

The Role of Teachers in Improving the Concentration of Children with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) Aged 5-6 Years

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ABSTRACT

Objective: This study aims to explore the role of early childhood education teachers in supporting children with ADHD, particularly in the B1 kindergarten class at RA Depag 1 Mojokerto, and to assess how teachers can enhance the learning environment for children with attention difficulties. **Methods:** A descriptive qualitative approach was employed, using data collected through direct observations, interviews with teachers and the principal, and documentation. The research was conducted over four months, from February to May 2024, at RA Depag 1 Mojokerto. Data analysis followed the interactive model by Miles and Huberman, including data reduction, display, and verification. **Results:** The study found that children with ADHD in the classroom face challenges in maintaining focus, which affects both academic performance and classroom behavior. Teachers provide individualized support by using personal approach strategies and creating a conducive classroom environment. These strategies include placing ADHD children near the teacher's desk, reducing distractions, and offering direct support. The involvement of parents and school counselors also plays a crucial role in improving concentration. **Novelty:** This research emphasizes the importance of a comprehensive approach that involves teachers, parents, and professionals in managing ADHD in early childhood education. The study highlights the significance of tailored interventions, classroom environment adjustments, and collaborative efforts to support children with ADHD, contributing to more effective educational practices for children with special needs.

INTRODUCTION

Early childhood refers to those aged from birth to six years old. Children experience a phase of rapid growth and development during this period, including physical, cognitive, socio-emotional, and language development. Because it is an important period in shaping the foundations of personality, social skills, and learning abilities, this period is often referred to as the golden age. Early childhood children learn through interaction with their environment, such as playing, exploring, and interacting with adults and peers. Compared to academic aspects, early childhood education places more emphasis on the development of basic skills such as motor, sensory, language, and social abilities. Permendikbud No. 137 of 2014 establishes the National Standards for Early Childhood Education for children aged 0–6 years. This regulation also emphasizes the importance of the stimulation provided to children during this period to support optimal growth and development.

Children generally need a larger area to engage in their activities because they usually have an extraordinary amount of energy to explore their surroundings. This is especially true for children aged four to five years, when they are in the phase of autonomy, when they feel they can do various things or activities [1]. At this age, various developments occur, including motor, cognitive, language, and socio-emotional development. This development will serve as the foundation for the child's future growth because it is very important to meet developmental milestones according to their age. Havighurst explains this by saying that success in carrying out developmental tasks at one stage of development affects success at the next stage of development [2]. Natasya [3] says that a good learning process is when students can focus their attention on one area of learning so that they can change their behavior in the most effective way. However, due to a lack of concentration, some children often cannot keep up with the lessons well.

Learning concentration is the focus of attention in the process of behavioral change, expressed in the form of mastery, use, and assessment of attitudes and values, knowledge, and basic skills. It is very important to study, focus is the key [3]. Students will be able to understand and accept every aspect of learning if they stay focused while studying.

Liniawati [4] said that early childhood children have a short attention span, which explains why many of them cannot follow lessons smoothly. A child who cannot concentrate can disrupt the learning process when in the same room with other children.

Early childhood also determines the achievement of development in the next developmental phase. There are problems for young children in the early stages of life. Especially since most children cannot describe what they have experienced. An early childhood teacher might have a misconception about how to care for their children. It is very concerning if parents are also unwilling to help these troubled children. To ensure that a child's potential can develop optimally, guidance is needed in addressing problematic behaviors. This must be done consistently so that the child can ultimately become a strong member of society.

The main problem is the presence of special needs in physical and psychological development that can slow down a child's growth. In early childhood education, children with special needs are closely related to both physical and non-physical issues. Children with special needs are very easy to recognize. Children with special needs are those who require special handling because they have developmental disorders and special needs in mental, emotional, cognitive, or physical aspects.

According to [5], children with special needs are those who significantly experience special needs or deviations (physical, mental, intellectual, social, or emotional) in the process of growth or development compared to their peers and require special education. Therefore, even if a child has special needs or certain deviations, if those special needs or deviations are not significant enough to require special education, the child is not considered a child with special needs [6]. Children with special needs are divided into

two categories: children with special needs who have permanent specialization (for example, a blind child). Meanwhile, children with temporary specialization are those who experience learning and developmental difficulties due to their environmental situations and conditions, such as bilingual children or differences in the languages used inside and outside of school.

In special education or special needs education, the term "special needs" is explicitly directed towards children who are considered to have special needs compared to the average condition of normal children in terms of physical, mental, and social behavioral characteristics, or children who differ from the average due to issues with thinking, hearing, vision, socialization, and movement [7]. Based on that definition, children categorized as having special needs include Dyslexia (learning difficulties), ADHD (difficulty focusing), Autism (neurological disorder), Speech Delay, Down Syndrome (physical and mental retardation), Intellectual Disability (special needs below average - IQ), Hearing Impairment (special needs hearing).

