



Socialization of the Play with Children Program (Program Beranak) to Mothers of Children with Special Needs

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ABSTRACT

One of the needs of children is play, but some parents are not optimal in utilizing play time with children at home. Although children have special needs such as autism spectrum disorders and intellectual disabilities, the desire to play in children still exists and must be fulfilled by parents. The community service program to play with children, which is called the "Program Beranak", is one of the programs that aims to bring closer the physical and emotional relationship between mothers and children so that it can increase self-confidence, stimulate cognitive development, social and emotional skills of children with special needs. In addition, playing with children with special needs is a form of therapy so that children can express themselves and train children's concentration. The method of this community service activity was carried out through lectures, small group discussions and simulations. The results of this activity show that there is an increase in the knowledge and skills of mothers who have children with special needs in playing with children at home. Some activities that mothers can do when playing with children at home such as reading fairy tales or storybooks, arranging puzzle toys, painting and coloring. It is expected that mothers can spend time with their children at least 30-45 minutes a day to play and the type of game is adjusted to the age and development of the child.

*Salah satu kebutuhan anak adalah bermain namun beberapa orang tua belum optimal dalam memanfaatkan waktu bermain bersama anak di rumah. Meskipun anak memiliki kebutuhan khusus seperti gangguan spektrum autisme dan disabilitas intelektual keinginan untuk bermain pada anak tetap ada dan harus dipenuhi oleh orang tua. Program pengabdian pada masyarakat bermain bersama anak yang diberi istilah dengan "**Program Beranak**" merupakan salah satu program yang bertujuan untuk mendekatkan hubungan fisik dan emosional antara ibu dan anak sehingga dapat meningkatkan rasa percaya diri, menstimulasi perkembangan kognitif, keterampilan sosial dan emosional anak yang berkebutuhan khusus. Selain itu bermain pada anak berkebutuhan khusus merupakan salah satu bentuk terapi agar anak dapat mengekspresikan dirinya serta melatih konsentrasi anak. Metode kegiatan pengabdian pada masyarakat ini dilakukan melalui ceramah, small group discussion dan simulasi. Hasil kegiatan ini menunjukkan terjadi peningkatan pengetahuan dan keterampilan ibu yang memiliki anak berkebutuhan khusus dalam bermain dengan anak di rumah. Beberapa kegiatan yang dapat*



dilakukan ibu saat bermain bersama anak di rumah seperti membaca dongeng atau buku cerita, menyusun mainan puzzle, melukis dan mewarnai. Diharapkan ibu dapat meluangkan waktu bersama anak minimal 30-45 menit dalam sehari untuk bermain dan jenis permainannya disesuaikan dengan usia dan perkembangan anak

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A. INTRODUCTION

Play is one of the basic needs of children that can stimulate children's cognitive, affective, emotional, and psychomotor development. Play can be used as a therapeutic medium for children with special needs known as play therapy (Saputro & Fazrin, 2017) . Children with special needs are children who have limitations that require special assistance and handling. Handling and assistance provided to children is due to children experiencing problems or disorders in physical, mental, and social (Khushaboo & Dua, 2022) . According to Law No. 8/2016, a person with a disability is any person who experiences physical, intellectual, mental, and/or sensory limitations for a long period of time who in interacting with the environment may experience obstacles and difficulties to participate fully and effectively with other citizens based on equal rights.

The presence of children with special needs in a family is not necessarily accepted by all family members. The impact of family unpreparedness can lead to less time with children and even less affection from parents towards children with special needs. Children with special needs need proper care from parents, equal treatment in fulfilling basic needs that are decent and of high quality as well as support both physically, psychologically, socially and emotionally. Parents as the closest and main person in the lives of children with special needs must be able to recognize and understand various aspects of the child so that they are able to provide good care to children (Savitri & Ratnawati, 2018) . Parents' busyness sometimes makes parents forget about meeting children's needs, causing children to lack attention. The results of research Damayanti (2024) show that parents' *quality time* with early childhood can have a positive impact on aspects of child development. One way that parents, especially mothers, can increase quality time with children is through play activities at home.

