

The Impact of Parents Training Program for the Psychosocial Development of Autism Spectrum Disorder Students

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Abstract

Every parent enjoys seeing their child's ideal development on the physical and psychological levels. The truth is that certain kids, including those with autism spectrum disorder, sometimes known as autism, are born with physical or mental disabilities. The purpose of this study is to ascertain the effects that the Parent Training Program has on the psychosocial development of autistic adolescents and how those effects are perceived. This study was carried out in one of schools in Indonesia. With the goal of determining the impact of the Parent Training Program on the psychosocial development of students with autism spectrum disorder, this study employs a descriptive qualitative research method using data collection techniques through interviews, observation, and documentation studies. Based on the research findings and the technical triangulation findings, it is clear that the Parent Training Program has an effect on the psychosocial development of students with autism. Parents who have participated in the Parent Training Program and put it into practice in their parenting can support their children's developmental stages effectively, allowing children to experience development in psychosocial aspects.

Keywords: Psychosocial, Mental Disabilities, Parent Training Program, Children.

Abstrak

Setiap orang tua senang melihat perkembangan ideal anak mereka pada tingkat fisik dan psikologis. Yang benar adalah bahwa anak-anak tertentu, termasuk mereka yang mengalami gangguan spektrum autisme, terkadang dikenal sebagai autisme, terlahir dengan cacat fisik atau mental. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengetahui pengaruh Program Pelatihan Orang Tua terhadap perkembangan psikososial remaja autis dan bagaimana dampak tersebut dirasakan. Penelitian ini dilakukan di salah satu sekolah di Indonesia. Dengan tujuan untuk mengetahui dampak Parent Training Program terhadap perkembangan psikososial siswa penyandang autism spectrum disorder, penelitian ini menggunakan metode penelitian deskriptif kualitatif dengan teknik pengumpulan data melalui wawancara, observasi, dan studi dokumentasi. Berdasarkan temuan penelitian dan temuan triangulasi teknis, jelas bahwa Program Pelatihan Orang Tua berpengaruh terhadap perkembangan psikososial siswa autis. Orang tua yang telah mengikuti Program Pelatihan Orang Tua dan mempraktikkannya dalam pengasuhan mereka dapat mendukung tahap perkembangan anak mereka secara efektif, memungkinkan anak untuk mengalami perkembangan dalam aspek psikososial.

Kata Kunci: Psikososial, Cacat Mental, Program Pelatihan Orang Tua, Anak

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INTRODUCTION

The physical and psychological perfection possessed by a child is a joy for every parent. But in reality there are some children who are born with physical or psychological limitations, these

limitations can occur at the beginning of the developmental period. Children with such conditions will find it difficult to learn and develop compared to other normal children of their age, therefore they are given the term children with special needs (special needs children) (Brooks, 1991). There are several types of children with special needs, one of which is a child with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) or better known as autism. According to previous research, some people with autism experience mental retardation at a moderate level. Mental retardation is a condition of a person when his level of intelligence is below normal (subnormal) limits, such a condition occurs since the child is born or since childhood. Usually mental retardation is characterized by the difficulty of behaving adaptively because of below average intelligence (Reynaldo et al, 2022).

Children who suffer from Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) will spend time on their own mental activities and look different from other children in general. Children with autism tend to be individualistic and will withdraw from their surroundings. This will hinder the process of social interaction which plays an important role in life. The process of social interaction is indeed important to support our lives, but children with autism have conditions where they find it difficult to interact socially optimally (Haryanti & Sumarno, 2014). This can be felt when communicating with children with autism, they cannot make eye contact, it is difficult to show facial expressions, body gestures, or cues that show reciprocity from the topics discussed. Less optimal in social interaction makes the psychosocial development of children with autism experience obstacles, psychosocial development, namely the development of psychological and social aspects. Psychology itself is a field of science that studies human behavior and its interaction with the environment (Nugroho et al., 2023).

Psychological development is related to several aspects including emotions, motivation, and personal development, as well as changes in how individuals relate to other people. While social development is a learning process to adjust to the values, morals and traditions that apply in society, communicate with each other, and work together (Nooraeni, 2017). It can be concluded that psychosocial development is development related to increasing the ability of individuals to control themselves and increasing the ability to understand social situations in their environment (combining psychological and social aspects). Significantly, psychosocial development in children relates to children's independent abilities such as (eating alone, tidying up their toys after use, or tidying up their bags to be taken to school), not always depending on parents or caregivers, being able to express their feelings, being able to socialize and interact with environment, understand the rules that exist around, and so forth (Tannady & Budi, 2023).

