

# EFFECT OF TRAINED PARENTING ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF AUTISTIC CHILDREN AT AUTISM SCHOOLS IN INDONESIA

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# EFFECT OF TRAINED PARENTING ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF AUTISTIC CHILDREN AT AUTISM SCHOOLS IN INDONESIA

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## ABSTRACT

**Background:** Autistic children are unique individuals who have different abilities and characteristics, so that they have different ways of interacting with themselves and the environment. The development of interest in children with autism can be hampered. Parenting in children with autism includes parents of autistic children who provide emotional, social, informational and practical support to develop children's interests with autism. Based on the results of a preliminary study conducted by the author at 8 Special Schools (SLB) in Yogyakarta and Ponorogo, East Java, most parents (93%) thought that enrolling autistic children in special schools (SLB) meant that their efforts had been said. enough. The purpose of this study was to analyze the effect of parenting on the development of interest in autistic children in autistic schools.

**Subject and Method:** This was a quasi-experiment pretest-posttest design with control group design conducted at the seven autism schools in Yogyakarta and one autism school in Ponorogo, East Java. A sample of autistic children selected by purposive sampling with the criteria of a pair of parents with autistic children aged 6-12 years. The dependent variable was development of interest in children with autism. The independent variable was parenting. The first observation was to determine the development of interest in children with autism before being given parenting and the second observation after being given parenting. Data was analyzed by bivariate analysis by Wilcoxon Rank Test.

**Results:** The development of interest in autistic children was higher after the intervention with trained parenting than before, and it was statistically significant ( $p < 0.001$ ).

**Conclusion:** Giving trained parenting is effective in increasing the development of interest in children with autism in Autism Schools in Yogyakarta and Ponorogo, East Java.

**Keywords:** Parenting, interest development, autistic children

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## BACKGROUND

Indonesia is one of the United Nations (UN) members to have and participate in carrying out commitments to improve the welfare of society. Yogyakarta supports the government's commitment by implementing programs and activities to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). One of them are children with special needs to live a decent, active, and productive life.

Quality human resources need to be improved where health promotion is very

important. Health is one of the promotive and preventive efforts in Indonesia's health sector, which aims to change people's behavior to be healthier. Child health is one of the main problems in the world (Ministry of Health of the Republic of Indonesia, 2004)

Based on the 1945 Constitution Article 31 paragraph 1 and Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System, the state provides full assurance to children with special needs. One of them is for children with autism to obtain quality educational

services. This showed that children with autism deserve the same opportunities as other children in education.

Autism is a developmental disorder caused by organic damage to the brain. Generally, autistic children have difficulty communicating verbally and non-verbally when they want something to tug at other people's hands to get attention. Besides, they are also very rigid with their routine activities as if they are undergoing certain rituals.

Attitudes such as withdrawal, children cannot establish communication, talk to themselves, sing by themselves, cry without cause, circulate without reason, and even cause irritation to those around them. Autistic children have different abilities and characteristics, so that they have different ways of interacting with themselves and their environment and make autistic children unique (Ginanjar AS, 2007).

Autism is a phenomenon that still holds many secrets though has been researched over 60 years ago. It cannot be found the exact cause of the autistic disorder so that no way can be developed prevention and proper handling. It was initially viewed as an autism disturbance caused by psychological factors, including not warm emotionally parenting patterns.

In the early 1970s, research on the characteristics of children with autism helped determine the diagnostic criteria used in the DSM-V (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders). Distraction autism is defined as a developmental disorder with three main characteristics, disruption in social interactions, disruption in communication, and limited interest or imagination ability (Ginanjar AS, 2007).

In the United States, the ratio between normal children and autistic children was 150: 1. In the UK it was 100: 1. There was no

data on children with autism in Indonesia because there has never been an official survey. Even though it is different from normal children, autistic children still have basic rights as normal children. Autistic children need to play, learn, and socialize in the community in their environment (Ginanjar AS, 2007).

The development of children with autism, both physically, emotionally, intellectually, and psychosocial, has problems that inhibit children from reaching a level of action appropriate to their age. The emergence of various developmental obstacles in children with autism is a phenomenon that needs to be further addressed so that the sufferer can still live a good life and optimize the slightest ability they have. This is important because, despite the various limitations, every human being has the same right to grow, develop, be accepted, and carry out certain roles in society.

