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# Massage therapy training for daycare caregivers to stimulate children's mental health in Dago Area

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#### **ABSTRACT**

Massage therapy has been shown to be highly effective in preventing premature birth, encouraging infant growth, increasing attention, reducing depression and aggression, treating motor problems, and reducing discomfort. Daycare is a partner institution for parents in childcare that synergizes in observing the growth and development of children's mental health. This community service program aims to increase knowledge about children's mental health, and training and mentoring regarding relaxing massage for children. This service activity plan consists of the preparation, implementation, and evaluation stages. The methods to be carried out vary from giving interactive materials, demonstrations, discussions, and practice. This activity was attended by 24 caregivers, 2 presenters, and 6 community service teams. This program was attended by caregivers aged between 22-50 years, with most of them being married, the highest education level being high school (75%), and the most work experience under 3 years (67%). Based on the results of the evaluation, all participants benefited from the knowledge training on child mental development and the application of baby massage in carrying out their daily duties as caregivers at daycare centers. Training childcare practitioners' mentalization and helping them achieve attitude-based mentalization is effective in helping them better understand child development.

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

The primary problem in child psychology is the issue of the kid's stages of mental development. The clarification of this issue is crucial from a theoretical standpoint as psychology will ultimately be able to address the issue of the driving forces behind mental development by identifying the phases of mental development and identifying patterns of transition from one stage to the next (El'konin, 2017). It is the responsibility of preschool teachers across the nation to get kids ready for kindergarten in terms of social and emotional development. Teachers aid in supporting children's social and emotional learning (SEL) within a rich ecology of emotional and social relationships (Mardhika et al., 2022; Zinsser et al., 2016).

Early childhood is a stage of life that affects how people develop. How wants are satisfied and the methods used to do so assist a child's growth. Working parents often struggle to provide for their children's needs. To prevent child neglect, there are alternatives for working mothers or parents so they can continue to uphold children's rights. Those with careers can find a solution in child care. This social service organization plays a temporary parental role for children in the area of child welfare. One such service is full day care when the child is kept the entire day (Hamer et al., 2020).

In the educational process that involves children, especially early childhood, comprehensive pedagogic knowledge is needed. Non-formal educational institutions such as daycare are institutions engaged in the field of early childhood care that are required to be childcare partners which assist parents in educating their sons and daughters. Growth and development at an early age are quite important because they will affect development at a later age. The curriculum also influences the growth and development of children psychologically in the form of cognitive, affective, psychomotor, language, emotional, social, and religious aspects, as well as physical and developmental aspects. A healthy and strong physique plays a role in the psychological development of children (Munawiah & Jannah, 2015; Rachmawaty, 2019).

The importance of young children's social and emotional development has been assigned a key priority in early childhood education. Among the skills that must be learned to successfully navigate this developmental stage are the capacity to create positive relationships, develop positive self-esteem, express feelings and control emotions, persevere and engage positively with challenging tasks, and adopt a positive outlook in a dynamic environment. The core concepts incorporated in the Positive Psychology approach to education, which concentrates on the ideal functioning of teachers and students in many educational contexts, include many of the competencies developed throughout this developmental stage. Positive Education, which aims to incorporate principles of positive psychology with educational practices, has recently grown in this area of study (Zinsser et al., 2016).

Children are the next generation of the nation, therefore the environment around children, namely families, schools and the government must create quality and healthy children both physically and mentally as children's mental health is one of the most important investments to form a good generation but unfortunately, nowadays the number of people with mental health disorders is increasing (Suminar & Hamidah, 2021; Puspita, 2019; Townsend & Morgan, 2017). Solutions with a religious approach are effective in building good child mental health. Research conducted by Layla et al. stated that individual children and adolescents who understand worship and carry out Islamic worship, can overcome problems in the life they are experiencing, are grateful, and productive, adapt to the environment, maintain relationships with their environment and God so that they tend to have good mental health standards. Children and adolescents can develop their great potential as the nation's future generation in developing regional potential toward a superior Indonesia and better lives by engaging in worship in an Islamic context, such as performing dhikr, reading the Qur'an, and especially praying (Lubis et al., 2019).

