



## The Role of Early Childhood Education Teachers in Communicating and Managing Schools Safe

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### Abstract

When a disaster occurs, students are the most vulnerable to the effects, especially if the disaster occurs while the children are at school. With the large number of potential disasters that occur, disaster education is very important to do early on, and this is done by equipping early childhood teachers about disaster education and managing disaster-safe schools. In the end, education and management of disaster-safe schools can be conveyed to children through play activities according to the principles of learning for early childhood. Efforts to provide disaster education from an early age is an important and fundamental action that is not only an act of curriculum development or enrichment alone, but is also a preventive action for the life of every child in dealing with this phenomenon in the future, so that when faced with real events every child has optimal readiness to deal with it.

**Keywords:** disaster safe schools; communicating and managing school; lembang fault.

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### Introduction

Indonesia is located between the Australian Continent and the Asian Continent, as well as between the Indian Ocean and the Pacific Ocean. Indonesia is also located between three plate confluences, namely the Indo-Australian Plate which moves north, the Eurasian Plate which moves south, and the Pacific Plate which moves from east to west, and is traversed by two active mountain passes (Agus Argunawan & Ikhwan Syahtaria, 2020). in the world, namely the Pacific Circum and the Mediterranean Circum. So, Indonesia is called a ring of fire country (Hermon, 2019). This location causes Indonesia to become a country that is very vulnerable to disasters, even with quite high frequency (Afrian et al., 2020).

A natural disaster is an event that has a detrimental impact on humans caused by a series of natural events (Rosselló et al., 2020).

Disasters or calamities can occur due to natural events such as earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, tsunamis, floods, tornadoes, droughts and landslides. Meanwhile, based on Law Number 24 of 2007, a disaster is an event or series of events that threatens and disrupts human life and livelihood, whether caused by natural factors, non-natural factors or human factors which cause casualties, environmental damage, property loss and psychological impact.

The Lembang fault is a potential disaster that can occur at any time and must be watched out for, especially by the local community (Helena et al., 2021). The Lembang Fault is an active fault located in West Bandung Regency, West Java (Daryono et al., 2019). Geologists have long warned of the dangers and risks of earthquakes caused by the Lembang Fault (Handayani et al., 2021). As an anticipatory effort, the community needs to be provided with disaster mitigation in the form of education and preparedness through various activity programs, especially in schools (Nurbani et al., 2020). This is at least to reduce the possibility of greater impacts and risks that can be experienced by the community (Wachinger et al., 2013). Education and mitigation of natural disasters need to be provided at all levels of education, including early childhood education (ECE). Through ECE institutions, young children learn to understand regional conditions and be prepared to anticipate various possible dangers.

Disaster mitigation in early childhood is a very important and relevant action. The reasons why mitigation is very important for early childhood include: 1) Children are vulnerable to the impacts of disasters. Young children, especially children who are still at a vulnerable stage of physical and mental development, tend to be more affected by disasters. The child may not have sufficient physical or cognitive abilities to handle emergency situations or take safety measures on his own. Therefore, disaster mitigation efforts in early childhood are needed to protect children; 2) Forming initial awareness in children. Teaching children about disasters and actions they can take to protect themselves and others from an early age can form an early awareness of the importance of safety and preparedness in facing disasters. This can be a foundation for better understanding and action in the future; 3) Continuous learning. Teaching about disaster mitigation to early childhood can be an integral part of education. This enables continuous and iterative learning about safety and disaster prevention measures; 4) Promote shared responsibility. By involving young children in disaster mitigation activities, such as evacuation drills or getting to know safety equipment, teachers can promote shared responsibility in families, schools and communities. Teachers can be communicators of change who encourage adults to more seriously consider disaster preparation and mitigation. 5) Reduces fear and anxiety. Children often feel anxious or afraid when they don't know how to deal with emergency situations. Through education and mitigation exercises, children can feel more confident and less anxious when they know what to do in a disaster situation; 6) Disaster mitigation efforts in early childhood can save lives. Children who are trained and prepared may respond better in disaster situations, and children may be able to help themselves and others more effectively; 7) Future Preparation. Early childhood children are future leaders. By providing children with education about disaster mitigation, teachers can create a generation that is more aware of risks and better able to overcome the challenges they may face in the future; and 8) Involving children in disaster mitigation efforts can also motivate adults, including parents and teachers, to be more serious in disaster preparation. Concern for children's safety is often the impetus for further action in disaster mitigation.

