

Parents Accompanying to Identify Special-Needs Children in Depok, Indonesia

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ABSTRACT The issue of detection services for children with special needs in Indonesia still merits attention, as it necessitates intensive treatment to enhance parents' ability to identify their children with growth and development issues. Regarding this topic, parents need a wealth of knowledge and skills. Community Service in Depok assists families in identifying children with special needs. Participants in the brief course must understand the characteristics of children with special needs. The goals of community service activities are as follows: a) conducting training activities on the characteristics of ABK, and b) conducting child development screening activities for the "early detection" of child growth and development issues. a) Parental comprehension of children with special needs; and b) Stage I, coordination with Forkesi, the Depok ABK service agency, the Depok Health Service, and the Depok City Government. Then, all Depok city councils and municipalities were invited to participate in parent training activities with the unique parent community. The second implementation phase entails training parents on the characteristics and ABK assessment programs. The subsequent activity in Phase III was observing ABK in the classroom and exercising child development screening with our Malaysian partner, Hospital Penawar. Stage IV involves conducting a FGD with parents, instructors, and the Depok Health Service in attendance. The next step will be collaborating to monitor the Depok Posyandu Movement's developments.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The identification services for children with special needs in Indonesia are pertinent for consideration and discourse (Finnegan & Accardo, 2022; Hetzroni, 2019). There exists a wide range of children with special needs, each exhibiting diverse symptoms and diseases (Erden et al., 2019; Fletcher-Watson, 2019; McDonald, 2019). Every condition exhibits distinct traits. This results in the necessity for tailored services based on the unique demands of each client (Brookman-Fraze, 2018; Sharda, 2010; Tonizzi, 2023).

Nevertheless, not all parents possess a comprehensive understanding of this distinctiveness. Insufficient availability of resources about the appropriate assessment and evaluation of children diagnosed with *Autism Spectrum Disorder* (ASD) and other developmental disorders leads to parents obtaining erroneous information regarding the true nature of their children's problems (Rios, 2020; Sharda, 2018).

The individuals engaged in this activity are parents who can identify potential child development issues, specifically visual impairments. A medical professional conducted a diagnosis on a child (referred to as B) and determined the presence of a neurological problem that adversely affected their visual capabilities (Russell, 2016; Wainwright et al., 2020). The physician recommended surgical intervention to address the nerve compression and mitigate potential complications from the patient's vision (Dynea, 2020; Troisi, 2020; Zhou, 2020). Ultimately, B did not have surgical intervention due to the diversion of his parents' focus toward his behavioral difficulties, characterized by frequent episodes of tantrums.

Based on a consultation with a psychologist, it was determined that individual B exhibited symptoms consistent with *Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder* (ADHD) at the age of six. As a result, B's educational needs were met through home-based instruction facilitated by their mother, as the

child expressed resistance towards attending traditional schooling. The mother is strongly inclined to participate in seminars or workshops on ABK (children with special needs) (Bosl, 2018; Pintacuda, 2023; Rubenstein, 2018). Additionally, she is keenly interested in community service activities that identify and support children with special needs (Sopa et al., 2022; Suharsiwi, 2016). The mother articulated her reservations regarding the child's diagnosis, the classification of her child, and the appropriateness of the homeschooling approach.

The screening or identification of children with special needs is of considerable concern to parents, as evidenced by the fact that out of the 12 parents who participated in the screening process, only 2 had their children's issues thoroughly assessed. In contrast, some parents of other children solely seek guidance from a psychologist or pediatrician (Setiyanti et al., 2022; Suharsiwi et al., 2018). Instances of children with developmental problems do exhibit such symptoms (Nafisah et al., 2023; Supriatna et al., 2023). Conducting thorough assessments at prominent medical facilities that offer specialized clinics for child growth and development is essential to obtain precise findings.