Daycare is a childcare institution, as a partner for parents in raising and accompanying their sons and daughters while the parents are working. One of the daycares in the city of Bandung is Dehakidz. This daycare is a childcare institution with an Islamic childcare partner tagline. The curriculum for child growth and emotional and spiritual intelligence is formulated based on Islamic teachings. However, in practice, it still requires in-depth knowledge of child mental health, as well as a practical solution approach. Therefore, we, the community service program Team, will carry out a community service program aimed at Dehakidz employees to help solve problems and provide an alternative solution in curriculum development, supported by child mental relaxation therapy through child massage. Dehakidz has human resources (HR) consisting of administration, teachers, and caregivers. The main task of the employees is to provide services in the field of child care services, with operating hours of 10 hours, from 7.00 to 17.00. The length of time for child care requires that the Dehakidz Institute has good program management, one of which is the child development curriculum. Dehakidz was founded in 2014, and currently there are 25 employees with 45 foster children. The background of the employees is high school graduates, with an average age of 35 years. As mentioned before, Daycare dehakidz is a childcare institution with an Islamic childcare partner tagline. The curriculum for child growth and emotional and spiritual intelligence is formulated based on Islamic teachings. To carry out one of the daycare programs in child development, namely mental intelligence and a good soul, massage training as a stimulation of children's growth and development and mental health is a solution to complement existing programs. This program is expected to be carried out in accordance with the procedures that will be trained so that the benefits can be felt optimally.

Based on survey results, situation analysis, and joint discussions, the need for employees to obtain health information is quite high, especially regarding children's mental health related to their duties during the parenting process. This community service program aims to increase knowledge about children's mental health, as well as training and mentoring regarding relaxing massage for children.

# 2. METHODS

#### Location

The dehakidz daycare partner group is situated in the Dago Sub-district, one of the 600m² sub-districts in the Coblong District, Bandung City, West Java, Indonesia, in the northern section of Bandung. The partner group's location is next to the community service program Team's location in the Bandung Wetan sub-district on the Unisba Faculty of Medicine Campus. This area is 2.9 kilometers from the campus Unisba and is reachable in 10 minutes by car. Locations with minimal travel times and distances are extremely beneficial to the community service program Team's ability to carry out the program, including continuing coaching and activity coordination. This institution has been established since 10 years ago engaged in the field of early childhood pre-school care and education. In carrying out its program this institution refers to an Islamic-based curriculum. This institution routinely conducts training to improve the knowledge and skills of caregivers.

# **Preparation Stage**

The preparatory phase begins with a situation analysis, namely a survey of partners' needs for this activity. Discussion about the solutions we offer and what expectations are desired, so that common goals can be achieved (Table 1).

Table 1. Preparation stage

The team conducts a preliminary survey, and visits Dehakidz leaders and employees.
Conduct situation analysis, discuss emerging problems, identify problems, and discuss solutions to problems.
Asking for approval of partners' willingness to be signed by the head of Dehakidz on stamp duty.
Carry out studies and field research, then draft a community service program proposal.
Divide tasks and assign to teams. Distribute tasks regarding the preparation of proposals.
Make activity permits.
Preparae activity equipment.

Time

Fourth Sunday of April 2023
Duration: 2 hours

## Implementation Stage

At the implementation stage we convey the plans and stages of the activities to be carried out. The partners are very cooperative in helping to prepare the places and equipment needed. This implementation phase involves the cooperation of both parties, the implementation team and the daycare team. The method used is material presentation, discussion, demonstration and practice. Material will be delivered by two speakers regarding the development of children's mental health and massage therapy as relaxation. Demonstrations and child massage practices were carried out by all participants using special dummy mannequins. During the massage practice, all participants were accompanied by the implementing team and guided at every stage of the massage movement (Table 2).

