

Designing an Interactive Children's Storybook about Outdoor Activities Using a Fable Illustration Approach

Jennie Clarissa

Desain Komunikasi Visual, Pradita University

Email: clarissajennie28@gmail.com

Accepted:
14 May 2025

Accepted After Revision:
19 May 2026

Published:
20 May 2026

Abstract

The use of gadgets among early childhood children has increased over time. However, excessive gadget use without parental supervision can have negative impacts, such as making children less physically active, reducing their social interaction, causing difficulty in concentration, and decreasing motor activities. This problem indicates the need for alternative media that can divert children's attention from gadgets while supporting learning activities. One medium that can be used is an interactive storybook, as it not only presents a story but is also equipped with activities such as matching shapes, solving mazes, and finding hidden objects. This study aims to design an interactive storybook as an alternative medium to reduce children's dependence on gadgets. This study uses a qualitative method, with data collected through observation and interviews. The results of this study are expected to produce an attractive and educational interactive storybook design that can encourage children to be more active socially, cognitively, and physically.

Keywords: Buku cerita anak, Interactive Book, Gadget, Fabel.

1 INTRODUCTION

The development of technology has made the use of gadgets increasingly close to everyday life, from early childhood to adulthood. Gadgets have attractive features such as videos, games, sounds, and moving images that are easily liked by children. However, gadget use among children should still be limited and supervised by parents, because at that age children still need a great deal of direct stimulation through playing and moving activities, speaking, and interacting with their surrounding environment.

In daily life, many parents give gadgets to toddlers as a medium of entertainment, educational media, or to prevent children from disturbing the parents' activities. When children cry, gadgets are often given to calm them down. If this habit continues without supervision, children may become accustomed to depending on gadgets and become difficult to redirect to other activities. This condition leads to gadget addiction, in which children continuously use gadgets and find it difficult to control their behavior, causing them to neglect other activities such as playing, learning, and social interaction [22]; [9].

Gadget addiction has negative effects on children's development. Excessive gadget use can

reduce social interaction, lower communication skills, hinder cognitive development, and make children less physically active. Research shows that uncontrolled gadget use can disrupt concentration, decrease children's interest in reading and writing activities, and hinder motor development because children spend more time sitting and focusing on screens [25]. In addition, prolonged gadget use without parental guidance can affect the social, emotional, and cognitive development of early childhood children [26].

Therefore, an alternative medium is needed to divert children's attention from gadgets while still supporting the learning and playing process. One medium that can be used is an interactive children's storybook. An interactive storybook does not only present a story but also involves children directly through activities such as placing stickers, solving mazes, matching shapes, and finding hidden objects. These activities can help children train their focus, hand-eye coordination, fine motor skills, and problem-solving abilities.

The design of this storybook raises the theme of outdoor activities using a fable approach. Outdoor activities are introduced so that children become more interested in recognizing activities that can be done outside the home, such as camping, collecting seashells,



and exploring the surrounding environment. Outdoor activities are important because they provide direct experiences, develop creativity, increase curiosity, and encourage children to move actively.

In addition, the fable approach is used because animal characters have forms and personalities that are appealing to children. Characters such as rabbits that like to jump, squirrels that like to climb, and ants that like to work can become figures that are close to children's world. Through these animal characters, children can more easily understand the story, recognize character traits, and become interested in following the activities in the book. Fables are not only a form of entertainment but can also broaden children's knowledge and provide learning values [16].

The interactive storybook is also designed to be used together with parents, because this activity can strengthen the relationship between parents and children while helping children understand the story content and the activities contained in the book [8]. With the presence of story elements, fable characters, outdoor activities, and interactive features, this book is expected to become an alternative medium to reduce children's habit of using gadgets. Through the design of this interactive storybook, children are expected to become more socially, cognitively, and physically active, as well as more interested in doing outdoor activities.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Gadget Use in Toddlers

Gadgets have become a daily necessity for everyone, from adults to children. Many parents introduce gadgets to their children before they can speak. According to the Central Statistics Agency (BPS), gadget use among young children in Indonesia is 33.44%. For children aged 0-4, it is 22.5%, and for those aged 5-6, it is 52.76%. This data comes from the Yogyakarta Region V Service Agency [24].

