

The Influence of Families and Community Partnership on Children`s Development

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Abstract

Families and community partnership is an essential element in ensuring children grow and develop in a safe and nurturing environment. When this partnership is exist and children will receive the care and support that they need. As a result, their potentials will be acknowledged and accommodated. The Epstein`s Framework on 6 Types of Involvement recognizes the collaboration between families and community on the best interest of a child. Therefore, this study is using this framework to further analyze the dynamic relationship between families and community in providing nurturing environment to support the children development. A qualitative approach is used in gathering information from 9 resource persons who are actively engaged in fostering a supportive environment for the children in through various activities conducted in Rumah Pintar. This study finds that active engagement between families and community for the best interest of children contribute positively on the children development.

Keywords: *Families, Community, Children Development, Epstein Framework, Partnership*

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Introduction

Ki Hajar Dewantara, known as the National Education Father as well as the Indonesian first Education Minister explained that a child socializes in three places that are family, school, and community/social organization which academically known as *Tripusat Pendidikan* (Education Tricentre)[1] . This became the solid foundation to encourage full engagement of parents and community members in a child`s education and development. In legal setting, this notion is regulated in the Law of National Education System Number 20 Year 2003 Article 7-9 and Presidential Regulation Number 60 Year 2013 on Holistic-Integrative Early Childhood Development. The issue of family and community members engagement is important to be examined to get a deep understanding on its influence on early childhood development.

A child spends her early years with her family. She learns new things, new words, achieves her milestones and many more from her family. Family is the small unit in a community [2]. Family, in this context, is biological parents or adult who are obliged to cared for a child hold the responsibility to educate, to teach, and to guide the child. The first interaction, character building, adapt to new culture, respect other values and norms all are taught in a family [3]. In a child development context, parents engage in every aspect of child development. Parents engagement is the substantial base in the productive family and community collaboration to optimize the child development process through he life span [4], [5], [6]. A child is able to think critically, capable of socializing with her peers, able to manage her emotion, build positive character, and smart in solving problems are some of the development milestones achieved by a child when her parents fully engage in providing stimulation, facilitating safe learning environment, and evaluating every milestone [4], [5], [7]. These skills and abilities are a child`s individual capital to grow and to develop as an independent individual and community members.

A child learns to socialize and interact with people from various background happens in the neighbourhood she lies in. The community as described by Ki Hajar Dewantara is filled with people from various age group, educational background, work experiences, social economy and others. From this particular situation, a child grows and develops to know other people and build her character [8], [9], [10], [11], [12]. Indeed, community has the significant contribution in a child`s development. Every action and words from one person will affect a child, directly or indirectly. Community also holds a prominent role in setting a good example of positive behaviour and atmosphere for a child to live in. Another important role is community can act as a supervisor in educating children on the responsibilities, norms and values in the community.

If family and community stand on the same framework on child development, then automatically both parties will collaborate and corporate to maximize all the resources they have to provide a supportive environment for children to grow and to develop [13], [14] This framework is understood and exercised by the families and community members in Block I Pengilar Sub-district Medan Amplas District Medan. Both families and community work together to provide a safe learning environment for the children derived from the neighborhood circumstances. Motorbike gang, bullying, robbery, drugs are the problems occurred in the neighborhood and raise concerns of the families and community on its effect on their children.

In 2018, the families and community work together with Yayasan Fajar Sejahtera Indonesia (YAFSI) to establish Rumah Pintar (RuPin) or literal translation Clever House. The activities in RuPin are focusing on children development that are literacy, positive character building, dancing, writing, and other activities that related to current issues. Families and community take part as the coordinators, facilitators, provide transportation and snacks if the children invited to an event outside the neighborhood. They also involve in discussion on what planning the activities for the children.

This is the collaboration that expected by the Government of Indonesia and researchers who interested in examining the family and community collaboration in children development [15]. Active participation and engagement of families and community are the vital elements in children growth and development [16], [17] In the education institution context, community is the external party who responsible in ensuring the neighborhood is safe for children to live in. However in this research, community is the internal and substantial party in facilitating a safe learning environment for the children [18]. The collaboration between families and community is greatly needed to support a holistic and integrative children development.

The dynamic and effectivity of the collaboration between families and community in Block I will be examined using the Epstein Framework 6 Types of Involvement in Family, School, and Community. These three spheres related to the three environment in the Three Centers of Education by Ki Hajar Dewantara. The six types of involvement are parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision making, and collaborating with community. This framework put children as the center of discussion to further analyze how each type and collaboration between and/or among types affect the children development. This framework also helps to put category on every activities, challenges, obstacles, and solutions [17]

The research findings presented above provide an open space for the researcher to examine the collaboration between families and community from a new perspective. This study focuses on the families and community collaboration in children development by questioning

how this collaboration able to support children development under Epstein Framework? The dynamic relationship between families and community in children development has not been much studied in scientifically. This issue is interesting to be researched as this collaboration face numerous obstacles, significant achievement, and constructive problem solving that will enrich the discussion in the families and community engagement. Especially, if the collaboration aiming to improve the children development and wellbeing. Therefore, the objective of this study is to explore and analyse the families and community collaboration exist in Block I in enhancing the children development.