**Table 2.** Implementation stage

# Description

Opening and Outreach Program

- Opening of community service program activities
- Socialization of offline activities with health programs.
- Icebreaking and Team and Partner introductions

# Mentalization training

- Presentation of interactive PPT material using in focus
- Methods: Training and Discussion

### Child massage training and assistance

- Delivered in easy-to-understand language, accompanied by animation in the form of illustrated pictures and videos.
- Delivered by the Massage team and the community service program Team delivered interactive media to facilitate the acceptance of the material and the enthusiasm of the participants.
- Methods: demonstration, hands-on, and video exposure

# Time

Second Sunday of June 2023 Duration: 6 hours

## **Evaluation Stage**

The evaluation stage is carried out after the activities are finished, and the daycare team applies the results of the training in carrying out their daily tasks. This activity was carried out using the discussion method with both daycare management and caregivers. This evaluation is carried out to see how far this program can be implemented, and what solutions can be made if there are problems in its implementation (Table 3).

**Table 3.** Evaluation stage

# Description

- Evaluation is carried out with the aim of knowing which massage stimulation activities were applied to stimulate the growth and development of children
- Evaluation is also carried out to find out whether there are difficulties or questions that arise when applying massage.
- Evaluation is done by discussion method
- This evaluation is used as a parameter of the success of the program.

#### Time

Third Sunday of June 2023 **Duration: 3 hours** 

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### Results

# **Program implementation**

This activity was carried out at dehakidz daycare in Bandung, and attended by 24 daycare caregivers. The activity was carried out in two sessions, namely giving material on children's mental development and material and training on child massage. Both sources are experts in their fields. The first material was provided by Ayu Prasetia, dr., Sp.KJ., MMRS. She is a lecturer at the Faculty of Medicine, Unisba. The second material was delivered by a massage consultant who has been certified nationally, namely Ms. Hesti Kristina P. Tobing, SKM., CIMI., CHt (Figure 1).





Figure 1. Program implementation

Most of the participants were in the age range of 41-50 years (58%). This age range concluded that the average age of participants was married and had children (Table 4), even though most have them only have work experience under 3 years (Table 5).

Table 4. Participant based on age

<u> </u>	
N (24)	%
4	17
6	25
14	28
	<b>N (24)</b> 4 6

**Table 5.** Participant based on work experience

Length of work	N (24)	%
< 3 years	9	37,5
3-5 years	8	33,3
5< years	7	29,2

As many as 67% of the participants were married and had the most recent educational history at the senior high school level, 75% (Figure 2). High school education is the minimum level of education that caregivers must have. Marital status is not a prerequisite but priority is given to those who are married as basic experience in raising children.

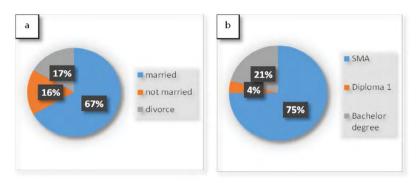


Figure 2. (a) Marital status; and (b) education background

# Step of growth and development

This activity was carried out in two stages, namely material presentation, and discussion through group discussion forums. The material provided regarded the stages of development of an individual and his mental development. This material exposure activity was given within 2 hours (Figure 3). The material provided regarding human development was based on a series of emotional changes. The material was given by discussion method so that the participants could be more proactive in participating in this activity. The training provided was in the form of knowledge regarding developmental tasks and moral development in the life cycle. Starting with an understanding of how the life cycle is, the growing process occurs step by step, has its own characteristics, have developmental tasks that must be completed by children. Failure to complete developmental tasks will affect the quality of completion of subsequent developmental tasks, and each individual has their own rhythm and tempo of development.

In the presentation of material on children's mental development, the participants were very enthusiastic. The development of science and knowledge is currently needed, especially parenting knowledge for daycare caregivers. The mental development of children conveyed is closely related to their duties as caregivers. The questions and discussions that were carried out also discussed problems in dealing with the obstacles encountered in day-to-day care, for example how to behave when a child is angry or aggressive.



