



Implementation of Parenting Education Program in Kindergarten

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Abstract

This study aimed at getting an overview of the type of parental education program that have been implemented, getting an overview of parental interest in parental education programs, and getting an overview of the strengths and weaknesses of parental education program that has been running in kindergartens in the region of South Tangerang. This study is explorative with descriptive analysis. The research location was in Pamulang and Serpong, sub district of South Tangerang, Banten. The research subjects are 49 kindergarten principals and teachers. The finding of the research showed that of the type of parental education program varied, but not all types of programs have been done. The Interests of parents to be involved in the parental education program which involves parents in kindergarten were quite high. The main strength of the parental education programs is the theme that meets the needs of parents. It can be a solution for them in solving the problem of child development. The main weakness in parental education program is the lack of parents presence on the program implemented. Therefore, the kindergartens need to think about a better strategy so that participation of parents in parental education programs would be optimal. Moreover, the principals and teachers in kindergartens also need to think about a better strategy to optimize the participation of parents in parental education programs.

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INTRODUCTION

Children's education in formally early childhood institutions like in kindergarten and in informal education in the family should be implemented in synergy. Child education in family is usually handled by parents. However, each parent has different needs, interest, and background affecting the way they educate their children. Therefore, the diversities of willingness and educational background of the parents need to be bridged in a variety of ways by the early childhood institutions, including the kindergarten teachers, so that synergies are created. One of the effective ways is by having parental education program.

The Role of Kindergarten in Parenting Education

Kindergarten needs to implement parenting education program. According Bredekamp & Coople (2007) and Gestwicki (2011) in Jackman (2012), there are some guidelines that are recommended for teachers in building partnerships with parents of children in kindergarten through education parenthood: (1) success in the young children education must be built on a foundation of teamwork involving both teacher and parents, (2) families are the primarily educators of their own children, (3) there is learning process that teachers and parents always face in the educational experience, (4) assessing the child's needs and progress must take into account the child's cultural and environment, (5) a teacher is prepared to meet the special needs of individual children, including those with disabilities, and (6) the early childhood teacher is in a unique position to be an advocate by recognizing the special circumstances of a child and his family and to help link up with whatever community resources are available and appropriate for helping them.

Furthermore, some guidelines that can be prepared a kindergarten teacher to implement partnerships with parents in parenting education are also explained by Dodge and Colker (2000): (1) hold an open house for new parents. Conduct a tour of the classroom, explain the program philosophy and goals, and invite question, (2) solicit parents' expectations and concerns. Find out how they feel about having their child enter the program. Listen to what parents have to say and be responsive, (3) get to know all the parents. Learn their last name, find out something about their interests, other family members, and their work so you can relate to parents more personally, (4) convey the importance of parent involvement. Let parents know that there are many ways

in which they can be involved in their children's learning. Invite them to share their interests and talents with the children, (5) solicit and try out suggestions parents offer. When parents feel that their ideas are taken seriously, they are more likely to increase their involvement, (6) promote a sense of pride in their child. Nothing something a child has done well and convey this to the parent goes a long way in building a positive partnership, and (7) always maintain confidentiality. What parents say about their child or their family is best used to help teachers work with that child and not to be discussed with others. In addition, Dodge and Colker also state that communication between early childhood teachers with parents can conduct in two lines, formal communication and informal communication. Formally, the communication can be done by: (1) set up a parent's bulletin board at the entrance of the classroom, (2) send weekly messages home. Make sure that the messages are in the home language, (3) establish a message center. Provide each family with a box or message pocket that can be used for general announcements and information on each child, (4) use journals. Provide each family with a journal that travels between home and school. Parents and teachers can share information about the child, and flyers or notices can be tucked inside, (5) develop a parent handbook that should be kept up-to-date and might include and explanation of the programs' philosophy, goals, and approach as well as policies and procedures. Being informally, communication can be done by: (1) do every day naturally, (2) be respectful of culture and the expectations of parents, (3) identify and call their parents by name so that parents feel welcomed like their child, (4) share an event or something the child has done recently, (5) solicit parents' advice about their child, (6) give support to parents when needed, (7) be a good listener, (8) check out communication, and (9) use "I messages" to communicate clearly without judging or putting parents on the defensive.

