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Stimulation of Early Childhood Intelligence through Interest Approach based on the Family Environment in the Pandemic Era

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Abstract

The application of learning programs from home as an effort to reduce the transmission of the covid virus has brought about several phenomena in the field, including learning stimulation that is not carried out optimally, parents feel very bothered, and children are depressed and so on. All of this happened allegedly because some parents did not understand the approach to learning in early childhood. This research uses a literature study approach by utilizing various sources, both printed and online. From the results and discussion, it can be concluded that; 1. To optimize the results of intelligence stimulation/learning done at home, parents must understand the characteristics of early childhood learning in general, including children who like to play, each child is unique, and children like to imitate people in their environment. 2. Learning will take place well if parents understand and adapt the interests or tendencies of each child. 3. Every available space/spot in the home environment can be a fun place for intelligence stimulation for children if parents have sufficient understanding of the characteristics of an early child and the different interests of each child.

Keywords

Stimulation, Intelligence, interest approach, family environment, pandemic era.

1 Introduction

Children are the generation that will be the successor of human civilization. Success in preparing children from an early age will determine the quality of civilization that will be realized after they grow up. At an early age stage of growth and development begins and is ongoing, including; physiological, language, social-emotional, motor, and cognitive development (Fauziddin, 2016). Stimulation of children's intelligence must take place continuously from an early age, without being limited by situations and conditions. If there are times in a child's life that escape the stimulation process, this will be very detrimental to them. Likewise, during the current COVID pandemic period, the stimulation process must continue. The ability to adapt to situations and creativity and support from all parties will greatly determine the continued implementation of the learning process for children. Awareness of this causes various parties to be expected to show their contribution to developing the intelligence of each child. The various parties referred here include the government, the community, and especially the parents.

In terms of the government, the contributions that can be made include formulating policies related to ensuring education management, providing educational facilities, and providing educators who meet the needs of quality education services. Various policies regarding the implementation of education for early childhood in Indonesia have been regulated in the National Education System Law No. 20 of 2003 including the explanation of PAUD in: (1) Chapter I Article 1 paragraph 14, (2) Part five, Article 26 paragraph 3, (3) The seventh part, article 28 paragraphs 1 to 6. Furthermore, for the implementation of the learning process during the COVID-19 outbreak, various government policies and regulations have been issued at both national and regional levels.

Meanwhile, the contribution from the community regarding the preparation of an early generation is the increasing number of people who support the existence of PAUD service places, both private and non-

governmental in the surrounding environment, in establishing PAUD institutions. In almost every *Kelurahan* or village, we can find many PAUD institutions popping up. Some of these institutions are self-support, the community works together, helping each other so that PAUD institutions can be established in their areas.

Taking into account the increasing awareness of various parties, both the government and the community in providing services for early childhood, of course, whether or not efforts to prepare a quality next generation is implemented are determined again by family factors. This is because in daily life children are the responsibility of their parents. For children from an early age able to get the educational services they need, every parent needs understanding and knowledge about the importance of stimulation of early childhood, and be willing to provide services for their children.

Furthermore, to provide the right and best education services for children, parents must understand the characteristics of early childhood. The approach used in providing stimulation for an early child cannot be equalized with the approach in teaching adults. In adult learning, an educator must pay attention to the life experiences they already have, as explained by Solfema in Yuse et al (2018). While early childhood does not have any experience at all. When viewed from the aspect of readiness, the adults are more ready to learn because they already have the awareness so that the outcome of their learning process will be beneficial for them. Meanwhile, early childhood does not understand the importance of learning for them. Early childhood is generally more interested in everything that gives them pleasure, such as playing activities or things they are interested in. All characteristics of early childhood must be considered in stimulation activities, but not all parents understand this. In fact, in stimulating children's intelligence activities, parents are still imposing their will and treating children as adults learn.

Based on the above background, the author is interested in writing an article with the title "Stimulation of Early Childhood Intelligence through Interest Approach based on the Family Environment in the Pandemic Era". It is hoped that this paper can provide knowledge, understanding as well as for all readers.

