

THE ROLE OF PARENTS IN INTRODUCING SEXUAL EDUCATION TO EARLY CHILDHOOD

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Abstract

This study aims to determine the role of parents in introducing sexual education to early childhood. The research method used is the descriptive qualitative method. The instrument used in this research is a questionnaire distributed online to 30 parents of early childhood in one of the PAUD Kertamukti Cianjur Village. The results of this study indicate that parents' understanding of sexual education is still in the lower category, this is because there are still many parents who think that sexual education is taboo and inappropriate to introduce in early childhood. The role of parents in introducing sexual education to early childhood is as educators and companions. In general, the role of parents in introducing sexual education to children is very good. Parents already have an awareness of how important their role is in introducing sexual education to children from an early age, parents have begun to provide understanding, guidance, and direction to children regarding sexual education.

Keywords: *role of parents, sexual education, early childhood.*

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui peran orang tua dalam mengenalkan pendidikan seksual kepada anak usia dini. Metode penelitian yang digunakan yaitu metode deskriptif kualitatif. Instrumen yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini yaitu kuisioner yang dibagikan secara online kepada 30 orang tua anak usia dini di salah satu PAUD Desa Kertamukti Cianjur. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa pemahaman orang tua terhadap pendidikan seksual masih dalam kategori kurang, hal ini dikarenakan masih banyak orang tua yang beranggapan bahwa pendidikan seksual merupakan hal yang tabu dan tidak pantas untuk dikenalkan kepada anak usia dini. Peran orang tua dalam mengenalkan pendidikan seksual kepada anak usia dini yaitu sebagai pendidik dan pendamping. Secara umum peran orang tua dalam mengenalkan pendidikan seksual kepada anak sudah sangat baik. Orang tua sudah memiliki kesadaran tentang seberapa penting peranannya dalam mengenalkan pendidikan seksual kepada anak sejak dini, orang tua sudah mulai memberikan pemahaman, bimbingan, dan pengarahan kepada anak mengenai pendidikan seksual.

Kata Kunci: peran orang tua, pendidikan seksual, anak usia dini.

INTRODUCTION

Early childhood is a child who is in the age range of 0-6 years. According to Wijana D Widarmi (2013), early childhood is a group that is in the process of growth and development. This age is a golden age in child development, where many

experiences and important times are passed by children. According to Rahman (2005), experiences experienced by children at an early age can have a strong influence on the child's next life, the experience will last a long time and cannot even be erased. Pleasant experiences during childhood make a positive contribution to children and can help children optimize their growth and development, on the other hand, bad experiences experienced by children can hurt their growth and development. Some things that can damage children are sexual abuse such as sexual harassment and violence against children (Ambarwati, 2013).

Cases of sexual abuse in early childhood in recent years have skyrocketed. Based on data from the United Nations Organization for Children UNICEF (2017) there are 176 million children under the age of 5 years in the world experiencing sexual abuse. According to the results of research (KPAI) in the year there were 2,898 cases in Indonesia, 59.3% of which were sexual violence against children. In 2016 there were 1000 cases of sexual violence and in 2017 there was an increase, totaling 2,737 cases of violence against children where 52% were cases of sexual abuse (KPAI, 2017). The high rate of sexual abuse at this time makes many parties sad. Children are one of the most vulnerable victims to be tricked by perpetrators of sexual violence because of the innocence of children and basically, early childhood is not yet able to detect the motives of adults, making it easier for perpetrators of sexual crimes to trap them. It should be realized that the lack of knowledge and understanding of sexual education is one of the factors that cause sexual violence against children. For this reason, one way to prevent it is through the introduction of sexual education in early childhood (Dewi et al., 2018).

According to Kurnia & Tjandra (2012), sexual education is education that involves the distribution of information and the formation of attitudes related to sex, gender identity, relationships between the sexes, and aspects of intimacy that focus more on closeness. The introduction of sexual education to children aims so that children can protect themselves from perpetrators of sexual violence. This is in line with the opinion of Hasni & Suparno (2021) that sexual education is very important to be given in early childhood with the aim that children have protection for themselves, have knowledge about the good and bad things that happen to their bodies and know how good attitudes should be shown in their social environment. The introduction of early childhood sexual education is certainly different from sexual education given to adolescents. Child sexual education does not focus on adult sexual behavior but

essentially discusses the introduction to children's sex and how to protect it in terms of health, hygiene, security, and safety tailored to the level of child development (Counterman & Kirkwood, 2013).