Therefore, schools through teachers play an important role in building disaster awareness in society, especially among students, thus efforts are being made to build schools that are ready to face natural disasters. As based on the Circular Letter of the Minister of Education No. 70a/MPN/SE/2010 which states that disaster education must exist in every educational unit. This policy shows that relevant stakeholders must be able to make policies and adopt and develop school-based disaster education programs based on regional characteristics and based on general guidelines from central government policy in terms of disaster management. Disaster education (disaster education) is a process to raise awareness that starts from building knowledge, understanding and action for preparedness, prevention and recovery (Shaw et al., 2004). disaster education is related to the process of socialization, understanding and knowledge development (Oktari et al., 2015). So based on this, disaster education focuses on the socialization process, understanding disaster knowledge, and developing self-saving skills. This article will discuss the role of early childhood teachers in communicating disaster safe schools. The disaster safe school in question is the Lembang fault disaster safe school in Lembang sub-district.

### **Disaster Safe School Concept**

Every child has the right to safety and continuity of life as well as the right to continuous and quality basic education (Amri et al., 2017; Johnson et al., 2014; Mitchell et al., 2008). These rights

are often at risk of being violated by natural and technological disasters that can cause disasters, both large and small (Lazarus & Brock, 2018). These disasters, whether large, medium or small, impact children's safety and education (Gibbs et al., 2019). When education is disrupted, a child's learning can be disrupted, sometimes permanently, which can have lasting negative impacts, both economic and social, on the child, their family, and the community (Mizuki et al., 2021; Peek, 2008).

For the education sector, the most serious impact of disasters is causing fatalities or serious injuries in schools. There are many other consequences that can permanently affect a child's future: (1) Schools that cannot be used because they are damaged; (2) Schools that cannot be used because they are used as temporary housing or refugee camps; (3) Schools that are no longer accessible; (4) Loss of physical access to child-friendly play spaces; (5) Loss of school equipment and educational materials; (6) Teachers cannot teach; (7) Students are expected to earn a living, help with recovery and care for their younger sibling's full time; (8) Psychosocial disorders in teachers, students and other education personnel (Kousky, 2016)

The education sector has an important role in overcoming the various challenges posed by natural disasters and preventing dangers from turning into disasters (Yusuf et al., 2022). By conducting hazard and risk assessments, making plans based on research results, ensuring physical and environmental protection, and developing preparedness plans, hazards can be prevented and develop into disasters (Shaw et al., 2009). Schools are institutions where knowledge and skills are shared. Therefore, they have great hopes to become role models in preventing natural disasters. The success of disaster mitigation is one of the main tests of the success of education provided for generations (Suryani, Adi et al., 2019).

In 2012, the National Disaster Management Agency (BNPB) issued Perka BNPB No. 4 of 2012 concerning Guidelines for Implementing Schools/Madrasas Safe from Disasters (SMAB), where this Perka aims to: 1) Identify the location of schools/madrasas in priority areas prone to earthquake and tsunami disasters; 2) Provide a reference in implementing Safe Schools/Madrasas from disasters both structurally and non-structurally (Nugraheni, 2023)

The scope of the guidelines for implementing schools/madrasahs that are safe from disasters is directed at fundamental aspects, namely: (1) Structural Framework, consisting of Safe location, The building structure is safe, Safe classroom design and arrangement, and Support for safe facilities and infrastructure; (2) Non-Structural Framework, consisting of Increased knowledge, attitudes and actions, Safe school/madrasah policy, Preparedness planning, Resource mobility

At the global level, there is a Comprehensive Safe Schools framework which summarizes the two Frameworks included in Perka BNPB No. 4 of 2012.