2 Methods

This study was made using a literature study research approach. Literature studies are widely used in culture, values, morals, and studies related to social situations or conditions (Sugiyono, 2012). In the literature study, the steps taken include preparing the necessary equipment, making a working bibliography, providing time, looking for relevant references, and writing research notes (Zed, 2014). Related to this paper, the main literature that researchers need is books/literature on the characteristics of early childhood development, the role of interest in learning, and the role of the family environment in child development. The supporting data in this study were obtained through mass media, newspapers, online journals, etc.

3 Results and Discussions

3.1 Early Childhood Development Characteristics

As previously explained, early childhood has different characteristics from other age groups. From various literature, it is found that there are several things that characterize early childhood. Furthermore, three of the characteristics of early childhood that need to be considered by educators, in this case, parents and teachers, will be explained to support the development of more optimal children's learning outcomes, as follows;

3.1.1 Early childhood and playing activities

Docket and Fleer explain that playing activities for early childhood are not just activities that they enjoy, but also a necessity (Ismaniar & Utoyo, 2020). Spencer also expressed a similar opinion that play is very important for children's development and can be said as a necessity. Every child should experience a period of play so that they achieve optimal development naturally.

Regarding playing activities, it is almost impossible to find an early childhood who does not like playing activities. Children get the opportunity to learn many things through play activities. As explained by Erik Erikson in (Ismaniar, 2020), playing activities can "maintain a child's ego or sense of self-esteem". By playing they can channel their social needs, emotions, feelings, and children also learn how to compete with others, and the people in their environment. Thus, children who get enough opportunities to play at their age will become pro-social individuals.

3.1.2 Each Child is Unique as Individual

Various literature research explain that each individual is unique. This unique term shows that no single individual (and early childhood) is truly the same. It can also be seen from their interests and talents in early childhood. As said by Bredekamp in Suryana and Wahyudin (2014), that each child has its uniqueness. For example, concerning their learning styles, areas of interest, as well as the conditions and socio-cultural environment of the family from which the child comes from. Parents and teachers must be sensitive to all this uniqueness. Monotonous treatment and uniform policies in serving and choosing strategies to stimulate children will be very detrimental to the process of developing children's potential. Parents/educators must pay attention to the talents, interests and tendencies of children one by one, and provide stimulation according to their needs and uniqueness.

3.1.3 Early childhood has a tendency to imitate the surrounding environment

Early childhood is an individual who does not yet have the right understanding and concept in assessing various things around them. All existing phenomena are something that interests them, especially if the phenomenon or something can provide pleasure or reward for them, they will quickly imitate it. Regarding this, Montessori in Ismaniar and Utoyo (2020), said that early childhood is like a dry sponge. The use of this term is to explain that if a dry sponge is dropped in one place, the sponge will immediately absorb all the liquid in the place where the sponge fell. Sponges are unable to choose which water is clean and which water is dirty. Responding to what is described by Montessori above, and then two sides need to be observed by educators/teachers. On the one hand, the absorption ability of early childhood is very strong, they are sensitive to everything that happens around them. But on the other hand, children have not been able to judge good and bad as well as appropriate and inappropriate phenomena seen for them to imitate. Early childhood educators must be careful. Educators (parents/teachers) should provide a positive environment for children's development, and all of that must start from the educators themselves. Educators are the closest figures physically and psychologically to children, so the example displayed by educators in daily life such as in saying, doing and acting will be very easy for children to imitate.

3.2 Interest Role in Learning Success

In general, many factors influence a person in achieving learning success, both external factors and internal factors. External factors include all things that are outside the individual such as support from the family environment, community environment, availability of infrastructure and including situations and conditions where learning is conducive or comfortable for learning. Meanwhile, internal factors are factors from within the individual, such as interests, talents, intelligence levels and health conditions.

Talking about the contribution of external and internal factors in learning activities, both are equally important. When compared between the two, of course, internal factors play a bigger role. However, this certainly does not fully apply to early childhood, because interest in learning in early childhood is largely determined by the ability of external factors to influence it, especially the family environment. Families must understand the interests of each child, and direct learning activities according to the child's interests. Various research results show that, if children learn according to their interests, they will be happy to learn and succeed in achieving their learning goals. This is as Slameto (2013) said that interest in learning has a great influence on learning achievement, because if the subject matter studied is not suitable with the interests of learning citizens, learning citizens will not learn well.