Assistant to the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection (PPPA) presented information about the growth in the number of people with autism, Indonesia's population is 237.5 million with a growth rate of 1.14 percent according to data from the 2010 Central Bureau of Statistics. So it can be predicted that there are 2.4 million people with autism in Indonesia with an increase of 500 people per year. The Director of Child Rehabilitation of the Ministry of Social Affairs also provided information that in 2015, sufferers of the autism spectrum reached 134,000. The highest

distribution is in areas with a high population density ratio, such as West Java, which has an estimated 25,000 autism cases. It is believed that the number of people with autism in Indonesia continues to increase, but until now the data regarding the number of people with autism is not valid because the population census data collection has never accompanied the health status of the population (Nuryanti, 2008).

Creativity is an ability that everyone has at different levels, because everyone is born with creative potential, and this potential can be developed and nurtured. If it is not developed, the creative potential will decrease day by day, until it is finally lost. Therefore creativity is very important to be developed. The creative ability stage of early childhood 5-6 years, namely children are able to make or shape works according to their shape from various materials such as paper, plasticine, blocks, used materials and others. By the time children are 5 years old, children are able to do a number of creative and imaginative games. This activity can encourage imagination and develop their ability to solve problems, think, and improve their motor skills. Children will also play more often using colors, stories and role demonstrations to solve a problem or feeling they want to convey. At the age of 6 years, children spend more time improving and developing abilities that have been previously learned. Children will be more thorough in every work they make. In addition, children are also able to tell stories and describe their feelings, and begin to be able to voice opinions about things that may or may not be liked (Astuti et al., 2023).

Accompanying children with autism is not an easy thing. To accompany the development of children with autism and help the process of psychosocial development, parents need guidance, education and training by participating in a parenting class program. The knowledge and information provided in the parenting class program will make parents aware of the right parenting style to apply. Parenting or parenting according to previous research is defined as a process that refers to a series of actions and interactions that are carried out by parents to support children's development (Suteja, 2014). The parenting process is not just a one-way relationship where only parents influence children, but more than that, in parenting there must be a process of interaction between two people who are influenced by the culture and social institutions in which the child is raised. This study aims to determine the impact that is produced and felt related to the psychosocial development of students with autism after their parents take part in the Parent Training Program (PPOT).

METHOD

This study uses a descriptive qualitative research method. The data in this research were obtained using interview techniques, observation, and documentation studies to gather information and find the required data, with the aim of knowing the Impact of the Parent Training Program (PPOT) on the Psychosocial Development of Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). This research was conducted in one of schools in Indonesia. Data triangulation was used in this study by

comparing the results of observations obtained through primary data and compared with writings found in secondary data.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Impact on Parents

In order to maintain the subject's good name, this study uses the subject's initials and the subject's parents to maintain privacy. There were three parents. The purpose of holding the Parent Training Program (PPOT) is to establish cooperation between parents and the school to carry out consistent care and education for children, this is done to support children's development according to the stages of their development. But before that impact occurs on children, it will definitely be felt by parents as participants in PPOT. And from the three parents who the researchers interviewed, they gave positive responses about PPOT and shared the impact they felt after participating in PPOT. Even though the three parents had not participated in PPOT until the final stage, they had already felt the impact. The impact they feel, among others, is that as parents they realize that the parenting style applied so far is not appropriate, it is not in accordance with the conditions of their child, because the child's abilities will develop if the parents are able to apply a parenting style that is appropriate to the child's condition. After participating in PPOT, the three parents, namely YS, KY, and MN, were more aware of their child's condition and began to gradually change their parenting style.

At PPOT parents will learn about the stages of child development, from there parents will know where their child's development is. As PB felt after participating in PPOT up to stage 5 he came to know the 7 domains that must exist at the stage of child development, after knowing about the domains he can now assess how far YS is developing. PB increasingly understands how to care for and educate good children according to the stage of child development. KY also stated the same thing, now KY can read the development and emotional situation of AR, and understand more about how a child's brain works, so KY finds it helpful in creating programs, rules, and good habits for AR. KY also realized after participating in PPOT that exploration is important for child development, now KY is giving AR the opportunity to explore the surrounding environment.