**Comprehensive Safe School Goals**

The goals of a comprehensive safe school in the face of anticipated hazards, whether natural or man-made, are to: (1) Protect students, teachers and other education personnel from the risk of death and injury at school; (2) Plan for continuity of education in the face of anticipated dangers; (3) Strengthening community residents' resilience to disasters through education; (4) Protecting investments in the education sector (Paci-Green et al., 2020)

**The Three Pillars of A Comprehensive Safe School**

Comprehensive safe schools can be achieved through policies and planning that are in line with disaster management at the national, provincial, district/city and at the school level as presented in figure 1. This comprehensive safe school is supported by three pillars as follows: (1) Safe School Facilities; (2) Disaster Management in Schools; (3) Disaster Prevention and Risk Reduction Education, Click or tap here to enter text.

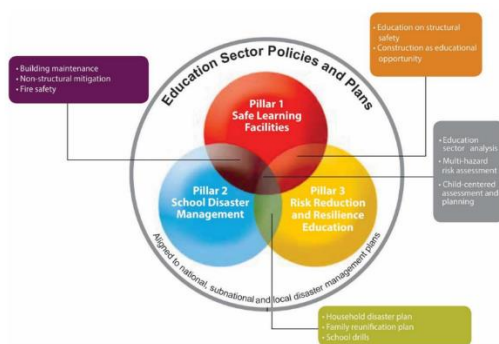


Figure 1. Three pillars of Comprehensive School Safety

## Research Method

The research was conducted in March and April 2023 using a qualitative research approach. This type of research is descriptive where this research aims to provide an overview/explanation regarding the role of early childhood education teachers in managing disaster safe schools. This research was conducted after teachers previously received training on managing schools safe from the Lembang cesarean disaster. Teachers who have received training then implement the Lembang cesarean disaster safe school program in their respective schools. The sample size for this research was 15 ECE teachers from Lembang sub-district, West Bandung Regency. Data collection techniques through observation and interviews.

## Results & Discussion

School is a very important place in children's lives, a place where children learn, grow and develop. However, natural disasters, including the Lembang fault disaster, can threaten the safety and welfare of students and other school personnel. The teachers have a very important role in communicating that schools are safe from disasters, especially on the Lembang fault. Teachers are responsible not only for educating children, but also for protecting and communicating with children in emergency situations. In this context, the role of early childhood teachers covers various very important aspects. The following will present the results of interviews and observations regarding the role of teachers.

First, the fifteen teachers understand that education and the formation of awareness need to be instilled from an early age. All teachers interviewed have provided explanations about the types of disasters that may occur in the Lembang sub-district, including the actions that must be taken when a disaster occurs. Observation results show that teachers communicate information about the location of school evacuation areas and safe evacuation routes. However, teachers have not communicated about disaster prevention and preparation measures, including the importance of having an emergency bag yet.

Early childhood teachers must have a solid knowledge of the actions to take in a catastrophic cesarean situation. Teachers should receive regular training on emergency measures, evacuation procedures, and use of safety equipment. This training equips teachers with the skills necessary to act quickly and effectively when a disaster occurs (Ebbeck et al., 2020).

Disaster training/simulations need to be taught periodically to children. Evacuation simulations are an important component of school disaster preparation. Early childhood teachers should plan and conduct regular evacuation drills with their students. This helps students understand evacuation procedures, safe gathering places, and how to stay calm in emergency situations. Evacuation simulations are the best way to prepare children for disasters (Elangovan & Kasi, 2014)

Second, teachers act as trainers in training activities and evacuation simulations. The fifteen teachers carry out regular evacuation drills with the children to ensure that the children know exactly what to do when the disaster alarm sounds. The teacher leads the evacuation drill calmly and gives clear directions to the children. This training helps children feel more prepared and reduces panic in emergency situations.

Early childhood teachers must be active in the development and maintenance of school emergency plans. This plan should include concrete steps to be taken in the face of a cesarean disaster, including evacuation, first aid, and communication with school staff and parents (Proulx & Aboud, 2019).