Figure 3. Training in understanding child mental health

# Massage stimulation

In this training learned the things that are a requirement in performing massage stimulation. First, the stimulation massage is carried out by trained personnel who have completed the training. Second, get permission from the parent/guardian of the child. The third is done by the closest person, not someone the child has just known. Other requirements are the child's general health, and cleanliness. Massage stimulation also has to be performed at a conducive time and place. Massage is done better by not using certain oils. Massage movements include the head, chest, abdomen, back, legs, and arms. The duration of the work is adjusted to the needs, on average it takes 30 minutes. This massage training activity uses doll mannequins specifically used for training. This activity was preceded by a demonstration followed by hands-on practice. Practical activities are carried out with assistance. The participants can immediately discuss if in the practice of massage there is something difficult or the movements are not correct. Each movement of the trainer provides an explanation of the parts that must be massaged and the benefits of each massage movement (Figure 4).





Figure 4. Massage relaxation training

## **Evaluation**

Based on the evaluation results of the activities carried out two weeks after the training, all caregivers benefited from the training in understanding children's mental development. Almost all caregivers have practiced massage in carrying out their duties, caregivers who do not practice massage because there is no conducive opportunity and time to see the child's condition (Table 6). As a worker who is responsible for caring for children, knowledge is needed not only about the stages of physical development but also the mental development of children. This is necessary in understanding how to solve problems related to attitudes and behavior of children. Massage movement training and assistance is also felt by all caregivers who benefit from it. Apart from being specialized in therapy in the management of children's mental health, massage is needed in stimulating growth and development and even certain movements can reduce the feeling of discomfort in the child's body.

**Table 6.** Massage training application

Massage application	N (24)	%
Yes	21	87,5
Not yet	3	12,5

Based on the results of the questionnaire, it is known that the difficulties encountered during the practice of massage. These difficulties are very broad, starting from the difficulty of conditioning the child, finding the right time, to implementing each massage movement. These results serve as an evaluation of the program and the time needed to carry out massage training activities in the implementation of subsequent activities. The result is at most 47.6% facing moderate difficulty. This is due to the

adaptation period for both caregivers and foster children, and as many as 19.1% or 4 caregivers of the total caregivers who have practiced difficult complaints (Table 7). This is especially in the conditioning of children, especially children who are actively moving. In addition, there are difficulties in applying massage movements to children, considering that children are not always sleeping or relaxed. This becomes an evaluation material in good child conditioning methods to support good massage practice.

Table 11 massage practice susce on the level of amounty				
Level of difficulty	N (21)	%		
Difficult	4	19.1		
Currently	10	47.6		
Easy	7	33,3		

**Table 7.** Massage practice based on the level of difficulty

## Discussion

Children's development, including the development of their gross and fine motor abilities, linguistic skills, and social skills, is greatly influenced by the parenting styles of both their parents and the daycare caregivers. Numerous factors, especially those related to mental health, might have an impact on the parenting approach used (Syahputra et al., 2022; Windiastri & Nurhaeni, 2020). Psychosocial issues are challenges that frequently occur in society. A psychosocial condition affects people and has both psychological and social components, or vice versa. Psychosocial refers to social interactions that take psychological aspects into account. Psychosocial issues are issues that affect both the mind and society. The connection between a person's mental or emotional well-being and social circumstances is known as psychosocial (psychosocial). As a result, psychosocial development refers to changes in one's emotions or mentality when interacting with others (Maulana et al., 2019; Nurjanah & Linggardini, 2022).

Family as the first and foremost educational institution, its existence determines the child's future. Daycare as a parenting partner for parents who are felt as family for children. Without serious attention and full affection from both parents especially, then of course in turn it will be difficult for the child's healthy and normal mental and mental growth and development to occur, which ultimately greatly influences the child's personality. Educating and caring for a child certainly requires knowledge of child development. The aspects of early childhood development include three aspects, namely physical, cognitive and psychosocial aspects. Early childhood are children aged 0-8 years. Parental education is important for parents so that parents can maximize the development of all children's potential, both physical, cognitive and psychosocial (Bustan et al., 2017; Jamaluddin et al., 2019)

Many studies have been conducted regarding the benefits of massage as a therapy, be it a stimulus for growth and development, therapy for various diseases, and boosting the immune system. The amygdala, hypothalamus, and anterior cingulate cortex all regions involved in managing stress and emotions are all affected by moderate pressure massage (Field, 2014). Massage therapy also affects the quality of sleep-in babies. In infancy, it is very important to give stimulation as early as possible to provide stimulation of affection to help the process of growth and development that is good for the baby until he becomes an adult. Massage is a means of stimulating affection given through massage which is a health care art that can be done alone in a family environment, inexpensive, comfortable, and safe if done properly. One of the benefits of baby massage is that it helps babies sleep longer, so the benefits of getting enough sleep at night can help the process of good growth and development for babies (Permata, 2017).