The growth and development of children necessitate a comprehensive approach. Parents require substantial knowledge and competencies in this subject field. The primary objective of Community Service in the city of Depok is to assist parents in identifying children within their families who may have special needs. The individuals who engage in the short course seek to acquire knowledge regarding the distinctive attributes of children with exceptional needs.

A subset of parents still require further comprehension to accurately assess and administer suitable forms of stimulation for their children with special needs. Concerns about elevated expenses contribute to parental hesitancy in monitoring their child's growth and development (Barnes, 2017; Chanway, 2000; Zahroh, 2014). The active involvement of parents in offering suitable attention and support from the early stages of a child's development is crucial, as they hold significant significance within the broader societal context.

Society must comprehensively understand children's diverse range of unique needs (Islam, 2021; Yeomans-Maldonado, 2021). The dissemination of information through seminars and workshops can effectively enhance public awareness of the significance of early identification and provision of appropriate stimulation for children with special needs. This encompasses initial indicators, such as atypical behavioral patterns in children (Dahlani, 2021; Sungkawati et al., 2022; Yuniwati & Afdah, 2021). The community plays a significant role in offering emotional support to families with children who have special needs. Assisting the community can mitigate the negative societal

perceptions and feelings of seclusion experienced by the family (Cholily et al., 2021; Eriyanti et al., 2022; Pratiwi et al., 2023).

The proposed initiative involves the collaboration between the community service team from UMJ and the Depok City Health Service to implement early detection services in Posyandu through the inclusive Posyandu program. The establishment of Posyandu is anticipated to facilitate the Depok City Government to obtain more precise statistics on the number of children with special needs and the specific challenges they encounter. According to the statistics provided by the Depok City Health Service in 2022, there are 379 children with diverse ages and types of special needs in Depok City. Among these individuals, 224 are classified explicitly as youngsters. According to the provided data, 7% of the individuals fall into the category of toddlers, while the remaining 93% belong to the age group ranging from 6 to 18 years. Approximately 4% of toddlers and 34% of children within the same age group exhibit indications of autism and intellectual impairments.

Because Depok City does not have entirely correct data on the number of special needs children, autism and psychiatric disorders may be underrepresented in toddler data. The Depok City Government understands its value. They collect data on special needs children in various age groups with the UMJ community service team and KKN students.

Early identification is crucial for children's future health and education decisions (Brown, 2019; Geweniger, 2022). The government must consider citizen welfare, school choice, therapy, and other child development programs. Special needs children are challenging to raise, and their development takes time (Darmayanti et al., 2023; Faker, 2018; Jans, 2021).

Community service activities aim to 1) train on ABK traits and 2) check children for "early detection" of growth and development issues. This exercise seeks to 1) teach parents about special needs children and 2) teach them about examination stages and what to do if their child has growth and development issues. Phase I: Coordinating with Forkesi, Depok ABK, Depok Health, and Depok City Government. Then, all institutions and the Depok City Government were invited to socialize parent training with the unique parent community.

Phase II—parent training—has a 40% theoretical weight. Phase III would involve 60% practical activities in school observation, mentorship, and child development assessment with our partner Hospital Penawar Malaysia—stage IV, closing activities, including FGDs, evaluation, and a Depok city government-UMJ MOU.

2. METHOD

The methodology employed in the community service project entails utilizing observational techniques, questionnaires, and documentation gathering to ascertain the presence of children with special needs in Depok City. A more comprehensive elucidation can be delineated as follows (Riono et al., 2023): (1) The study involved conducting observations to examine the challenges encountered by parents in identifying the symptoms exhibited by children with special needs. (2) Documentation was employed to gather photographs, videos, and data about the individuals participating in community service initiatives. (3) Questionnaires were utilized to enhance comprehension of community service's advantages.