One of the hallmarks of children with dyslexia is difficulty in processing phonology (sound manipulation), spelling, and the speed of visual-auditory response. As a result, educators face challenges in teaching children with dyslexia, which ultimately leads to low learning outcomes. Some people with autism spectrum disorder start showing signs from infancy. The most prominent characteristic is not making eye contact and not showing significant reactions towards her mother or caregiver. Children with Down syndrome can exhibit a range of characteristics, from those that are not visible at all to the appearance of very noticeable distinctive signs. These signs can be very easily recognized, such as a relatively small head shape compared to normal (microcephaly) with a flattened (anteroposterior) head, characteristics on the head, face, and neck, as well as signs on the mouth and skin. Children with ADHD may have problems with attention focus, self-control, and excessive activity [8].

ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder) is a term for children with special needs who have difficulty in maintaining their attention, accompanied by their condition as someone who is hyperactive. Some experts claim that the main causes are genetic problems, the presence of chemicals, issues during pregnancy or childbirth, and viruses. With the presence of that cause, it will damage brain disturbances. These ADHD symptoms definitely appear during childhood. At first, it was difficult to concentrate, very active, and hard to control oneself. The core of the deficiency in children with ADHD is difficulty focusing. Children with ADHD are very active, causing chaos around them. So, if you talk to other people, they usually just walk away and don't want to listen. As a result, you always fail to complete the task [9].

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is a behavioral disorder characterized by attention deficit, uncontrolled speech, and hyperactive behavior. According to the American Association of Psychiatrists, ADHD is defined as a consistent pattern of inattention or impulsive and hyperactive behavior that is more frequent and severe than what is typically observed in others [10]. ADHD (Attention Deficit

Hyperactivity Disorder) is a condition where a child consistently shows one or more characteristics over a period of time, including (1) lack of focus; (2) hyperactivity; (3) impulsive behavior. ADHD is a chronic (long-term) disorder that can start in infancy and can continue into adulthood. Chronic ADHD can have a negative impact on a child's life at school, at home, and in their community. ADHD is a condition when someone experiences symptoms of inattention, hyperactivity, and impulsivity that can cause an imbalance in most aspects of their life [11].

Children with ADHD who experience attention deficit, also known as inattention, have difficulty controlling their behavior because they prefer to act according to their own desires. Students may lose focus during lessons due to stimuli from outside activities or their environment. The inattentive behavior mentioned above negatively impacts students' academic performance. Children who have attention problems may experience difficulties in learning, especially in language, writing, and reading [5]. When a child with ADHD loses attention and focus on their studies and instead focuses on general things in their learning environment, such as pictures on the wall and the sound of vehicles outside the classroom, the relationship between ADHD and learning difficulties becomes very clear. There are three habits that can be formed by a child's behavior that will determine their attitude in the future. Children with attention disorders have difficulty focusing when doing tasks and often feel reluctant when they get bored with the assigned tasks, which causes them not to complete them well. In general, the symptoms of learning disorders in children with ADHD include loss of concentration and lack of focus, as well as difficulty reading mathematical operation signs and difficulty understanding and solving word problems [12].

The role of teachers in managing hyperactive children is very important and can impact their learning outcomes. Teachers must have a good understanding of the types of hyperactive children and be able to identify them easily to take appropriate actions. This is the right action to help hyperactive children manage their energy and stay focused while studying. To create a supportive and inclusive learning environment for children with hyperactivity, teachers must adopt new and creative approaches. The problem in strategies for addressing hyperactivity in children is fundamentally that there is no one most appropriate method, because before seeking ways to address it, the most essential thing is that everyone, especially teachers, must understand the causes of a child's hyperactivity [13]. However, this problem is not insurmountable; rather, the way to overcome it indeed depends on the strategies of each individual or teacher [13].

To help hyperactive children overcome problems in maintaining focus and concentration during the learning process, teachers and parents must work together. Teachers can use interactive teaching methods that involve physical or visual activities to meet the needs of children with hyperactivity. In addition, teachers must communicate openly and honestly with parents to understand the child's situation and comprehend good family parenting patterns. Parental involvement is very important in providing support when dealing with hyperactive children, creating a supportive home

environment, and collaborating with teachers to provide consistent and coordinated support. With effective cooperation between parents and teachers, hyperactive children can receive comprehensive and optimal support when facing learning challenges [13].

