

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Background of the Study

People who live in the 21<sup>st</sup> century are expected to have a great attitude and thinking skills since an early age to help them achieve success in the future. These attitudes and skills can be obtained from early childhood education. In Indonesia, that special education is known as Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini (PAUD). This early school process starts from the age of three, until five years of age, which is known as the Golden Age. At this age, children's attitude and thinking skills are formed (Mulyanti, 2013, p. v). PAUD is considered vital to prepare children for higher education. Getting children into early childhood education is important as it helps them build the necessary cognitive, sensory-motor, and social development. Because of the urgency, importance, and benefits, it is suggested that early childhood education should not be delayed. As Astuti (2008, p. 7) says, delays in early childhood education result in adverse effects, whether in terms of sensory-motor development, cognitive development, or social development. This means that children will also grow less

confident, insecure, and not dare to take risks. She adds that children will become slow in gaining new experiences, in responding to stimuli or in growth (Astuti, 2008, p. 7). Wiyani (2014) explains that sensory-motor development can be interpreted as physical changes in early aged children which affects their movement ability (p. 35). She also explains that cognitive development is physical transformation from early aged children which affect their thinking ability (p. 62). Furthermore, she explains that social development is an action to elaborate social attitude which is worthy of being accepted by society (p. 131).

However, starting school early may trigger the onset of school refusal and this commonly happens in the first few days of school. School refusal, as defined by Kearney and Silverman (as cited in Brill, 2009, p. 1), is any refusal made by a child who does not want to attend school or join class activities for the whole day. The main reason of school refusal, according to Csóti (2003), is separation anxiety. Mulyanti (2013, p. 97) adds that playgroup children have school refusal because they are often afraid of being separated from their parents. They become stressful because of the experience of temporary separation from their parents (Csóti, 2003, p. 17). Furthermore, there are three types of anxious school refusers which are stated by King and Bernstein (as cited in Egger, Costello, & Angold, 2003, p. 798): those with separation anxiety, those with social phobia, and those with non-specific anxiety or depression. Separation anxiety in school refusal can be manifested in behavioral symptoms such as crying, screaming, and kicking (Kearney, 2007, pp. 13-15) and physical symptoms such as headache and diarrhea (Ampuni & Andayani, n.d, p. 55).

To overcome school refusal, playgroup teachers should know proper strategies for handling this condition, so that the children can be less stressful and finally enjoy school. Thus, the purposes of this thesis are to investigate the most common reason of school refusal at a particular playgroup in Bandung, and to find out the teacher's strategies for handling children's school refusal in their first two weeks of school.

### **1.2. Statements of the Problem**

This thesis is written to answer the following research questions:

1. What is the most common reason of children's school refusal at a particular playgroup in Bandung?
2. What are the teacher's strategies for handling the most common reason of children's school refusal at a particular playgroup in Bandung?

### **1.3. Purpose of the Study**

This study aims at finding out the most common reason of children's school refusal at a particular playgroup in Bandung, as well as the teacher's strategies for handling the problem.

### **1.4. Significance of the Study**

Playgroup teachers play a crucial role in children's development. Therefore, this study can be a guideline for playgroup teachers who have to handle children with symptoms of school refusal. Besides, this study can be useful for the readers who want to know about children's school refusal and the strategies for handling this problem.

### **1.5. Limitation of the Study**

This study will only focus on three to four-year-old children with symptoms of school refusal and the teacher's strategies for handling them at a particular playgroup in Bandung.

### **1.6. Organization of the Study**

This thesis is divided into five chapters. Chapter One is Introduction, which consists of Background of the Study, Statement of the Problem, Significance of the Study, Limitation of the Study, and Organization of the Study. Chapter Two consists of Theoretical Review, which discusses previous studies, the definition of school refusal, reasons of school refusal, behavioral and physical symptoms of school refusal, and the teacher's strategies for handling school refusal. Chapter Three is Research Methodology, which consists of Research Design, Participants and Setting, Data Collection Techniques, Data Analysis, and Validity. Chapter Four consists of Findings and Discussion. Chapter Five consists of Conclusion and Recommendation. The last part of this thesis comprises Bibliography and Appendices.