The important role of interest also occurs in early childhood. When children are given stimulation to learn according to their interests, then they will follow it feeling happy and participate actively in these learning activities. Walgito (2010), asserts that a child who has a sense of pleasure or likes certain lessons will learn with pleasure, and continuously learn it, the child will not be forced and will not be bored in learning. Agreeing with Walgito's opinion above, Safari in Yulidar et al (2018), states the pleasure that a

person has for an object or object will foster that person's interest in the object or related objects. Furthermore, a sense of attraction will foster a desire to have the object or objects that are liked. So is the case with learning activities in early childhood. Therefore, the ability of parents as first and foremost educators must be able to develop an interest in something that is being studied, because their interest will determine whether the child will enjoy learning or not.

3.3 Stimulation of Early Childhood Intelligence through Interest Approach based on the Family Environment

Changes in situations and conditions that have occurred recently, especially related to the spread of Covid-19 transmission have a major impact on learning activities, in the context of stimulating the intelligence of early childhood. The policy of limiting the movement of every citizen causes most of the learning stimulation of children who have been served in PAUD institutions, must be returned again and focused on the family environment. Parents become the main focus of the process of stimulating the potential of their child so that it becomes a useful competency for their later development stage.

Taking into account the descriptions that have been presented in the previous section, it is important for parents to pay attention to the characteristics and interests of children in the stimulation process for children that will be carried out at home. Parents must understand the characteristics of early childhood in general and the uniqueness of each child which can be seen from their interests and tendencies. Stimulation of children's learning should adapt to the general characteristics of early childhood, for example, the tendency of children who like to play. Parents must get used to the fact that children will feel happy to follow the stimulation that we provide if it is identical to playing activities. So parents don't pressure them to follow the learning activities that we designed while at home, because we demand that they study seriously. An understanding of the characteristics of early childhood will also make parents more flexible in using all available places and spaces in the home environment, starting from the terrace, living room, dining room, kitchen, room, bathroom, and other spaces that are places of stimulation for children. Children do not have to study in a study room or a particular room. But where children can play, learning activities can take place at once. The results of Gwen Dewar's research entitled *The Cognitive Benefits of Play: Effects on the Learning Brain*; Ismaniar (2018), prove that playful behavior has a positive effect on the brain and children's ability to learn. In fact, play can serve as an important mode for learning. So, for early childhood learning while playing, an approach must be applied to get optimal results.

Furthermore, it is related to the importance of parents paying attention to their children's interests and tendencies in learning. This actually concerns the uniqueness of each child. Parents need to realize that one child with another child may not be treated exactly the same, even though they are brothers or even twins. A method/strategy/tip or other similar terms that may have been successfully applied by parents to older children may not necessarily gain the same success when used for their younger siblings. The accuracy of parents in serving the uniqueness of children will provide a helpful learning atmosphere for each child, and based on various studies on learning outcomes, this will determine the results obtained. Emphasizing what has been described above, Winkel in Walgito (2010), Every student who has an interest in the subject matter will try to find challenges in the content of the lesson being studied, look for examples according to the current situation related to learning, and continuously will discuss the lesson. Maybe it will be found that every child has favorite spots or places to study at home, this should be adopted by parents. So, the principle of learning wherever and whenever can also be applied in the home environment for early childhood.

4 Conclusion

Based on the results and discussion described in the above section, it can be concluded that (1) The development of intelligence in every child is an impact of the stimulation process that is carried out continuously and must be started from an early age because early age is a sensitive age; (2) To obtain optimal results in the learning process during the pandemic period that is focused at home, parents must understand the characteristics of early childhood in general as well as the interests and uniqueness of each

child; (3) Every available space/spot at home can be a fun place for intelligence stimulation for children if parents have sufficient understanding of the characteristics of AUD and the different interests of each child.

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