In addition to understanding the stages of child development, parents also feel the impact when communicating with children. They got this in PPOT 1, namely the 18 attitude program, this program equips parents with the basic attitudes they need to have in raising and educating children, from these attitudes parents will also train themselves to communicate properly and appropriately with their children. MN stated that his relationship with NN became closer after understanding 18 basic attitudes that parents must have. MN understands more about the attitudes that must be had in parenting children, MN also learns that how to communicate with children greatly influences children's development, especially for children who experience speech delays such as NN will help them to add new vocabulary.

PB also stated that he now understands how to communicate properly with children, such as staying away from prohibitions or orders. PB said he would prefer to use the phrase "A chair is a seat" rather than "Don't stand on a chair" when YS is standing on a chair, that way YS will think critically that the function of a chair is to sit, not stand. That is an example of applying one of the attitudes, namely patience, so indirectly applying these 18 attitudes will change the way parents communicate with their children. Then parents learn to apply independence to children, so that gradually children can meet their own personal needs without the help of others, for example, such as toilet training. As told by MN, he started to implement toilet training on NN, apart from that NN was also able to wear her own clothes, MN only prepared her clothes, even eating, NN was able to do it herself.

KY also stated that what was taught in PPOT was cooperation in self-management such as bathing alone and eating alone, and KY understood that special needs children such as AR needed training and assistance until they could do it on their own. PB also made a statement regarding the application of independence, he allowed YS to be independent by trying new things to meet his needs such as cooking his own omelette for him to eat, even though the results would be messy but PB allowed him to, according to PB it was in accordance with what the school taught in PPOT that it is a child's learning process to practice better. Another impact felt by parents is starting to get used to being consistent in implementing parenting and education as taught in PPOT, and of course as implemented by the school. Parents understand that consistency in parenting will have a good impact on children's development, as PB and KY said about their consistency in implementing appropriate parenting patterns after participating in PPOT.

Impact on Children

The first student with autism, namely YS, previously experienced obstacles in communicating like children with autism in general, YS experienced speech delays, plus YS and his family had lived in Australia so that his ability to communicate verbally was increasingly hampered. But now YS already has a lot of vocabulary that he can say, gradually he can communicate with the people around him, YS also starts to think critically and asks a lot of questions to his parents or teachers when there is something that makes him curious, even during observations researchers can interact and communicate with YS. Previously, YS had not been able to socialize well, even though PB had modeled it, for example, PB gave an example of how to behave towards people who visit the house, they have to invite them in and they have to be able to share. PB kept reminding and modeling it, until finally YS was able to practice it when someone visited his house. YS could greet him kindly and say "Welcome, please come in", besides that he was also able to invite the guest to try the food he had just bought. YS has also been able to share or lend his personal items such as books or toys, even though previously he was very protective of his belongings. This shows that YS's social skills are starting to wake up, and what the researchers see is that he can already play with his friends at school and even with his seniors he is able to interact.

In addition to social skills that are starting to build up, YS's independence is now starting to show, he is getting used to taking care of his own needs such as school needs, cleaning up used objects, even YS can cook his own omelette without his mother's help, and his toilet training is very good. As for his self-confidence, YS still needs encouragement from parents and teachers, according to the results of the interviews described in chapter 4 that from the start he entered the school his self-confidence was very lacking, but with the cooperation of teachers and parents now YS's self-confidence is starting to show, such as YS started to dare to speak in front of his friends at the time of recalling, was able to lead a pledge in front of his friends, and had a willingness to join his friends during extracurricular activities because before he felt inferior, now as long as he feels he can believe in himself to give it a try.

The next student with autism, AR, according to interview results, was that when AR was just a new student, it was difficult for him to adapt to his environment, especially the school environment which directed him to be active with many activities, which might be difficult for him as a child with autism. Because it is difficult to adapt and AR does not feel comfortable with his environment, he often has tantrums when he arrives at school. Apart from that, AR has also not been able to establish closeness with his teachers, let alone with his group mates, AR has always refused the presence of people around him, he prefers to be alone. His independence has not yet been awakened, toilet training cannot be implemented properly. AR still likes to urinate anywhere, so extra assistance is still needed for him. Now AR's condition is increasingly showing its development, he has been able to adapt to his environment, it can be seen that AR can accept the presence of friends around him and sometimes he even calls his friends to invite him to play, now AR also has close friends whose words AR really listens to. When morning arrived at school AR was not crying anymore, he just said goodbye to his parents by kissing his parents, after that AR entered with his teacher. Sometimes AR still likes to have tantrums but only for a while not as bad as before, now what makes AR tantrums is usually that he doesn't feel comfortable in class because he is on vacation or because he is feeling sick.

