoretical Model of KinderKaizen Play

It is recognized that play comes naturally to children because it is part of their development. It is their natural instinct. They know how to play without being taught to them. When children play, they have many opportunities to develop skills. It is the most natural way for children to explore and learn. With this notion on the importance of play in early childhood, Dr. Putri Afzan Maria Zulkifli designed the Theoretical Model of KinderKaizen Play. The first KinderKaizen Enrichment Centre started in 2014 as an alternative to existing preschools in Malaysia.

Graph of Parents’ Perspectives on Play

The Theoretical Model of KinderKaizen Play reflects the types of play, Howard Gardner’s Multiple Intelligences, Carol Tustie’s children’s type of energy, and Midledt Parten’s Stages of Play.

Findings: Children show improvement in their play skills within 3 - 8 months of being in KinderKaizen. As a result of this, there are improvements in the children’s PSED, PD, and CL developments. All graphs below show results after a year of the children being in KinderKaizen Enrichment Centre.

KinderKaizen Assessment System (KAS) refers to the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) components used in England. KAS result is meant to help PlayLeaders to have a more meaningful understanding on the children under their care.