Community service is implemented in the following manner (Sari et al., 2023): (1) The scheduled events are set to occur on the 9th and 10th of August in the year 2023, encompassing two separate meetings held on Wednesday and Thursday. (2) In executing this service, the researcher enlisted a team comprising two lecturers and two students to oversee administrative tasks and gather data in the field. (3) Throughout the community service initiative, the researcher and their team, consisting of three lecturers and two students, offered aid and conducted training sessions for parents in Depok City on strategies for identifying symptoms of children with special needs.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Distinct developmental demands characterize every stage of a child's development, and children with special needs typically have challenges in acquiring specific abilities (Suharsiwi et al., 2023; Triono et al., 2023; Zahroh et al., 2023). Assistance is required to fulfill these objectives, and numerous distinct family or parent-child communities offer the requisite services to cater to these parents' needs. Nevertheless, it is essential to acknowledge that confident parents may be unable to participate in these programs due to a range of factors, including limited comprehension of their child's condition, demanding schedules, challenges in embracing their child's distinctiveness, financial constraints, and other similar circumstances.

The community of families with special needs children holds considerable significance, as it is led by administrators who are parents with firsthand knowledge of caring for their children's unique needs (Kraleva, 2017; Sülter, 2022). Particular administrations have taken the initiative to establish educational institutions to disseminate knowledge and address the specific requirements of parents. This is particularly relevant in circumstances when conventional schools are unable to adequately cater to the needs of children with special needs, particularly those with more severe conditions such as autism and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder

(ADHD). The findings of a survey done by a research team at the sole State Special School in Depok revealed that the institution's policy of not admitting children with autism was based on their perceived lack of capacity to provide adequate care for this particular student population.

With university support, the institution and the Depok City Government agreed to organize a Special Family Forum for all Depok parents of special-needs children. This combination promotes early detection and home parenting skills training. Educated parents may help teachers and schools help their children succeed (Brocas, 2020; Zhou, 2020). Early detection programs can be delivered by Inclusive Posyandu or experienced volunteers. Special needs children require holistic treatment, and the Health Service (Dinkes), Education Service (Disdik), and Social Service (Dinsos) collaborate on early discovery. In 2023, Depok City began implementing the Regional Regulation (Perda) on Disabilities, reflecting this collaboration.

Caring for special-needs children will inspire the Depok community to develop a disability-friendly community. Special needs children will receive health, education, and the opportunity to work or start a business. Before this may happen, the community can participate in exams, training, and consultations through connected institutions, the government, and universities (Brodie, 2017; Kesäläinen, 2022). The Forum, including particular parent institutions, universities, and the government, will create a joint consultation center for financially disadvantaged parents to access free or subsidized therapy and consultation services for child growth and development. This program might start small and grow until the facilities serve all special needs children. Inclusive posyandu helps identify children with special needs, who can be examined by doctors, psychologists, therapists, and child/exceptional education professionals in a treatment facility. Community cooperation and participation can implement these activities and make Depok City disability-friendly.

Training Participant Pretest

Below is the original data (pretest) from Muhammadiyah University, Jakarta's squad, before training and coaching support.

Table 1. Description of Participants' Pretest Knowledge Data

No	Indicator	Average Value
1	Knowledge about Autism	70
2	Knowledge about types of Autism	70
3	Characteristics of Autism	75
4	Knowledge about dyslexia	65
5	Knowledge about dyscalculia	65
6	Knowledge about ADHD	70
7	Characteristics of ADHD	70
Total Average		69,29

Source: Research Documentation (2023)

Table 1 demonstrates that each aspect's average is below 70. This reveals that many parents have missed early special needs indicators. So this training is needed.

Implementing Training

Early detection and stimulation of autistic children at home require parental help. ASD is a neurological condition that affects children's social, communication, and conduct. Early diagnosis and intervention can help autistic children develop healthily.