Fundamentally, toddlers are not yet suitable for gadgets due to the negative impacts they can have, requiring parental supervision. In Indonesia, many children use gadgets, including laptops, cell phones, and so on [7]. For toddlers aged 2 to 5, the ideal gadget usage time is around 30 minutes to 1 hour [19]. In Indonesia, very few toddlers use gadgets for less than 1 hour. The average gadget usage time for toddlers is around 3-6 hours per day [7].

In general, gadget use among toddlers has both positive and negative impacts. This depends on the duration of gadget use and parental supervision. These impacts affect child development (Susanti and Mariyana, 2022). The positive impacts of gadgets on children include (1) improving motor skills such as finger and wrist movements; (2) improving cognitive abilities, including thinking, remembering, logic, and

problem-solving; and (3) providing entertainment for children, as gadgets offer sound, color, and attractive images, often enjoyed by children through videos and games [22].

Excessive use of gadgets by children can have negative impacts, including (1) disrupting social development [22], (2) making them lazy to engage in activities because they are focused on the gadget; (3) reducing memory; (4) making it difficult to concentrate [14], and (5) causing emotional disturbances because children do not yet understand their emotions, resulting in them becoming angry and impatient [22].

Gadget addiction negatively impacts social development. Toddlerhood is known as the "golden age" because during this period, intellectual, emotional, and spiritual intelligence develops rapidly. This can hinder children's social interactions, reduce communication skills, and lead to dependence on gadgets. Therefore, it is important for parents to supervise their children to prevent negative impacts [22].

2.2 Interactive Children's Story Book

Interactive children's storybooks are books that combine visual/picture aspects and verbal/word aspects arranged sequentially to convey a story. This type of book is not only for reading, but children can interact directly with the content of the story so that they become involved in the storyline. [15][10].

2.3 Benefits of Reading Interactive Children's Story Books

Reading interactive storybooks can provide benefits for children's growth and development [2]. Through stories and illustrations, children can learn new vocabulary, understand storylines, develop imagination, and improve observation skills. Illustrations in books help children understand the content of the story because early childhood children more easily receive information through images [4].

Interactive books encourage children to improve their cognitive abilities. According to Piaget's theory, early childhood children aged 2-7 years find it easier to understand something through images rather than logic when understanding story content, making conclusions, and recognizing the sequence of events in a story [11]. In addition, Vygotsky's theory also states that when children retell the content of a story using their own words, they unconsciously learn how to arrange words using their own language and understand the story content [13].

Interactive features in books can train children's motor skills and focus. Sticker-placing activities can train fine motor skills, focus, and shape recognition [14]. Maze activities can help develop motor coordination and

line-drawing skills [17]. Meanwhile, hidden-object activities can train memory, concentration, and problem-solving abilities. Through these activities, children become more interested in reading the book again.

2.4 Interactive Books as a Solution to Reduce Gadget Use in Children

Excessive gadget use in children causes them to focus too much on screens and engage less in other activities. Children become less physically active, less socially engaged, and more easily lose focus. This issue highlights the need for an alternative medium that can divert children's attention from gadgets while still being attractive and enjoyable for them.

Interactive storybooks can be one solution because children do not merely look at pictures or listen to stories, but are also invited to carry out direct activities such as placing stickers, finding a way out of a maze, and discovering hidden objects. These activities can replace children's habit of playing with gadgets with activities that are more active and beneficial.

In addition, interactive stories can help develop children's cognitive, motor, language, and social abilities. Children can learn new vocabulary, understand stories, practice hand movements, and create opportunities for discussion with parents about the story content. Therefore, parental guidance is still needed so that children can understand the contents of the book. By reading together, parents can explain vocabulary, discuss the storyline, and convey moral messages. Regular guidance can also gradually improve children's reading ability and comprehension [23].

Thus, interactive storybooks are needed as an alternative medium to reduce children's dependence on gadgets. This medium does not only function as entertainment, but also as a learning tool that can encourage children to be more active, focused, and involved in activities that support their development.