To achieve maximum results, every educational process always requires collaboration between the school and parents. In principle, education should start from home, and education will fail without parental participation. One of the main requirements that parents must fulfill in striving for good cooperation with the school so that the education process runs optimally is to pay full attention to the child's development as a person and not just attention to what the child achieves, likewise with the education of children with autism. Between parents and other family members with educational institutions must be able to work well together.

This is under the exposure in various literature that the effectiveness of multiple programs for handling and improving the ability to live for children and adolescents with special needs will depend on the full participation and support of the family and community. The knowledge and skills acquir-

ed by children at school will be more durable and will be mastered well if they can also train them at home or outside the school environment with their parents' help and direction. Parents act as educators for their children, especially children with autism. The family environment is also said to be the most important environment because most of the lives of children are autistic in the family, so most children with autism receive an education are in the family.

Parents must understand their essence and role as parents in raising children, equip themselves with proper parenting, knowledge of the child's education, and knowledge of child development. It is not wrong to apply a form of an educational pattern, especially in personality formation. Children who are under the purpose of education are meant to educate the nation's life.

Autistic children can maximize their abilities by utilizing the remaining skills they have. Autistic children also need to get special treatment by involving their parents in accompanying them while at home. Parenting in children with autism includes parents of autistic children who provide emotional, social, informational, and practical support. The attention and love from parents and family will encourage autistic children to develop better. Autistic children will feel loved and wanted when more people in the family circle love and care for them. Parenting is important for parents and families with autistic children. Parents and families can accompany and stimulate interest in children with autism during care and assistance at home (Badi'ah A, 2018).

Based on the results of preliminary studies that have been conducted by the author using interviews at 7 Autistic schools in the Province of DIY (SLB Autism Samara Bunda, SLB Autism Dian Amanah, SLB Autism Fajar Nugraha, SLB Autism Citra Mulia Mandiri,

SLB Autism Bina Anggita, SLB Negeri Pembina Yogyakarta and the Autism Service Center (PLA) in Sentolo) and the Baitul Qur'an Ponorogo School for Autism / Special Needs (ABK) East Java.

16 parents who have autistic children, the results obtained by most parents (93%) thought that by including children autism to special school autism under their limitations, their efforts can be sufficient. The rest of the school is responsible for educating and teaching various life skills to their children. They do not yet understand that a lack of parental attention and support will result in schools' educational process not being optimal. Not all parents realize that education in special schools (SLB) with autism is not a guarantee for developing children's abilities with autism. This study aimed to determine parenting's effect on the development of interest in autistic children in autistic schools.

## **SUBJECTS AND METHOD**

### **1. Study Design**

This was a quasi-experiment pretest-posttest design with control group design conducted at the seven autism schools in Yogyakarta and one autism school in Ponorogo, East Java.

### **2. Population and Sample**

A sample of autistic children selected by purposive sampling with the criteria of a pair of parents with autistic children aged 6-12 years.

### **3. Study Variables**

The dependent variable was the development of interest in children with autism. The independent variable was parenting.

### **4. Data Analysis**

Bivariate analysis by Wilcoxon Rank Test analyzed data.

## RESULTS

### 1. Univariate Analysis

Table 1 showed in the experimental group the largest number of children with autism was from the Autism Service Center as many as 11 children (23.9%) and the minimum number

of SLB Dian Amanah and Baitul Qur'an as many as 3 children (6.5%). Whereas in the control group, the highest number of autistic children was from SLB Citra Mulia Mandiri and Autism Service Center (PLA) as many as 10 children (21.7%) and the least number of SLB Baitul Qur'an was 3 children (6.5%).

**Table 1. Sample Characteristics (categorical data)**

Variables	Experiment		Control	
	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
SLB Fajar Nugraha	4	8.7	4	8.7
SLB Pembina	6	13.0	6	13.0
SLB Bina Anggita	5	10.9	5	10.9
SLB Citra Mulia Mandiri	10	21.7	10	21,7
Autism Service Center (PLA)	11	23.9	10	21.7
SLB Samara Bunda Dian Amanah	4	8.7	4	8.7
Special School Baitul Qur 'Special School an	3	6.5	4	8.7
	3	6.5	3	6.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>100</b>

The normality was tested using Shapiro Wilk because  $n < 50$ , with  $p(\text{sig}) > 0.050$ , which meant the data was normally distributed and  $p(\text{sig}) < 0.050$  was not normally distributed. The normality test of the experimental group and the control group pre-test and post-test on autistic children in autistic schools can be seen in Table 4 below.