Parenting education programs as a means to ensure parental involvement in kindergarten have many benefits. Research of Henderson & Mapp (2002) states that related to the parental involvement with quality schools, there are two items conclusion of research as follows: (1) schools that cooperate well with the parents raise the spirits of teachers and get a good assessment of the parents, (2) the school that the parents are involved have more support and have a better reputation in the community.

Based on the above background, it should be explore on the implementation of a parental

education program that has been implemented in kindergarten. So the aim of this study was to get an overview of: (1) the type of educational program parenting that have been implemented, (2) parental interest in parental education programs, and (3) the strengths and weaknesses of parental education program that has been running in kindergartens in the region of South Tangerang. This paper is expected to be useful for: (1) principals and kindergarten teachers, in order to design a parenting education program that is helpful and appropriate to the needs and expectations of parents, and (2) the parents in kindergarten, as input on the various ways to get involved in the education of children at the kindergarten.

METHOD

Type of Research

This is the result of quantitative research using exploratory research methods. This method is used to get an overview (description) of the condition of the research subjects.

Research Subject

The population of this study was kindergarten principals and teachers who are in the Southern part of South Tangerang City, the District Pamulang and Serpong. The area was chosen with consideration that in this area there are many new kindergartens as resulted to the growth of new housing projects on the peripheral of Jakarta, which is generally inhabited by young families. Purposive random sampling is used as the representative of the research population as many as 49 principals/ teachers from 10 different kindergartens. The study was conducted in 2015/2016.

Instrument

This study used questionnaire about parenting education programs that have been implemented in the kindergarten to get three things: the types of educational parenting program that have been implemented, parental interest in parental education programs, and the strengths and weaknesses of parenting education programs that have been implemented in kindergarten. Validity test is being conducted by Pearson (Product Moment) with r table 0,361. Reliability test is being conducted with Cronbach alpha, with the reliability coefficient of 0.926. That is, the reliability of the instrument is already very high for use.

Data analysis method.

Data found in the field were presented

descriptively in the form of graphs and qualitative analysis

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research Result

This study produced data on the types of parental education programs that have been implemented, parental education programs that meet the interests of parents, and the weaknesses and strengths of parental education programs that have been implemented.

Parenting Education that have been Implemented in Kindergarten

Different types of parenting education programs have been attempted implemented in kindergarten, but have different intensity, which can be seen on the following chart.

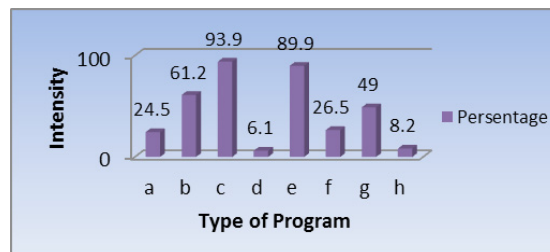


Chart 1. Parenting Education that Have Been Implemented

Note:

- a. Parenting simulation
- b. Educational seminars
- c. Forum parents meeting
- d. Teachers volunteer
- e. Events of children and parents in kindergarten (assembly)
- f. parents consultation day
- g. Teachers home visits
- h. Making bulletin

Based on the chart, it appears that parent meeting forum, the assembly activities and educational seminars are the three most common activities implemented in kindergarten. Parent meeting forum sometimes is called parenting class. Meanwhile, two activities that are most rarely asked are parents as volunteer teachers and production of bulletins.

Parents' Interest in Parenting Education Programs

Parental education program that consists

of various activities turned out to get a different response from parents. Such differences in detail can be seen in the following chart.