2.5 Theory of Designing Illustrations for Interactive Children's Storybooks

In designing this book, the author chose the PRE-READ 2 level for children aged 4-6. Illustrations are used predominantly (90 percent), while the text only includes 1-3 concrete words without using complex reading rules. The font used is sans-serif with a minimum size of 28 pt, and the number of pages is 8-16. This book requires adult guidance. At this level, children are taught about divine values, humanity, developing good manners, recognizing animals, plants, surrounding objects, numbers 1-20, and letters.

The illustrated book design process begins with pre-sketches. Sketches are then developed, starting with character design, which includes character research,

including gender, age, culture, and personality. Shape is crucial for characters; round shapes convey a friendly impression, triangles convey an aggressive impression but can be modified to be soft, and squares convey a strong and stable impression. Attributes are then added to strengthen the character's identity.

After the character sketches, the next step is to create a storyboard for each page, including the layout of the illustrations and text. Don't forget to continue with the color selection process and add shadows, light, and texture. Color selection is important because it influences the emotional atmosphere of a story. The placement of the focal point is also important to highlight the illustration that readers want to see first [6].

2.6 Design Theory for Interactive Children's Storybook Illustrations

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2.7 Stages of Writing Short Stories for Children's Books

Before writing, the writer must determine the child's age group, as this affects the number of words and illustrations used. For example, children aged 5-6 can read more words than children aged 3. The writer also needs to determine the main theme or topic to be created.

The story structure is divided into three parts: the beginning, which introduces the characters, the middle,

which is the culmination of the events, and the end, which resolves the story. Although the story aims to convey a moral message, it must be conveyed subtly and without being patronizing. Children's reading is for enjoyment, not for being lectured. Although the story's message is not directly conveyed, children can grasp the moral message.

A balance between text and illustrations must be maintained to avoid confusion or make the story feel heavy. Sentences should be concise and concise. The process of creating a children's story requires effort, such as choosing the right words and conveying the story in a way that is effective. Finally, efforts should be made to differentiate the story from other storybooks by emphasizing the story's unique characteristics [20].

3 RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a descriptive qualitative method. This method was chosen because the data collected consisted of interview results and visual analysis of several children's storybooks.

Data collection was carried out using two types of data: primary data and secondary data. Primary data was obtained through interviews with sources related to the design of children's storybooks, namely a children's book illustrator and a child psychologist. Meanwhile, secondary data was obtained through literature studies and document analysis in the form of children's storybooks and children's activity books that are relevant to the design theme.

3.1 Primary Data

Primary data was obtained through interviews. The first interview was conducted with Eshaly Esti, a children's storybook illustrator who has published works through Yaumi Kids. Some of her children's book illustration works include *Adrenalin dan Bayang-Bayang Ketakutan*, *Banjir Dopamin Gara-gara Gadget*, *Ciptaan Allah di Liburan*, and *Allah Ciptakan Aku dan Temanku*. This interview aimed to understand the creative process in designing interactive children's storybooks, particularly regarding visual style, color, typography, character expressions, and interactive elements suitable for children.

The second interview was conducted with Fabiola Priscilla, a child psychologist who works at Dharmawangsa Mental Hospital, teaches at UNIKA Atma Jaya, and is actively involved as a speaker in seminars. This interview aimed to understand children's interest in adventure-themed stories and outdoor activities, as well as to identify the types of characters, activities, and story values that are appropriate for early childhood children.

The research subjects in these interviews consisted of two informants. The informants were selected because they have knowledge and experience relevant to the needs of the design process, namely from the perspective of children's storybook visuals and child development. However, this study has limitations because it has not directly involved children as the main target audience or parents as children's companions.

3.2 Secondary data

Secondary data was obtained through literature studies and document analysis. This data was used to support the interview results and serve as a reference in the process of designing the interactive children's storybook.

Document analysis was conducted on four books relevant to the design, namely:

1. *Aku Bisa Sedekah untuk Hewan*
2. *Dongeng Sebelum Tidur: Krayon Baru Rumi*
3. *Dongeng Seru Hewan Laut: 10 Dongeng Memikat untuk Anak*
4. Quiet Book

These four books were selected because they are suitable for early childhood children, as they contain attractive illustrations, fable characters, and are appropriate references for the design process. The aspects analyzed include illustration style, use of color, character design, typography, background, storytelling, and interactive elements.