Table 4 showed that the development of pre-test and post-test in the experimental group were not normally distributed ( $p < 0.050$ ). In the control group pre-test and post-test were not normally distributed  $p < 0.050$  so that the alternative test, Wilcoxon was used.

## DISCUSSION

In the experimental group of this study, the development of autistic childre in the pre-test showed most of the categories were less than 35 subjects (76.1%). Whereas in the control

group, the development of autistic childre in the pre-test was mostly in the poor category as many as 46 subjects (100%). Playing and interacting with other people in autistic children can increase children's interest, including learning the basics of the language through games and interacting with parents or caregivers in a meaningful way, and looking at the child's face then starting to talk to the child.

Stimulate the child to make eye contact by holding a child's favorite toy or object and waiting for the child to see before handing over the toy, among others, by blowing a balloon or rolling a ball. Children are trained to recognize vocabulary that is easy for children to understand by giving examples and holding toys. For example, children are asked to hold the ball and say the ball.

Autistic children are trained to mimic movements such as clapping, waving, shaking hands, and knocking on doors. Stimulation can also take the form of inviting children to sing, clap their hands, imitate movements, or play games together. In some children with autism, the ability to mimic a sound or hum is better than communication.

This can be used as a gateway to the world of children (Badi'ah A, 2015). Although parents also have to be vigilant, not because the child is encouraged to them, then his communication skills are not developed. Games are simple and also good for stimulating children, such as cheek-ba play.

**Table 2. Characteristics of autistic children and parents of autistic children in autistic schools (n = 92)**

Characteristics	Experiment		Group Control Group	
	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
<b>Age</b>				
6-8 years	11	23,9	14	30.4
> 8-10 years	6	13.0	8	17.4
> 10-12 years	29	63.0	24	52.2
<b>Gender</b>				
Boys	35	76.1	32	69.6
Female	11	23.9	14	30.4
<b>Class</b>				
Kindergarten	7	15.2	10	21.7
SD	39	84.8	36	78.3
<b>Parental age</b>				
20 - 30 years	5	10.9	1	2.2
31 - 40 years	31	67.4	38	82,6
41 - 50 years	9	19,6	5	10,9
51 - 60 years	1	2,2	2	4,3
<b>Parental education</b>				
Elementary school	4	8,7	4	8,7
Junior high school	10	21,7	10	21,7
High School	24	52.2	21	45.7
S1	8	17.4	9	19.6
S2	0	0	2	4.3
<b>Parental Occupation</b>				
Civil servant	8	17.4	11	23.9
Private	24	52.3	20	43.5
Housewives	14	30.4	15	32.6

**Table 3. Development of interest in pre-test and post-test in the experimental and control groups before and after being given parenting to autistic children in autistic schools**

Development	Experimental				Control			
	Pre Test		Post Test		Pre Test		Post Test	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
<b>Interests</b>								
Good	0	0	11	23.9	0	0	0	0
Enough	11	23.9	25	54.3	0	0	3	6.5
Less	35	76.1	10	21.7	46	100	43	93.5

**Table 4. The normality test of the experimental group and the control group for the development of pre-test and post-test in autistic children in autistic schools**

	Groups	p	Information
<b>Pretest</b>	Experiment	<0.001	Abnormal
	Control	<0.001	Abnormal
<b>Post test</b>	Experiment	<0.001	Abnormal
	Control	<0.001	Abnormal

**2. Bivariate Test**

**Table 5. Differences in the development of interest in pre-test and post-test in the experimental and control groups before and after being given Parenting to autistic children in autistic schools**

	Groups	p
<b>Experiment</b>	Pre Test	<0.001
	Post Test	
<b>Control</b>	Pre Test	0.083
	Post Test	

Autistic children are trained to mimic movements such as clapping, waving, shaking hands, and knocking on doors. Stimulation can also take the form of inviting children to sing, clap their hands, imitate movements, or play games together. In some children with autism, the ability to mimic a sound or hum is better than communication. This can be used as a gateway to the world of children (Badi'ah A, 2015). Although parents also have to be vigilant, not because the child is encouraged to them, then his communication skills are not developed. Games are simple and also good for stimulating children, such as cheek-ba play.