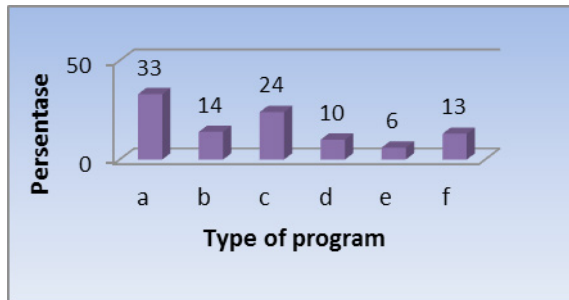


Chart 2. Parents' Interest in Parenting Education Program

Note:

- a. events with the children and parents
- b. parents meeting forum
- c. educational seminars
- d. parenting simulation
- e. parent consultation day
- f. peaks theme (assembly)

Based on the chart above it shows that four of the most desirable programs in parental education are respectively: (1) event with parents and child, (2) educational seminars, (3) forum parents meeting, and (4) the summit theme. The joint activities between parents and children in kindergarten are done in various ways, for example: Mother's Day activities, the rituals of Hajj, a sport day, swimming together, field trip, and so on. Parents usually will have more interests to participate in activities with the children if it is implemented outside the kindergarten. Moreover, parents also have willingness to attend the educational seminars if the speaker is a well-known figure. Therefore, they are curious to attend the seminar to directly meet the famous presenter. Meeting forum activities are desirable enough because parents (especially mothers) can meet each other. This activity will be effective if it is combined with the monthly gathering activities. Assembly activities (peak themes) also get high enough interests from parents, because at that moment, all children will perform with a variety of activities. Parents usually allocate time to come to kindergarten in order to see the performance of her child and to keep it as a personal document.

The Strengths and Weaknesses of the Implementation Parental education Programs.

Parental education programs implemented

in several TKs need to be evaluated. They can be categorized as their strengths and weaknesses. The strength of parental education program implemented in kindergarten can be seen in the following chart.

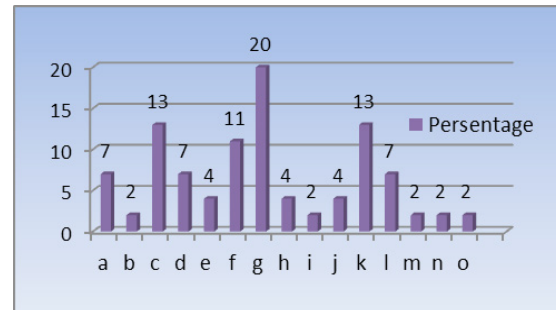


Chart 3. The Strength of Parental Education Program

Note:

- a. cooperation between teachers and parents
- b. the well-organized school activities
- c. interesting, helpful and applicable materials
- d. well-planned program and schedule
- e. better parents understanding of the children's education
- f. strong relationship between parents and teachers
- g. the needed theme as the solutions to the child problem
- h. the improvement of parent knowledge
- i. the appropriateness of day selection
- j. selecting appropriateness of theme selection
- k. the support of parents and the environment
- l. adequate facilities and infrastructure
- m. improvement the quality of service of teachers
- n. improvement of children and parents creativities
- o. parental confidence improvement

Based on the chart above, it shows that four major strengths in parental education programs that have been implemented are: (1) theme meet the needs and become the solutions to the problem of child, (2) the materials are interesting, helpful and applicable (3) the support of parents and the environment, (4) strengthen the parent-teacher relationship. The theme that fits the needs and solution in handling with the

problem of children can be selected based on a poll of parents at a previous meeting. Selection of the theme of this parent's poll would increase parent's sense of belonging to the program so that there is a strong will to attend. The material also is interesting and can be applied. In addition, the theme fits the needs of parents. The selection of speakers who are the expert in their fields can deliver the material better to the parents who have different educational backgrounds. Speakers are usually psychologists, nurses, or local education leaders appropriate to the theme.

Besides, there are also weaknesses of the programs that have been implemented, as shown in the following chart.

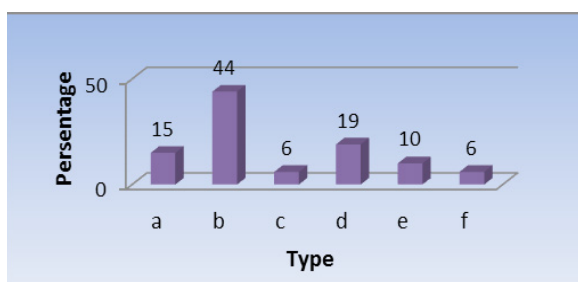


Chart 4. The Weaknesses of Parental Education Program

Note:

- a. uninterested parents
- b. lack of parents' presence
- c. limited funds
- d. the inappropriate schedule for working mom
- e. lack of adequate human resources
- f. disproportionate demands of parents

Based on the chart above, the main weaknesses of parental education programs that have been implemented are: (1) the lack presence of parents (2) the schedule is not appropriate for working mom, and (3) parents do not care. One way to overcome the minimal presence of parents is in choosing meeting schedules, and interesting themes. If majority of both parents are working, the parents' meetings should be held on weekend which is Saturday or Sunday. Selection of an appropriate theme to the problems experienced by parents will also make parents concern for spending their time to attend kindergarten meeting.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The parenting educational program in kindergarten can be done in various ways, namely

(1) parents meeting (parents' class), (2) Parental involvement in the children class, (3) parental involvement in the gathering events, (4) the parents' consultation day, (5) home visits, and (6) other forms of activities that can be developed according to the needs (Department of Education, 2012). However, apparently not all of these activities have been implemented in kindergarten. The activities that have been already carried out especially in kindergarten are meeting forum of parents (parents' class), the gathering activities between children and parents such as assembly, and educational seminars. Maxim (1993) referred to the group meetings for forum meeting parents. The meeting according to Maxim should consider the following guidelines: (1) designing a first meeting with the parents to introduce daily activities at school, (2) asking parents to fill out a questionnaire about their expectations or needs at the next meeting, (3) designing alternative atmosphere for the meeting, and (4) encouraging parents to take part in designing or into the committee at the meeting. Findings in this study showed that all kindergartens have conducted the first guideline, namely inviting parents to have a meeting at the beginning of the new school year. But for the second guideline was implemented only by some of kindergartens, it was not in the form of questionnaire, but it was only verbally polled. In fact, the teachers and principals believe that a questionnaire would be good input materials for the kindergarten to make a variety of activities according to the needs of parents. For the third guideline - designing alternative atmosphere of the meeting, has been done by most of kindergartens. The alternative is either: it is combined with the activities of gathering, outbound for parents, or combined with monthly religious activities. The fourth guideline also has been done some kindergartens. The meetings held outside the kindergarten building, are usually managed by parents and committees.

While the activities which are almost never implemented in kindergarten class is parent-children involvement by encouraging parents to be a volunteer teacher, and a bulletin board production. According to Coughlin et.al. (1998), producing newsletter or brochure is a reliable means to support parental education informally. Coughlin states that the informal communication strategy can be done by: (1) verbal communication when delivering and picking up the kids, and (2) making notes and journal, bulletin boards, and flyers. Making bulletin will be very useful especially for parents who rarely have the opportunity to attend kindergarten every day for deli-

vering or picking up their child because of work. The existence of addition bulletin will improve the knowledge of parents and also make them not miss the important information about the different agendas in their children kindergarten.

In terms of interest, parents tend to attend to the activities which directly involve children and parents, but not the specific activities for parents. These activities are the assembly, visiting museums, outdoor sports day, and others. Henniger (2013) also suggests that to create a school atmosphere that is familiar with the family; the kindergarten needs to make it easy for parents to be involved. Some of the examples are by holding various activities with the children and the parents, or by providing daycare during the event a parent conference or seminar forum of education so that parents can focus on the exposure of the presenter.

One of the main strengths of parental education program that has been implemented is the real support of parents. In connection with the support of parents and the environment, parental education program is considered successful if a lot of parents are present and active in the activities. This is in line with the opinion of Henniger (2013) which states that school needs to accommodate the different types of families. It can be done by scheduling an appointment that the most parents can attend, communicating to parents both traditional and modern type, being aware and supporting a wide range of situations of family life, adjusting parental involvement strategies with varieties of different family needs associated with different backgrounds both ethnicity, race, religion, and customs. In addition, parental education will improve the relationship between parents and teachers, so that misunderstandings between education at home and school can be minimized. Henniger opinion is supported by the research of Horvat, Curci & Partlow (2010). Their study concluded that the relationship between parents and principals needs to be negotiated across the shifting race and class terrains of different eras, and that future research should focus on the tensions and challenges inherited in the relationship, as well as the effort expended and the skill required by principals to effectively manage relationships with parents in the school community. This research was conducted in the area of Tangerang, near Jakarta. The conditions both places are not much different that is multi-ethnic and multi-religious, with the idea of a more open and critical, so that the principals is necessary to make approach that is able to maintain a kindergarten and home comfortably. It has

been tried by the principals where research was taken place, The principals tried to get closer to all parents so that parents felt comfortable to express their aspirations or the problem.