The statistics indicate that there is a reasonable approach to conceptualizing the mechanisms behind massage's therapeutic effects, even though a much more thorough examination of the

neuroscience of massage is required. C fiber stimulation of the brain's neural networks is linked to feelings of happiness and well-being. Along with improving parasympathetic tone, massage also activates the brain circuits that regulate sympathetic and parasympathetic activity. These actions may then have the impact of modulating some components of immunological function, such as the inflammatory response, as well as the stress response. Thus, a compelling working hypothesis concerning the advantages of massage for some psychiatric diseases can be derived from the existing facts on the biology of massage. Complementary and integrative therapies are accepted by patients and are frequently used. They regularly use massage therapy to address the signs and symptoms of anxiety and depression. Not enough information is available regarding the use of massage as a therapy for depression or anxiety disorders, despite studies suggesting that it may assist reduce issues with depressed mood or acute anxiety. According to recent evidence, massage may at the very least be useful as an adjunct to traditional therapy. Despite the paucity of evidence, some studies have found that massage can improve immunological response, boost parasympathetic tone, and modify brain circuitry in addition to perhaps acutely lowering hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal activity (Pourkamali et al., 2017; Rapaport et al., 2018).

Massage has been shown in studies to be beneficial in the treatment of behavioral issues in children. Massage has been shown to be more successful than methylphenidate control, regular care, and no treatment in the treatment of attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) in children and adolescents, and to be more beneficial when paired with sensory integration training than when used alone (Chen et al., 2019). The family has a great deal of responsibility for the child's health, physical development, overall education, the development of their intellectual affinities, as well as the development of better moral values and convictions and attitudes, habits to a firm and well-behaved cultural relation in the family as well as in the society in which the child lives. On the other hand, the family as an institution must provide conditions for the formation of positive relationships with work, which is a propensity towards a better establishment of a realistic approach for the better development of the children's personalities (Ceka & Murati, 2016; Zeanah, 2018).

The method of parenting in understanding children's mental health that is now developing is mindful parenting. Mindful Parenting appears to be a potential new intervention in mental health care for parents, as it appears to be helpful in a wide variety of child, parent, and family characteristics (Bögels et al., 2014). The community service program previously carried out massage as a stimulation of growth and development in the city of Makassar by Rosidi & Purnamasari (2021). As a result, the training can increase knowledge about massage and its benefits for growth and development (Rosidi & Purnamasari, 2021). The service that our team is currently doing is not only understanding growth and development but an approach to stimulating children's mental health, by touching on the positive side of their psychological development as well as the benefits of stimulating children's growth and development.

Various approaches to understanding the pattern of children's mental development are currently being developed. Thus, the process of educating children, as well as understanding the growth and development of children both physically and spiritually can be achieved to produce good children's character in the future.

## 4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Training childcare practitioners' mentalization and assisting them in achieving attitude-based mentalization can help them better comprehend a child's internal workings. The ability of teachers to read children's signals may improve as a result of this practice. The limitations experienced in this program are adding direct practice methods to children/infants so that in addition to massage techniques, preparation and conditioning techniques can be evaluated.

# Massage therapy training for daycare caregivers to stimulate children's mental health in Dago Area Meta Maulida Damayanti, Yuktiana Kharisma, Ayu Prasetia, Ermina Widiyastuti, Meike Rachmawati, Ismet Muchtar Nur, Abdul Hadi Hassan

To help to better manage children's mental development, it is hoped that this community service program activity can be repeated at regular intervals by incorporating a special massage program for children whose actions are carried out by ongoing research, and direct practice on children, not just mannequins.

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