3.3 Data Analysis Technique

The data obtained were analyzed using a descriptive qualitative analysis technique. The results of the interviews and document analysis were grouped into information needed for the design process. These themes included illustration style, color, typography, characters, and types of engaging interactive activities.

After the data were grouped, the writer drew conclusions from all the information. These conclusions were then used as inspiration to help the writer design the interactive children's storybook, such as determining the visual concept, story content, characters, and interactive activities that are interesting for children.

4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
4.1 Illustrator Interview Results



Figure 1. Illustrator interview documentation

The author interviewed children's book illustrator Eshaly Esti. The interview was conducted online via WhatsApp on Sunday, March 23, 2025. The interview concluded that an art style suitable for children's storybooks is one with bright, contrasting colors and clear facial expressions. Adding texture and patterns to the background and characters helps children understand basic concepts such as rough-smooth, dense-sparse, and geometric shapes.

For children aged 2-5, bright, contrasting colors are used, while for children aged 3-5, more complex but still bright colors are used. Typography should be large, simple, and easy-to-read, such as a sans-serif font. Creating an interactive book that engages children should involve physical and imaginative activity. Interesting characters are expressive, possessing distinctive characteristics that reflect their personalities. Clear facial expressions also help children understand the story and develop their imagination. Educational elements can be adapted to the message conveyed in the book.

4.2 Child Psychologist Interview Results



Figure 2. Illustrator interview documentation

The author conducted an interview with a child psychologist named Fabiola Priscilla. The interview was conducted online via Direct Message on Instagram on Tuesday, April 14, 2025. The interview concluded that

to create educational and engaging children's stories, it's best to base them on familiar places, such as the neighborhoods they live in and see. However, it can be expanded by introducing new places, such as forests or underwater, to broaden children's horizons.

Characters or figures that children enjoy are those with positive values, such as saviors, helpfulness, perseverance, and kindness, thus serving as role models for them. Meanwhile, engaging in outdoor activities for children involves physical activity and imagination, such as planting trees and rescue missions. Adventure stories can provide benefits for children, such as enhancing creativity, learning to solve problems, enhancing social development, and fostering resilience and always choosing the right.

4.3 Observation

In this study, the author analyzes several children's storybooks that will serve as references in designing interactive children's storybooks. The analysis focuses on illustration style, color, typography, and story delivery.

4.3.1 "Aku Bisa Sedekah Untuk Hewan"– Author Intari Dyah Pramudita and Illustrator Bella Ansori



Figure 3. Cover of the book "I Can" Giving Charity to Animals (Source: Shopee)

This book uses cartoon-style illustrations suitable for toddlers. The illustrations are characterized by large heads, large, round black eyes, and white lines for hair. This makes the characters appear cute, expressive, and adorable, making them easily recognizable to children.

The backgrounds remain consistent with the cartoon style, but are enhanced with lines forming wood, leaves, and dots representing grass. These elements create a distinctive feel. The dominant color is green, depicting a garden. Other colors, such as red, yellow, blue, and orange, create a contrasting and harmonious effect, creating a balanced color scheme when combined. The author will use the character styles, settings, and colors in this book as inspiration for designing an interactive children's storybook.

In terms of storytelling, the story is arranged using a chronological plot. The story begins with Salim and Salma playing in the garden. The conflict appears when they see a caterpillar eating leaves, which makes them dislike the caterpillar. After that, their father explains that animals are also creations of Allah and should not be hurt. This makes Salim and Salma understand that animals need to be treated kindly.

The story then continues with Salim and Salma helping a bird by giving it water. At the end of the story, their father explains that giving water to animals is a good deed and is considered an act of charity. Overall, this story conveys its message through daily activities, making it easy to understand without feeling too preachy.

The typography used is a sans-serif typeface that tends to be rounded and clean, giving a cheerful impression. The spacing between letters is quite loose and the font size is large, making it easier for children to read.