Moreover, this game requires the presence of other people. With this game, pa-

rents can introduce their children to the people around them. This kind of game can and should be done by all family members. Different people can do it. Children are allowed to feel the same stimulus in different settings (playing with the mother in the room, with the father on the terrace, etc.). Sensory integration activities that can be done for children with autism include: making handicrafts, such as forming clay with different shapes or painting by holding a child's hand and teaching how to paint so that the child can paint independently.

The use of image media can help encourage autistic children to generate interest in learning. Assisting in the development of interest and helping them interpret

and memorize the contents of the material from a book or text (Soetjningsih, 2012) (The use of picture cards as a learning medium is appropriate for developmental conditions of children's interest with autism. Children gain understanding through symbolic activities. Picture card media in generating attention and interest in autistic children is under the media's function, namely as a communication bridge that makes it easier for autistic children to obtain appropriate perceptions.

This study showed that the experimental group the development of interest post-test being given therapy to play stories. Pop-up toys in most of the categories were sufficient as many as 25 respondents (54.3%). Whereas in the control group, the post-test development was given parenting, most of the fewer categories were 43 respondents (93.5%). The use of picture cards as a learning medium is under children's cognitive development conditions with autism because children gain understanding through symbolic activities.

The ability of picture card media to generate attention and interest in autistic children is in accordance with the media's function, namely as a communication bridge that makes it easier for autistic children to obtain appropriate perceptions. Educational Game Tool is a game tool that can optimize children's development according to their age and level of development, and is useful for the development of physical aspects (activities that support or stimulate children's physical growth), language aspects (by practicing speaking, using sentences that true), the aspect intellectual (with recognition of speech, size, shape, color etc.), and social aspect (especially with the interaction between mother and child, family and society). Play, invite children to talk, and love are

important for children's development and the need for food for body growth.

Sometimes this obstacle may not be from children but from therapy teachers who are less skilled in handling certain cases, so it is necessary to share among therapy teachers who may have experienced similar cases. If there is an obstacle, the teacher will call the child's parents to discuss child therapy what the parents have done at home regarding the obstacles and progress that the parents feel about their child at home. It will discuss finding a way out and make new steps parents will take at home in the next month.

The bivariate data analysis results showed the effect of parenting on the development of interest in autistic children in autistic schools in the experimental group ( $p < 0.001$ ). Whereas in the control group, there was no influence of parenting on the development of autistic child's interest in autism school.

Parenting carried out in children is structured, directed, and measured with basic techniques dividing certain skills into small parts, teaching one part of the skills one by one until mastered, ensuring the learning process is focused, assisting where necessary, and gradually reducing assistance and using reinforcement procedures behavior. Parenting is given to autistic children who experience special obstacles and require certain therapy under the obstacles they encounter. Parenting is a therapy that aims to increase interest in children with autism because almost all children with autism experience delays in the development of interest.

In occupational therapy, the therapy teacher will teach children how to hold objects properly. The therapeutic tools used are reflex balls, button attachments, stacking balls, wearing shoes, which are useful for increasing interest in playing, stimulating



tactile, stimulating blood circulation. Parenting that is given applies the principle of learning, which is a form of education that emphasizes responses or behaviors controlled by consequences or consequences.

This theory stated that organisms tend to repeat behaviors and interests followed by pleasant implications or consequences. Therefore, the child will repeat what has been taught to him if during the learning process the child is given reinforcement if he succeeds in carrying out activities correctly according to the interest's ability (Badi; ah, 2015). Parenting that is given repeatedly and continuously may facilitate neuroplasticity in the nerves that experience and generate interest in autistic children to do activities.

During the research, some parents could not attend, so that parents who could not attend the parenting were carried out on another day when the parents picked up the school. This study concluded that the development of interest in autistic children before parenting in autistic schools in the experimental and control group showed the less category. The development of interest in autistic children after parenting in the experimental group showed moderate category, and in the control group with less categories. There is an effect of parenting on the development interest in autistic children. The suggestion in this study for families and teachers in schools with autism is that parenting can be applied as a guide for families to stimulate children with autism in autistic schools to increase children's interest.

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PAGE 1

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PAGE 2

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PAGE 3

---

PAGE 4

---

PAGE 5

---

PAGE 6

---

PAGE 7

---

PAGE 8

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PAGE 9

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