Introducing sexual education from an early age is the first step so that children can gradually understand it. The introduction of sexual education must be taught to children from an early age, especially by parents. In line with what Ratnasari & Alias (2016) revealed sexual education must be given by parents to children as early as possible because parents are the first and main environment during the child's life phase. According to Sugiasih (2010), the introduction of sexual education should be done with parents, because talking about sex to children must be done openly in a comfortable situation so that it can make it easier for children to learn sexual education in everyday life situations. Thus, parents can provide sexual education to children naturally according to the child's development.

However, in reality, there are still many parents who are less concerned and consider taboo on the introduction of sexual education in early childhood. According to Sciaraffa & Randolph (2011), sexual education in children is considered taboo by some people, especially parents. Parents still think that sexual education is inappropriate to be introduced in early childhood because providing sexual education to children seems to invite children or encourage children to engage in sexual activity. This is in line with the opinion of Chrisman & Chounchenour (2002) that parents think that providing sexual education from an early age will make children curious about sexual activities and do not rule out the possibility of making children active perpetrators. This problem does not only occur in Indonesia, but almost in every country sexual education for early childhood is still considered taboo. This is following the results of research conducted by Ching (2005) which shows that parents in America and Hong Kong still have difficulty in providing an introduction to sexual education to children. The research shows that parents in America and Hong Kong have the same problems in introducing sexual education to children. Parents are confused when trying to explain the difference between sexual education and adult sexual behavior to children (Counterman & Kirkwood, 2013; Mil, 2015).

Based on the background that has been conveyed that sexual education for early childhood is still considered taboo by parents, the researcher is interested in researching the role of parents in introducing sexual education to children. This research is expected to help parents be more aware of the importance of the role of

parents in introducing sexual education to children as an effort to prevent sexual harassment and violence against children. From this study, researchers also hope to find out more about the role of parents in introducing sexual education to early childhood.

METHOD

This research uses qualitative methods with descriptive qualitative research. This is because this research describes the role of parents in introducing sexual education to children. According to Nugrahani (2008), qualitative research is research that produces descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words from people and observed behavior. The population in this study were parents of early childhood in one of the PAUDs in Kertamukti Village, Haurwangi District. Due to having a small population, the sampling technique used is saturated. According to Sugiyono (2016), the saturated sampling technique is the determination of the sample if all the population is used as a sample. The instrument used in this study is an online questionnaire via a Google form. The questionnaire uses a Guttman scale with 2 rating scales. The Guttman scale is a scale that only has two intervals, one of which is "yes-no" (Sugiyono, 2018).

The results of filling out the questionnaire that was given to parents were then analyzed. The first step in the analysis is to calculate the percentage of parents' responses using the following formula.

$$\text{Response Percentage} = \frac{\text{Total score (x)}}{\text{Total maximum score}} \times 100$$

Furthermore, the percentage results of respondents' questionnaires on the role of parents in introducing sexual education to children are classified on the following criteria. After the analysis, the next step is to describe the results of the analysis that has been obtained. The final stage is to conclude from the results of the analysis and description of the data that has been done.

Table 1. Parent response criteria

Interval	Representation
$80\% < X < 100\%$	Very good
$60\% < X < 80\%$	Good

40% < X < 60%	Simply
20% < X < 40%	Less
0% < X < 20%	Very less

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Sexual education is the process of learning about human sexuality, including the body, reproductive organs, sexual development, sexual relationships, and sexual health. Sexual education is important to be given to children from an early age because it can help children understand and appreciate their sexuality healthily and safely. Parents are the main sexual educators for children as well as the first to introduce children to the concepts of sexuality. This is in line with the statement of an expert, that parents must have an attitude of playing an active role in sexual education in children because parents are the first actors who provide a sense of security and comfort in communication and information about sexual education (Wahyuni, 2018).

The rise of sexual violence cases that threaten early childhood is clear evidence of the lack of children's knowledge about sexual education that should have been obtained from an early age through parents. This shows that the role of parents is needed in introduce sexual education from an early age to provide information and understanding to children on how to protect their bodies from people who intend to harm them. In this study, the parent response questionnaire was given to 30 respondents via Google Forms. Respondents of this study are parents of children at PAUD Apel V. The results of the questionnaire distribution were analyzed based on three indicators, namely (1) parents' understanding of sexual education, (2) the role of parents as educators, (3) the role of parents as mentors. The three indicators were developed into statements distributed via Google form to parents at PAUD Apel V as follows.