The course aims to recognize early indicators of special needs children, such as ADHD, ASD, etc. These steps can parents take:

- 1) **Understanding Autism** Parents must comprehend autism, its symptoms, and its effects on their child's development. This will help parents cope (Chen, 2019).
- 2) **Child Development Observation** Parents must regularly observe their child's development. Consult a healthcare professional quickly if language difficulties, social issues, or substantial behavior changes occur (Ferreira, 2023).
- 3) **Consult a Specialist.** Parents should see autism-experienced psychologists, psychiatrists, or therapists. They can help diagnose and recommend treatments (Magaña, 2020).
- 4) **Speech and Behavioral Therapy** Communication is harsh for autistic children. Children can learn communication and social skills through speech and behavioral therapy. Parents can practice these methods at home (Schoen, 1989).
- 5) **Special education** Parents can work with schools and special education centers to acquire their children's assistance. Children can overcome learning disabilities with exceptional instruction (Peristeri et al., 2022).
- 6) **Utilize Technology and Online Resources.** Several autism-specific apps and websites exist. This technology can help parents stimulate and teach their kids (Bieleninik, 2017).
- 7) **Patience and Consistency** Parenting an autistic child takes patience and consistency. Children need emotional support and parental stability (Buckley et al., 2015).
- 8) **Therapy Engagement** Parents can participate in child treatment. This may involve attending treatment, completing the therapist's activities, and tracking the child's development.
- 9) **Maintaining Family Health** Parenting an autistic child can be exhausting. Parents need good physical and mental health to assist their kids.
- 10) **Communicate with Others** Talk to teachers, friends, and family about your child's autism requirements and struggles. This can make the youngster feel supported.

Helping autistic children succeed requires parental support. Children with autism can develop better with care, understanding, and effort.



Figure 2. Training Discussion Activities
Source: Research Documentation (2023)

Figure 2 exhibits photographs of opening activities and speaker reviews from the



Figure 3. Participant Interviews and Observations
Source: 2023 research document

Muhammadiyah University of Jakarta Community Service Team event. Parents and children with growth and development issues, such as autism, are invited to discuss early detection of developmental disorders like autism.

Figure 3 displays psychologists/psychotherapists' observations of parents and special-needs children during interviews. The public should know this activity to spot developmental issues in children with special needs like autism.

Posttest/Final Activities

After training activities are implemented, they are evaluated to determine their success. Final activity (posttest) results after team training are shown below:

No	Indicator	Average Value
1	Knowledge about Autism	80
2	Knowledge about types of Autism	80
3	Characteristics of Autism	85
4	Knowledge about dyslexia	75
5	Knowledge about dyscalculia	75
6	Knowledge about ADHD	80
7	Characteristics of ADHD	85
Total Average		80

Source: Research Documentation (2023)

According to Table 2, the mean value for each observable aspect has attained a score of 80, falling into the "good" category. This evidence indicates that training interventions aimed at enhancing

parents' ability to recognize symptoms associated with children with special needs have effectively enhanced parents' awareness and comprehension of the distinctive traits and attributes exhibited by such children. Hence, this training program can be deemed successful due to achieving success indicators (Astuti et al., 2023; Mubarok et al., 2023; Usmiyatun, Sah et al., 2023).

The significance of mentoring and coaching initiatives for parents in identifying the initial indications of children with special needs should not be disregarded. There are other justifications for parental support and coaching in this particular context.

Parents who have received formal training can identify the initial indicators of emerging special needs in their children. Early identification of a condition or particular need facilitates prompt intervention, enhancing the likelihood of a kid successfully overcoming obstacles. Early intervention reduces the development of essential abilities in children in numerous instances. If parents can promptly identify early signs, children can be provided with specialized therapeutic or educational services tailored to their needs (Safitri et al., 2023; Sekaryanti et al., 2022; Usmiyatun, Mustafa et al., 2023).

Parents who know their child's unique requirements can adequately equip themselves emotionally and practically. This encompasses comprehending optimal methods for facilitating a child's growth and progress, obtaining necessary resources, and engaging in effective communication with healthcare and educational practitioners. Parents who know their child's unique needs can establish an environment that fosters their developmental progress. This includes modifications in parental communication strategies, adjustments in educational approaches, and the establishment of customized schedules tailored to the child's specific requirements (Ahmed et al., 2021; Arif et al., 2022).