AR's ability to communicate has shown progress, now he can communicate verbally even though his words are still not clear, but gradually AR has recorded a lot of vocabulary that he can use, his mother, namely KY, also stated that now his child can be invited to communicate in two directions, and the relationship AR with family becomes more harmonious. AR is also able to follow instructions from his teacher when his condition is calm and comfortable. Then toilet training can be implemented by AR, now when he wants to urinate he talks to his teacher, he doesn't urinate anywhere anymore, even though he still needs to be accompanied but he already understands about toilet training. Apart from toilet training which can already be implemented, other developments in independence can be seen from the way he wears his own clothes and tidying up his toys. His current condition also shows that AR is more active in exploring his environment, he likes to ask his teacher about things that make him curious. Now AR can be creative using lego or magnets that he made into

buildings with a structured form from which his creativity and focus have been formed. AR also shows his competitive attitude, if his friend can he also wants to be like his friend and even wants to be superior to his friend, but if he feels his friend is superior he will usually show an attitude of annoyance and disappointment.

The last student with autism is NN, as the researcher explained earlier in chapter 4 that NN suffers from non-verbal autism, making it difficult for him to communicate or just convey what he feels, so tantrums often occur. According to the results of interviews with her mother, namely MN, it can be illustrated that before going to school and before MN took part in PPOT, NN's relationship with her family was not as close as it is today, she did not look comfortable in her environment. Because when he tries to communicate with the people around him no one understands what he means, so he feels uncomfortable with his surroundings and lacks closeness or harmony with his family. In addition, the interview with the teacher also illustrated that only NN's physique was growing to keep up with his increasing age, but his behavior was still like a baby who really needed extra assistance. Now NN has experienced development, although not optimally, but gradually there have been changes from the previous conditions. NN is starting to feel comfortable with her environment and looks cheerful, as explained by MN her relationship with NN is now getting closer, because after participating in PPOT MN understands how to behave towards children. According to the teacher now NN understands that she has to be in her group, so whatever she does she will return to her group after that, NN can also play with her friends even though there is no communication going on but at least she is not alone, she can share her toys with her friends. When playing a role he wants to play along and have a role, when his friends want to pray he also understands to gather around his friends by wearing a sarong.

NN also has the courage to stand in front of her friends when recalling, even though NN cannot tell a story by speaking directly, NN wants to be like her other friends in doing recall, and according to her teacher, this is a big strength and advantage of NN. Indeed NN cannot communicate verbally, but she can show what she is feeling with her body movements, but little by little there are already some vocabulary that NN can say even though it is still in the form of words not yet in the form of sentences. And now he can listen to his teacher's words, even if he is just silent but he listens to his teacher's words and does it if he feels comfortable and calm. Like when his teacher asked him to help lift the table, he understood and wanted to help. Then NN can also interact with new people, such as when the researcher invites him to shake hands he responds by shaking the researcher's hand, even though previously it requires a process first, during the process he will pay attention to the other person even though his eyes are not focused on the person he is talking to. But the researchers saw that NN could focus and be active while playing games such as building Lego, meronce, and sewing. Researchers use this theory because Erik Erikson's theory of psychosocial development focuses more on socialization dimensions and explains the psychosocial development of children according to their age stages, so that it can make it easier for researchers to find the results of this research.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research that has been carried out and the discussion that has been described regarding the impact of the Parent Training Program (PPOT) on the development of students with autism spectrum disorder (ASD), it can be concluded that the impact of the Parent Training Program (PPOT) can be seen on the psychosocial development of students with autism. already have the ability to observe the surrounding environment, able to interact with their friends, gradually children also begin to communicate verbally or use their body movements. Development is also seen in children's independence, when children are gradually able to meet their own needs, such as defecating, bathing, dressing, and eating. Then children with autism begin to be active in playing and exploring the surrounding environment. When playing initiative, imaginative and competitive nature has also begun to form. The self-confidence that is usually not possessed by children with autism is now starting to be seen from the way they want to try new things like their friends do.

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