Play is a fun activity that can be done by parents with children at any time, to increase children's creativity, develop children's imagination, language, physical, cognitive, and emotional skills and involve the five senses and limbs (Hayati & Putro, 2021) . Play can provide positive benefits for the relationship between parents and children, in addition to reducing stress, anxiety, and depression. Playing at home can be done by parents with children because it does not require expensive costs and the tools and game media are tailored to the needs, age and development of children.

In everyday life, it is still found that some parents who have children with special needs have not maximized play time with their children. Mothers are busy at work, taking care of household chores and the fatigue factor makes mothers not optimally utilize play time with children. As a result of the lack of attention from parents, children prefer to play alone or watch movies on television, play *gadgets*, play *games* so that children are busy with their own activities. The use of gadgets in early childhood can have both positive and negative impacts on children's development. The use of *gadgets* for a long period of time can have a negative



impact on children because children will be dependent and engrossed in *gadget* games so that it can cause children's concentration to decrease while the positive impact if the use of *gadgets* is carried out in a controlled manner can improve children's right brain abilities and help the development of adaptive functions (Yumarni, 2022) . The results of interviews with several parents who have children with special needs that some children are late in speaking, tantrums and decreased concentration, one of which is caused by parents from an early age giving *gadged* to children and forgetting to control the time or duration of use.

There are some parents' perceptions that play must be done outside the home and requires expensive costs. Some parents who have children with special needs during interviews said they did not know what games were appropriate for children with special needs. Whereas according to Hayati and Putro (2021) games given to children by parents do not require expensive costs because games can be created by themselves by utilizing items around. In addition, some games such as storytelling, singing and reading fairy tales do not require costs but have great benefits for children. Storytelling can improve good relationships between parents and children, train concentration, and increase vocabulary for children and stimulate children's imagination, fantasy, and creativity (Rukiyah, 2018) .

It is necessary to socialize families, especially mothers who have children with special needs, about playing with children, which is abbreviated as "BERANAK" so that mothers can help stimulate children's development through play therapy at home. The reason this program is needed is because some parents who have children with special needs prohibit their children from playing outside the home for safety reasons. Through the socialization of the play with children program in community service activities with the target of mothers who have children with special needs in one of the special schools in Pontianak City, it is hoped that it can increase positive relationships and parental acceptance of children with special needs and increase the use of quality time between parents and children. Play emphasizes the quality of parents' time with children not based on how long the play activities are carried out but how much quality time is spent together in play activities.

B. METHODS

The implementation of community service activities took place on October 18, 2024 at one of the Special Schools in Pontianak City with the target of mothers who have children with special needs totaling 20 people who attended the socialization of the play with children program. The method used for this community service activity is through lectures, small group discussions, and simulations of playing with children.

1. Preparation

Preparation is carried out by contacting partners to collaborate in the implementation of community service activities. This community service activity partners with one of the Special Schools in Pontianak city. After a discussion with the partner leader about the time for implementing community service activities, then make invitations to parents who have children with special needs. In the preparation stage, the community service team, namely the lecturer staff of the West Kalimantan Muhammadiyah Institute of Technology and Health, was assisted by students in preparing the materials, rooms, media, and equipment needed.

2. Lecture method

This method begins with the delivery of material about the concept of play to parents who have children with special needs. The material provided includes the definition of play, the purpose and benefits of play, types and methods of play.

3. Small group discussion

Next, there was a discussion session and sharing of experiences between mothers who have children with special needs in playing with children at home. Some mothers shared stories about their experiences playing with children at home. The results of discussions in small groups found that mothers who have children with special needs have different views regarding the concept of playing with children with special needs, but mothers agree that children need to get attention in the form of love and need time with parents at home. So far, some mothers only let their children play gadgets alone, watch cartoons on television.

4. Simulation

The final stage of this community service activity is a simulation of playing with children at home by utilizing several educational games that can stimulate children's cognitive abilities, children's concentration and problem-solving skills by arranging puzzle toys, coloring pictures and telling stories or storytelling. Each mother is given the opportunity to simulate playing with children according to the type of game that the child is interested in at home.