According to research, parents who actively participate in the early identification and advancement of children with special needs are more likely to collaborate with healthcare and education experts (Yurkofsky, 2019). This facilitates the formation of a cohesive and effective team dedicated to promoting children's holistic development. Early intervention and parental support can potentially reduce the optimal development of children with special needs, enhancing their overall well-being and fostering their autonomy.

Identifying and comprehending a child's unique needs by parents might mitigate the stigma linked to the particular condition. Parents can serve as advocates for their children, contributing to the enhancement of societal comprehension regarding

special needs and aiding in eradicating detrimental stereotypes (Elgrably, 2021).

Schools, health institutions, and non-profit groups frequently provide special education programs and family assistance (Nelson et al., 2021) to aid parents in recognizing early indications of children with special needs. Parents can significantly contribute to the optimal development of children with special needs by providing support and understanding.

Community service initiatives that prioritize supporting parents in identifying the indicators of children with special needs have numerous favorable consequences that can significantly impact both people and society. Several critical implications arise from this activity:

This community service initiative can potentially assist parents and families in recognizing early indicators of children with special needs. This facilitates expedited and more efficient intervention, enhancing the child's developmental prospects (Esch, 2018; Liao, 2020). Parents who are provided with support will acquire enhanced information and comprehension about the diverse special needs that their children may possess. This enables individuals to have a deeper understanding of the obstacles and determine the most effective approaches to facilitate the growth and advancement of children (Goksu, 2016). Mentoring endeavors can offer parents emotional assistance, particularly when they frequently encounter stress and apprehension about their child's unique requirements (Berger, 2015).

This intervention can potentially mitigate stress levels and enhance the overall quality of life for the family. Parents who engage in mentoring activities frequently can interact with other parents encountering comparable circumstances (Robertson, 2017). This phenomenon can establish a significant social support system wherein parents can exchange experiences and access valuable resources.

Engaging in these activities can also mitigate the social stigma around those with special needs. As the collective comprehension of special needs within society expands, it is anticipated that there will be a reduction in the prevalence of negative stereotypes and discriminatory practices (Jones, 2018). Parents who possess a more comprehensive grasp of their child's symptoms and requirements are more inclined to pursue assistance from healthcare and educational experts actively. This has the potential to enhance children's accessibility to suitable services. Please provide more context or information for me to understand what you refer to (Waddington, 2017). Parents who engage in mentoring activities assume a more proactive role in their child's educational journey. Parents can collaborate with schools and teachers to ensure their children receive an education tailored to their needs

(Asbury, 2021).

The timely identification and assistance offered by parents can exert a beneficial influence on the development of children. Children with unique needs may encounter enhanced levels of independence, communication abilities, and several other capabilities.

Community service activities can enhance the well-being of children with special needs and their families. This intervention can facilitate youngsters in achieving their maximum capabilities and experiencing a greater sense of social acceptance within society.

Engaging in parental assistance activities can effectively contribute to disseminating knowledge regarding special needs and the significance of early detection within the community. This can foster more participation among individuals in the endeavor above. The involvement of parents in recognizing symptoms exhibited by children with special needs carries significant and favorable consequences for enhancing the overall well-being of the children and their families. This investment holds considerable value within a society that prioritizes inclusivity and demonstrates a genuine concern for its members' diverse needs and experiences.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings and subsequent scholarly discussions regarding parental assistance activities in identifying children with special needs, it may be deduced that these activities have been successfully implemented, resulting in concrete advantages for parents of such children. Parents also acknowledge the importance of a comprehensive evaluation with a qualified expert for a precise diagnosis. This, in turn, allows parents to receive suggestions for developmental interventions that can be executed and organized correctly. One potential advice for research and community service activities aimed at parents involves offering assistance and direction in evaluating the social skills of children with special needs. This initiative aims to provide a strong foundation for improving Indonesia's educational and public health outcomes, emphasizing equality and equity.

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