Meanwhile, the result of a 1990 survey of Cooke & Engstrom (1992) of 183 parents in Minnesota ECFE programs revealed five themes of change: (1) an increased feeling of support from others, knowing they are not alone in their emotions and experiences and that other parents have the same problems and concerns, (2) an increased sense of confidence and self-esteem as a parent, (3) Increased knowledge, awareness, and understanding about children and child development and the parental role in relation to child development, (4) changes in perceptions and expectations for themselves as parents and for reviewing their children based on increasing knowledge, awareness, and understanding about children and child development and the parental role in relation to child development, and (5) changes in behavior based on increasing feelings of support from others, increasing self-confidence, increasing knowledge, and changes in perceptions and expectations of reviews their children and themselves. The findings of Cooke & Engstrom were very consistent with the findings of the strength this program, which is the theme at the meeting according to the needs and could be a solution for parents facing problems of children, because parents get additional insight and knowledge during the meeting. Parents' conference theme is usually determined by a committee of parents, or by polling among parents at the previous meeting.

In connection with the weakness of the parenting educational program is seen by the lack of presence of the parents at the meeting. According to Beaty (2013), parents often feel uncomfortable with the teacher because the teacher usually focuses on helping parents learn how to respond more effectively to their children. It implies that the teacher's role is more superior. Parents sometimes do have a different perception on teachers who teach their children, both in terms of negative and positive. Parent-teacher meetings that took place in a relaxed situation could be one way to relieve the discomfort. Research from Bracke & Corts (2012) concluded that almost all parents believe that involvement in their child's education is important. Parents who shared a variety of good intension have 'good intentions' in wanting to participate in the range of school activity schedules. However there are significant differences in the norm among parents who are often involved in with that are not involved. Parents perceived as 'not 'involved' were more likely to note that friends and neighbors were not actively involved, and that majority of parents were unable or

unlikely to be actively involved. The perception and discussion between parents on the informal condition will also affect the level of their involvement in the event at their child's kindergarten. Therefore, the kindergarten's principal through committees needs to continue providing reinforcement of the importance of parental involvement in parental education programs that have been planned. One way that has been done by the kindergarten involved in this research is to create a WhatsApp group for sharing information and motivation whose members are all parents, teachers and the principal. In addition, according to Gianzero (1999), parents often want to be more involved in the education of their children, but they are not sure how to do it, and the teacher also wants parents to participate in school but they need guidance and support in promoting it. Therefore the briefing should be given in advance to the principals and kindergarten teachers to be able to carry out a wide range of parenting education programs that is appropriate with the needs and expectations of the parents so that the meeting will receive full support from parents.

CONCLUSION

Conclusion

Some things that can be inferred from this study are as follows: (1) The type of parental education programs implemented are quite varied, but not all types of programs have been implemented. Programs which generally have been implemented is parent meeting forum, the assembly activity and educational seminars. Meanwhile that is hardly ever done is to encourage parents to be volunteer teachers and produce school bulletins. (2) Parents are especially interested in parental education programs involving children with their parents. It is followed by education seminars and parent meeting forums. (3) Strength in parental education programs are the themes that meet the needs and solutions to the problems of children; materials were interesting, helpful and applicable; support from parents and the environment, and strengthen parent-teacher relationships. The weaknesses in parental education programs that have been implemented are the lack of parental presence on the programs implemented, the meeting schedule is not suitable for working mothers, and less concerned for the parents of the programs offered.

Suggestion

Suggestion that can be given on the results of this study are: (1) The kindergarten needs to

devise strategies in accordance with the conditions of the parents to parental involvement in kindergarten. It is able to have a better parent participation in educational parenting programs, (2) Professional organizations such as IGTK and IGRA are also able to help teachers and principals of kindergartens in formulating educational programs parenthood which is better and more useful for parents.

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