As a result of the observations conducted at RA Depag 1 Mojokerto, the researcher focused on one child from the B1 group aged 5-6 years who exhibited hyperactivity. He shows his attitude during learning activities, for example, when the teacher explains the material and tasks, he finds it difficult to stay focused and hard to remain quiet. Some examples of his behavior include eating during lessons, running, crawling under the table, sleeping, and holding something that can attract attention. By examining the results of in-depth observations of the child's hyperactive behavior, the researchers can identify various problems faced by teachers when creating a learning environment that supports the development of hyperactive children. The researcher's goal is to assess the extent of the role of early childhood education teachers in addressing this issue and to provide useful approaches to support child development [14].

The role of the teacher in the B1 kindergarten class in handling children with ADHD is not only in academic matters but also in improving their behavior. For example, by having the child directly guided at the teacher's desk while working on the worksheet after the teacher explains the theme and learning activities. This is done so that children with ADHD can remain concentrated and focused on the tasks assigned by the teacher. This strategy has proven successful in improving concentration among children with special needs ADHD in the classroom. The teacher also uses the method of giving special attention and personal intervention. For example, when the child makes a mistake in class, the teacher advises that what they did was not good and should not be repeated. If the child repeats the mistake, the teacher will impose a light penalty on the child to instill a deterrent effect.

Providing appropriate attention, guidance, and support can help a child experiencing hyperactivity well. It is very important for teachers to address various issues that sometimes disrupt learning in the classroom. To ensure that the learning process runs smoothly, teachers play a very important role. Therefore, early childhood education teachers help children complete their developmental tasks. To assist early childhood education institutions, teachers must use various approaches, methods, procedures, language, and attitudes to address each child's hyperactivity. Giving guidance to children from an early age is also important.

Based on the background of the problem, the issue in this research is how the role of teachers as companions for ADHD children aged 5-6 years at RA Depag 1 Mojokerto, as an educational institution that has one student with ADHD. The objective is to understand how early childhood education teachers perceive the characteristics and needs of hyperactive children and how they can encourage, assist, and support these children during the learning process.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach, which means that the data collected consists of words and direct descriptions of events occurring in the field. Therefore, the researcher aims to explain the research results in more detail about what happens in the field. Moleong states that descriptive qualitative research is research that analyzes data consisting of words, descriptions, and not numbers obtained from field notes, interview transcripts, and other documents [15]. This research was conducted at RA Depag 1 Mojokerto School. This research was conducted for approximately four months, from February to May 2024. The determination of data sources in qualitative research is carried out through direct observation and interviews. Observers in qualitative research must be fully involved in the research, starting from conducting interviews, which are open discussions according to the interview list. The subjects of this research are teachers and students with special needs related to ADHD. The data sources used in the research consist of primary data, which is data obtained directly in the field, and data from informants who provide relevant and factual information related to teacher interactions with ADHD students [16]. Secondary data includes supporting data such as literature and document data.

Data was collected through direct observation using previously prepared observation instruments. Interview, data was collected from the question-and-answer session with the Class Teacher and the principal using appropriate and structured questions, in accordance with the interview instrument sheet created by the researcher to discuss the role of teachers for ADHD children in the classroom. Such as how teachers can recognize signs that a child has ADHD, how teachers can help ADHD students stay focused during lessons, how teachers can balance attention between ADHD students and others, and how teachers can create a classroom environment that is conducive for ADHD children to concentrate better. Documentation, data was collected with photos of ADHD students during the learning activities. Data analysis, the interactive data analysis model created by Miles and Huberman, namely data reduction, data display, and data verification, is used in this research [17]. Field observation notes, interview notes, and guidebooks, as well as activity documentation during the research, are used to verify or determine conclusions.

In the analysis of this research data, it consists of written or spoken words and behavior, and considers the assumptions from the informants' opinions. The number of informants in this research activity consists of two informants, namely the Class Teacher and the School Principal.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

In the environment of RA Depag 1 Mojokerto school, there is one student with special needs, specifically ADHD, in the TK B1 class. The researcher conducted an

interview with the homeroom teacher regarding a kindergarten student with special needs, ADHD. Based on the interview with the homeroom teacher, it was found that "when the child first entered school, the parents had already explained that their child tended to exhibit hyperactive behavior." During the observation at the school, the researcher received information about the parents from the homeroom teacher. Next, the researcher conducted another interview with the homeroom teacher of class B1. According to the homeroom teacher of class B1, "That child really cannot stay still and tends to want to break away from the lesson immediately."

The researcher also asked about the teacher's role in handling children with ADHD. Here are the results of the interview with the homeroom teacher of class B1, who explained that "the teacher in the kindergarten B class pays great attention to all her students, but the homeroom teacher gives special attention to that child because he has a particular need that, if not given extra attention, he can disturb his classmates and hinder the learning activities in the class." As shown by this study, supporting children with ADHD should be done through a comprehensive approach involving various parties. The first one is the use of appropriate learning strategies. For example, the teacher uses a personal approach learning strategy with the child, by guiding the child directly at the teacher's desk while working on the worksheet after the teacher explains the theme and learning activities. This is done so that children with ADHD can remain concentrated and focused on the tasks assigned by the teacher.