1. Sexual education discusses the issue of sex, so it is not appropriate to talk to children;
2. Provides an understanding of the differences between boys and girls;
3. Introduces children to the intimate organs of boys and girls;
4. Providing children with an understanding of body parts that should not be touched and seen by others;

5. Instilling a culture of shame in children by familiarizing children not to go naked in front of others and pee anywhere;
6. Educate children about the importance of keeping their genitals clean and how to clean them;
7. Cultivate feminine traits in girls and masculine traits in boys;
8. Instilling a culture of "Privacy" in children by training children to respect family members who are bathing and knocking on the door when they want to enter the room;
9. Separating girls' bedrooms from boys';
10. Teaching children about the boundaries of what they can and cannot do with the opposite sex.

The results of the questionnaire on the role of parents in introducing sexual education distributed to respondents can be analyzed and presented in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Results of Questionnaire Analysis of Parents' Role in Introducing Sexual Education to Children

Indicator	presentation (%)	Category
Parents' understanding of sexual education	33,3 %	Less
Parents' role as educators	95,3 %	Very good
The role of parents as mentors	98,3 %	Very good

Based on the table of questionnaire analysis results related to the role of parents in introducing sexual education to children above, it can be seen that the first indicator obtained a percentage of 33.3% in the sufficient category. The second and third indicators obtained a percentage of 95.3% and 98.3%, both of which are in the excellent category. The results of this analysis show that most parents at PAUD Apel V lack an understanding of sexual education. This is because parents still think that sexual education is a discussion of sexual relations issues so it is inappropriate to talk to children. This is in line with the results of research by Wijhati, et al (2018) that parents' understanding of sexual education is still considered taboo and must be improved to prepare children to ward off the increasingly open development of globalization, one of which is sexuality. Parents are still reluctant to talk about

sexuality to children because they feel uncomfortable and do not know how to convey it, even though sexual education to children is a form of parental concern for the future of children in maintaining their honor (Zakiyah, Prabandi, & Triratnawati, 2016). However, parents' awareness of their role as educators and coaches in introducing sexual education to children based on Table 2 shows that in the very good category.

Based on the results of research conducted on parents who have early childhood, it is found that parents have a very good educator role in introducing sexual education to children, this can be evidenced by the results of Table 2 analysis which shows that 95.3% of the role of parents as educators is in the very good category. Parents have a role as educators because a child gets the first knowledge and understanding from his parents. This is in line with the opinion of Sandarwati (2014) that parents are the first people to provide knowledge, shape character, and have a major influence on children's lives. Therefore, parents are the most appropriate in providing sexual education in early childhood. Sexual education for children is important and not taboo. Sexual education for children is not teaching children how to have sexual intercourse, but rather an effort to provide children with an understanding of the aspects, understanding, objectives, and consequences related to the biological, psychological, and psychosocial fields by instilling moral ethics and religious commitment so that they respect themselves (Camelia and Nirmala, 2017).

The role of parents as educators in introducing sexual education to children can begin with introducing children to the intimate organs of boys and girls, giving children an understanding of body parts that should not be touched and seen by others, giving children an understanding of the importance of maintaining genital hygiene and procedures for cleaning them, and teaching children about the limits that can and should not be done with the opposite sex. This is by research conducted by Suhasmi and Ismet (2021) that parents can provide sexual education information in the form of differences in male and female sex, explaining human sexual organs that must be maintained, differences in the bodies of women and men, and the limits of relationships between men and women. The role of parents as educators in introducing sexual education to children aims to provide children with an understanding of gender differences and prevent children from sexual violence and harassment.

In the third indicator, the role of parents as mentors, the results showed that out of 30 parents, 98.3% were in the very good category. This figure shows that parents have an important role in guiding children in understanding sexuality. This is because parents are the closest people to children and have the responsibility to provide a complete, gradual, and comprehensive understanding to children including sexual education. The way parents guide children can be started by separating the bedrooms of girls and boys, fostering feminine traits in girls and masculine traits in boys, instilling a culture of "privacy" in children by training children to respect family members, and instilling a culture of shame in children. This is in line with the opinion of Chomaria (2012), which states that parents can guide children in understanding sexuality by separating children's beds, getting used to covering the aurat, instilling shame, and instilling a culture of privacy in children. The role of parents as mentors has the aim of guiding children about the concept of healthy and positive sexuality and preventing children from risky sexual behavior. The increase in sexual abuse of children, especially in the increasingly sophisticated digital era, requires all parties, especially parents, to provide guidance and instill early sexual education seriously (Ratnawati, 2021).

CONCLUSION

Parents' understanding of sexual education is still in the lower category, this is because there are still many parents who think that sexual education is taboo and inappropriate to introduce in early childhood. The role of parents in introducing sexual education to early childhood is as educators and companions. In general, the role of parents in introducing sexual education to children is very good. Parents already have an awareness of how important their role is in introducing sexual education to children from an early age, parents have begun to provide understanding, guidance, and direction to children regarding sexual education.

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