4.3.2 "Dongeng Sebelum Tidur krayon Baru Rumi" - Author Iwok Abqary and Illustrator : Bella Ansori



Figure 4. Book Cover Dongeng sebelum tidur krayon baru Rumi
(Source: Shopee)

This book uses a cartoon-style illustration of animal characters with simple shapes. Each animal is drawn in a simple, yet not overly complex or detailed form, making it easily recognizable, especially for toddlers. This style of animal characters creates a cute and adorable impression.

The backgrounds consistently use a cartoon style, but are not plain. Instead, they feature textures such as colored pencil strokes forming lines and dots, and a blend of colors and textures creates a cheerful impression. The colors used vary depending on the story, but the dominant colors are green and brown. Other colors, such as red, blue, yellow, and purple, when combined with the dominant colors, create a contrasting, non-dark, or pastel look. The author will use the backgrounds and animal characters in this book as

references for designing interactive children's storybooks.

The storytelling in this book uses a simple plot that is closely related to children's daily lives. Each story begins with everyday situations, such as riding a bicycle, hearing a strange sound, receiving a gift, climbing a tree, or playing jump rope. The moral messages are easy for children to understand without feeling preachy, such as being brave to try, not giving up easily, helping one another, being careful, and staying enthusiastic.

Overall, the storytelling in this book is suitable for early childhood children because it uses simple conflicts, interesting animal characters, and events that are close to children's experiences. The stories are not too long, making it easier for children to understand the storyline and the message being conveyed.

The typography used is a sans-serif typeface, but it resembles a handwriting font. The spacing between letters is loose, making it easier for children to read. In addition, the book also contains text effects that differ from the main font. This aims to emphasize the atmosphere of the story.

4.3.3 " Dongeng Seru Hewan Laut 10 Dongeng Memikat Untuk Anak"- author Dhiwangkara Ilustrator Singgih Cahyo



Figure 5. Cover book Dongeng Seru Hewan laut
(Source: Shopee)

This book uses illustrations of marine animals in a cartoon style. Uniquely, the character illustrations use a poster-paint texture. The sea animal characters are uniquely designed with hands, feet, and clothing, creating an appealing impression for children. The eye shapes are varied yet simple.

The dominant color is dark blue to reflect the underwater atmosphere. Other colors, such as dark red, purple, brown, yellow, orange, and green, when combined with the dominant color, create contrasting colors. However, compared to the bright colors typical of children's storybooks, this book uses darker and more muted colors.

The background uses a cartoon style with a poster-paint texture. The coloring technique applies textured poster-paint shading along with paint splatter

effects. Line details and graphic elements such as sea plants and other details use colored pencil, and this combination creates a harmonious impression.

The stories presented are close to children’s everyday experiences, such as going to school, playing hide-and-seek, delivering packages, looking for friends, and going to the library. The problems in the stories are made easy to understand, for example when a character feels sleepy while swimming, has difficulty finding a friend, feels itchy because of parasites, or is confused about finding a book. The resolutions are presented in positive ways, such as apologizing, helping friends, working together, and understanding mistakes.

Overall, the storytelling in this book is suitable for children because the conflicts are not too heavy, the characters are appealing, and the messages are easy to understand. The stories also introduce undersea life in a fun way, so children can learn while getting to know the characters of sea animals.

The font used is a sans-serif typeface that tends to be rounded, neutral, and without decoration. For sound effects, a handwriting style is used in the typography, making it not only something to be read, but also something to be felt.

4.3.4 “ Dongeng Seru Hewan Laut 10 Dongeng Memikat Untuk Anak”- Penulis Dhiwangkara Ilustrator Singgih Cahyo

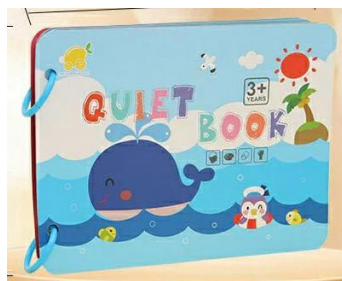


Figure 6. Cover book Quiet Book (Source: Shopee)

This activity book is designed to engage children interactively. It features attractive and easy-to-use removable Velcro stickers. In this activity book, children not only stick stickers but also learn to recognize animal shapes, fruit and vegetable shapes, arrange pizza slices, learn the names of planets, learn about the weather, put together puzzles, and arrange numbers from one to nine.