Next is creating a conducive classroom environment. For example, arranging the classroom to avoid overcrowding, strategically selecting seating (for instance, placing ADHD children at the front or near the teacher), and reducing visual and auditory distractions are important factors that support children's concentration. The seating arrangement for ADHD children significantly impacts their concentration during classroom learning. That is because the teacher can provide direct and intensive support. If the child with special needs ADHD is grouped with other classmates and far from teacher supervision, the child will disturb their desk mate and make the classroom environment unconducive.

So the teacher places his seat near the teacher's desk so that the teacher can constantly supervise and assist the child with special needs ADHD, and the classroom environment will be more conducive. And lastly, there is intervention with a personal approach. For example, teachers provide special attention and personal intervention, including involving parents and school counselors to support the child's learning process. Besides the role of teachers in the classroom, the role of parents also influences the improvement of concentration in children with ADHD. Which is when at home, the parents educate the child to be more disciplined. For example, when the child makes a mistake, the parents advise that what the child did was not good and should not be repeated. If the child repeats the mistake, the parents will impose a light punishment so that the child learns a lesson. In addition, parents also regularly take their child for psychological therapy with an expert.

The results of this study show that the role of teachers is very important in helping to improve the concentration of children with ADHD. Children with ADHD generally have difficulty focusing, which affects their ability to complete academic tasks and daily activities at school. The teacher acts as a facilitator who provides individualized learning strategies tailored to the needs of these children.

Discussion

The role of the teacher in the TK B1 class in handling children with ADHD is not only in academic matters but also in improving their behavior. This research shows that applying behavioral modification methods such as scheduling, rewarding positive behavior, and giving clear instructions can improve concentration and reduce impulsive behavior in children diagnosed with ADHD. Some roles of classroom teachers in handling ADHD children during classroom learning activities include using appropriate teaching strategies, creating a conducive classroom environment, and giving special attention with a personal approach to the ADHD child.

This research shows that teachers, parents, and professionals (psychologists, therapists) must work together to create programs that meet the needs of each child. Previous studies have also shown that a structured and consistent environment can help children with ADHD improve their cognitive and social skills. In addition, teachers are expected to be more skilled in identifying ADHD symptoms early and using intervention methods that can help children's development at school [18].

This research shows that the role of the teacher in the kindergarten class B1 is very important in supporting children with ADHD, not only in academic aspects but also in behavioral development. By applying behavioral modification methods such as setting schedules, providing rewards for positive behavior, and giving clear instructions, teachers can help children improve concentration and reduce impulsivity. Moreover, collaboration between teachers, parents, and experts allows for the creation of more holistic and effective intervention programs. Teachers are also expected to have the ability to identify ADHD symptoms early and use research-based intervention methods to support children's development in school.

The role of teachers in managing hyperactive children is very important and can impact their learning outcomes. Teachers must have a good understanding of the types of hyperactive children and be able to identify them easily to take appropriate actions. This is the right action to help hyperactive children manage their energy and stay focused while studying. To create a supportive and inclusive learning environment for children with hyperactivity, teachers must adopt new and creative approaches. The problem in strategies for addressing hyperactivity in children is fundamentally that there is no one most appropriate method, because before seeking ways to address it, the most essential thing is that everyone, especially teachers, must understand the causes of a child's hyperactivity [13]. However, this problem is not insurmountable; rather, the way to overcome it indeed depends on the strategies of each individual or teacher.

CONCLUSION

Fundamental Finding : The study found that early childhood education plays a crucial role in supporting children with ADHD, especially in improving their concentration and behavior. Teachers at RA Depag 1 Mojokerto utilized personalized strategies, such as direct desk guidance and creating a conducive classroom environment, to help children with ADHD focus on their tasks. These efforts, alongside parental involvement and collaboration with school counselors, helped improve the children's ability to manage their energy and maintain focus during lessons. **Implication :** This research highlights the importance of tailored teaching methods for children with ADHD. Teachers must understand ADHD's characteristics and apply strategies that cater to individual needs. Collaboration between educators, parents, and specialists is essential to provide holistic support, ensuring that children receive the attention necessary for optimal development. **Limitation :** This study is limited to a single school with one child diagnosed with ADHD, which may not represent the broader spectrum of ADHD cases. Additionally, the research focused on observational data and interviews, which may not fully capture all the complexities of ADHD management in various educational settings. **Future Research :** Future research should explore ADHD interventions across different schools and regions to understand better how various strategies impact children's development. Studies could also investigate the long-term effects of early intervention on children with ADHD in different educational environments.

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