Apart from that, teachers need to carry out evacuation simulations, because simulations are the best way to prepare children to face disasters. Evacuation simulations are an important component of school disaster preparation. Early childhood teachers should plan and conduct regular evacuation drills with their students. This helps students understand evacuation procedures, safe gathering places, and how to stay calm in emergency situations (Elangovan & Kasi, 2014).

Third, teachers play a role in preparing emergency plans. Teachers have participated in preparing the school's emergency plan and understand their respective roles in the plan. Teachers know the location of safety equipment such as first aid equipment in the classroom. Teachers also know how to contact authorities if necessary. However, none of the schools have other equipment such as fire extinguishers (APAR). Emergency plans were prepared during disaster safe school training. Early childhood teachers must be active in the development and maintenance of school emergency plans.

Fourth, teachers play a role in carrying out first aid measures. In this case, all respondents already have first aid knowledge, but the knowledge that teachers have is still basic knowledge such

as injuries, not yet comprehensive and teachers have not received first aid training so that when given examples of certain cases teachers have difficulty and even make mistakes in handling them.

Fifth, the teacher acts as a leader who provides calm. In this case, teachers still need to be trained in handling emotions when a disaster occurs. The teacher understands that he must be calm and provide guidance to the child regarding what to do.

In addition to formal training, early childhood teachers have an important role in instilling safety awareness in their students which provides peace of mind. They can use creative and play approaches to teach children about the dangers of disasters and the actions they can take to protect themselves. The play approach is an effective way to teach children about safety without scaring them (Kido et al., 2022)

Sixth, the teacher acts as a communicator and evacuator. Teachers who are respondents understand that when a disaster occurs, teachers are responsible for ensuring that all students are safe. During the disaster simulation, the teacher supervised the students during the evacuation and ensured that no one was left behind or lost.

Seventh, the teacher plays the role of maintaining the physical security of the classroom. Only four teachers have ensured that the classroom is in a safe physical condition. Teachers also ensure that safety equipment and medications do not expire.

Eighth, teachers act as individuals who are ready to face disasters. The fifteen teachers had not prepared emergency bags. Even teachers don't know what the contents of an emergency bag need to be. This becomes the teacher's "homework" in knowing the contents of the emergency bag, because the teacher also needs to convey to the children about this emergency bag. However, the actions that must be taken to protect oneself in an emergency situation are understood.

It is important to understand that the role of teachers in communicating and managing schools safe from disasters is not only about protecting students but also about setting an example and educating them about safety and preparedness in facing disasters (Midtbust et al., 2018). With good understanding and preparation, teachers can help create a safe classroom environment and better prepare students to deal with emergency situations (Mitchell et al., 2008).

## Conclusions

Disaster safe school management is a holistic approach to protecting schools and school personnel from disaster risks. This involves all school members, including students, staff and parents, in a joint effort to create a safer and more resilient environment against various disaster threats. Preparedness is the main component in managing a disaster safe school. Schools must have a comprehensive emergency plan, including evacuation measures, emergency communications, and security measures. Teachers have an important role as communicators of disaster safe schools. They are responsible for communicating emergency information to students and staff, organizing drills, and providing emotional support during emergency situations. Managing disaster safe schools requires good cooperation and coordination with the authorities, emergency response teams and local communities. This collaboration is important to ensure an effective response when a disaster occurs. Disaster education must be integrated into the school curriculum to increase students' understanding of risks and preventive measures in dealing with disasters. School emergency plans should be evaluated and updated periodically according to changes in disaster risk and changes in student and staff composition. In addition, modern technology can be used as an important tool in managing disaster-safe schools, including early warning systems, emergency communications, and reporting security conditions.

Good communication is a necessary foundation for implementing a school disaster plan effectively. This helps protect the safety of students and staff, minimize uncertainty, and improve school preparedness in the face of various disaster threats. Effective communication is the main element in managing a disaster safe school. Teachers have a key role as communicators of disaster safe schools. They must be able to convey emergency information to students and staff, as well as play an important role in organizing drills and evacuations.

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