The illustrations use a cute and simple cartoon-style vector, making them easy for toddlers to understand. The colors used are bright and striking. The dominant color is light blue, with other colors such as pink, green, brown, orange, yellow, red, and purple creating contrasting colors when combined. The character and background illustrations do not use

shading or texture. This book can be used as a reference for designing interactive elements in the form of stickers.

5 CONCLUSION

5.1 Design Style



Figure 7. Rabbit Character Design (Source:Jennie Clarissa)

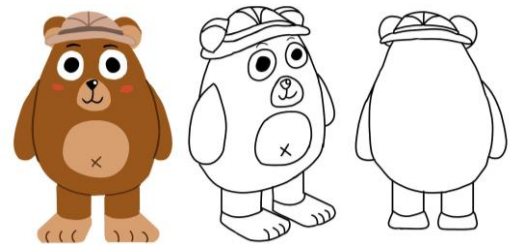


Figure 8. Bear Character Design (Source: Jennie Clarissa)

The type of illustration used in interactive children's storybooks is cartoons. Cartoons are drawings or caricatures created to convey messages, ideas, or criticism in a humorous manner [18]. The author chose a cartoon art style because the shapes are unique and can be made more expressive, making them easier for children to recognize and understand. Cartoons are able to capture children's attention, making them suitable for interactive children's storybooks.

For the rabbit character, the author used geometric shapes: an oval for the head and a rectangle. For the bear, an oval for the head and body, a cube for the feet, and circles for the ears are used.

5.2 Typography



Figure 9. Futura Font (Source : Dafont Free)

The font used to fill the content of the interactive children's story illustration book is sans-serif so that it is easy for children to read. This font selection refers to the book grading matrix from the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology for early readers level B for ages 4-6 years, which recommends using unrelated letters and adequate spacing. In the heading section, the author chose the Futura font. Futura is a typeface designed using geometric shapes such as circles, triangles, and squares. The author's reason for choosing Futura is that the letters are simple and have no excessive decoration, so they are easy for children to read [5].

5.3 Colour



Figure 10. Colour Palette (Source: Jennie Clarissa)

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5.4 Design Content

Book 1: Adventures in the Forest

This book tells the story of a bear and a rabbit who find a piece of paper that turns out to be a treasure map. They work together to put the map together and begin their journey to find the treasure. However, along the way, a monkey steals their map and disappears. Rabbit and Bear must navigate a maze to find the monkey and persuade him to trade the map for bananas.

After recovering the map, they continue their journey and arrive at a gloomy flower garden, where the flowers are colorless. Rabbit and Bear ask the reader for help in making the flowers colorful and making the garden beautiful again. Once the flowers are colored, they find clues leading to the treasure and finally find it.

Book 2: Adventures Under the Sea

This book tells the exciting adventure of Rabbit, who rides a seahorse and discovers a sea polluted with trash. Rabbit then helps clean the sea and continues his journey. He also arranges fish and seashells. Rabbit sees a dolphin crying because he has lost a favorite item. Rabbit happily helps him find it. The dolphin thanks him. On the journey, Rabbit sees a turtle struggling to lift a sea turtle. Rabbit happily helps.

5.5 Design Results



Figure 11. Interactive sticker display sketch (Source: Jennie Clarissa)

This book tells the adventures of a bear and a rabbit who find a piece of paper that turns out to be a treasure map. They work together to put the map together and embark on a journey to find the treasure. However, along the way, a monkey steals their map and disappears. Rabbit and bear must navigate a maze to find the monkey and persuade him to trade the map for bananas.

After recovering the map, they continue their journey and arrive at a gloomy flower garden, where the flowers are colorless. Rabbit and bear ask the reader for help in recoloring the flowers to restore the garden's beauty. Once the flowers are colored, they discover clues leading to the treasure and finally succeed.

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