C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The implementation of community service activities regarding the socialization of the play with children program or abbreviated as "BERANAK" was carried out according to the predetermined schedule. Present at the implementation of this activity were 20 parents, especially those with children with special needs, school principals and teacher representatives. Mothers were chosen as the target in this activity because mothers are the main caregivers of children at home and are the ones who spend the most time with children at home (Jiu & Rungreangkulkij, 2019).



Figure 1. Simulation of play with child



Figure 2. Participants of community services activity

In the implementation of this community service activity, the parents present were able to demonstrate how to play with children with special needs that were adjusted to the type of special needs of the child and the development of the child's age. In this play activity utilizing game tools available at home. The principles of play applied in this activity are safe for children, do not require large costs, can be done by parents with children at home, in accordance with the development and needs of children.

The results of the evaluation of the knowledge of mothers who were present during the community service activities showed that 80% of mothers could correctly explain the benefits of playing with children with special needs, the types and media of games that are suitable for children. The results of the simulation of playing with children obtained 100% of mothers can demonstrate how to play with children by utilizing several tools such as *puzzles*, coloring pictures, recognizing letters and numbers.

Supporting factors in this community service activity are good cooperation between the community service team from the West Kalimantan Muhammadiyah Institute of Technology and Health with partners and parents who have children with special needs. Meanwhile, obstacles in the field during the implementation of this activity such as limited time for simulating play activities so that parents have to try it themselves at home with their children without assistance from the team.

Play is a very good activity or developmental stimulation for children. The benefits of play can improve children's thinking to develop emotional, social and physical aspects and can improve children's physical abilities, experience, and knowledge and mental balance (Saputro & Fazrin, 2017) . Play is an activity to provide a sense of pleasure for children if done appropriately and directed. Through play activities, children will get a sense of pleasure and provide a feeling of satisfaction for the children who do it.

Play in children with special needs is one of the therapeutic methods. Some children with special needs such as children with autism spectrum disorders who have developmental problems in the aspects of communication, social and behavior can be carried out play therapy to improve the child's ability to interact and communicate with parents, teachers, and therapists in two directions (Yustesari & Azizah, 2023) , as well as children who experience intellectual disability problems, play can develop skills that expand children's physical, cognitive and emotional abilities. Play is a medium that allows a child to access and explore



their world. Through play, a child can develop skills that expand their physical, cognitive, and emotional abilities (Rathnakumar, 2020) .

There are many benefits of play for children. Children gain knowledge, learn to think, remember, and solve problems from their play. Through play children learn to problem solve, improve language and communication skills. Play allows children to be creative while developing their own imagination. Play not only offers children the ability to master certain skills but play can help children develop self-confidence, increase emotional intelligence and improve social relationships. Puzzle play therapy that is carried out continuously using various methods and combinations of games for children with special needs can improve children's cognitive abilities (Paschalia et al., 2024) . Guidance programs through play therapy can improve adaptive abilities in children with special needs even though there are obstacles to adaptive behavior in children with tunagrahita in carrying out daily activities but the ability to maintain themselves is quite capable. Whereas in children with autism disorders the ability to help themselves in play therapy programs is quite good even though there is rejection from children (Adimayanti et al., 2019)

According to Murtiningsih (2014) for nuclear families consisting of parents and children, the involvement of other people in play is very low and play activities are only carried out by parents. However, for the extended family type, the involvement of other people in play activities is quite good because it will lead to good play activities, the more people involved, the better it will be in fostering child development (Murtiningsih, 2014).

D. CONCLUSION

The results of this community service activity show that parents need to spend time playing with children at home. Play activities for children with special needs can improve concentration, and the emotional closeness of children and parents. The game tools used for playing must be adapted to the child's development. Parents can spend time with their children at least 30-45 minutes a day to play with children with various types of games such as arranging puzzles, telling stories, coloring and recognizing letters and numbers.

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F.AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Team contributions include Cau Kim Jiu; responsible for the entire activity process. Kharisma Pratama; in charge of preparing article writing and publication, while Usman; in charge of revising the articles that have been compiled based on input from the team

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