Literature Review

Epstein's Framework of Six Types of Involvement

Children learn, grow and develop in three areas that are families, school, and community. Their physical, social, emotional, cognitive, literacy, moral, values, art, religious will develop holistically during their intensive interaction with people in the three domains throughout their lifespan. This framework proposes six types of involvement that are parenting, communicating, learning at home, decision making, and collaborating with community (Table 1). Children is the centre of this framework so every activities conducted in each type and collaboration between or among types are aiming to stimulate all children development aspects. Every element is obliged to the best interest of the child. This Epstein's Framework emphasizes children will learn, grow, and develop when parents/legal guardians, teachers, and community members work together in educating, teaching, and guiding the children.

Type 1 Parenting	Type 2 Communicating	Type 3 Volunteering	Type 4 learning at Home	Type 5 Decision Making	Type 6 Collaborating with Community
Assist families to create conducive learning environment at home.	Design an effective communication form from school to home and home to school.	To recruit and to design activities to support families.	Provide information and ideas to the families about the school.	Involve families in decision making related to school related matters.	Identify and integrate resources from community.

Table 1. Epstein's Framework of Six Types of Involvement

This study focusing on Type 6. Collaborating with Community. All the resources available on the families and community are the strength that are valuable in providing safe learning environment for children to grow and develop well. Every type has its own strength and weakness however the weakness will become strength when elements work together.

The Epstein model examines the roles and relationships of family, school, and community in a child's life. Therefore, children are at the center of Epstein's framework. Children are agents of change for themselves. Their education and development are the responsibility of their families, schools, and communities. These three environments can work independently and together to support optimal development. The three tables above illustrate the complexity of the relationships between family, school, and community, yet they are closely interrelated. For example, institutionally, families and communities can collaborate by preparing a place for children in the home environment where they can learn and play under supervision. Personally, parents can seek health advice from a Posyandu cadre.

Family and community involvement in child development can be expressed through various activities that support all aspects of child development. If families and communities view child development as a priority and provide stimulation appropriate to children's needs, children will achieve development appropriate to their needs, grow according to their age, and explore their potential. Collaboration between families and the community in children's growth and development can be implemented by providing a learning and play space for children located in the heart of the community. The aim is to ensure that children are properly supervised.

Early Childhood Development

Lonto [19] explained development is the qualitative changes on the maturity of an individual organ functions for examples, jumping, using scissor, and folding paper. A development changes in every person is different. Two children who are at the same age maybe have different development and achieve different milestones. This is due to the stimulation they received from their surroundings. In Indonesia, early childhood development stipulated in 2 legal documents, that are the Minister of Education and Culture Regulation Number 137 Year 2014 on the Early Childhood Education National Standard and Minister of Education and Culture Regulation Number 146 Year 2014 on the 2013 Curriculum Early Childhood Education.

Research Methodology

This study is using a qualitative approach. The information from the resource persons is collected directly and every statement gathered is analyzed academically [20]Nine adults who participated since RuPin was established are the resource persons. They have been actively engaged in facilitating, coordinating, and providing essential materials needed for RuPin. They were asked on their experiences and thoughts on the importance of families and community collaboration to ensure the optimal development of the children in the neighborhood. Their statements will be analyzed under the Epstein`s Framework.

Results

One of the main indicators on child development is the safe and fun learning environment for children to actualize all their potentials [8], [13]. The positive environment for children development will greatly affected their mindset and characters. Families and community hold the responsibilities to provide the nurturing and supporting environment. When this particular environment exists, children will maximize their potentials to develop themselves, have a good social skills, able to think critically, and have high motivation to achieve well in their futures [4], [6], [21], [22].

The families and community in Block I believed that collaboration between families and community will significantly contribute to the children positive development. This belief is supported by YAFSI and resulted in the establishment of RuPin. Type 6. Collaborating with Community in the Epstein`s Framework explain identify and integrate resources and services from the community to strengthen school programs, family practices, and student learning and development. One of the obstacles is to integrate the needs for children development and the resources from the families and community. During the initial discussions of RuPin, both parties have agreed to share their resources for the children. Their skills and life experiences are the advantages that will transferred to the children. The resource persons stated cooking skills, baking skills, dancing, storytelling are some of the talents they have and they are happily to transfer it to the children.

The active engagement of families and community in children development will automatically provide a nurturing and safe learning environment for the children [6], [8], [16], [23], [24]. Eden, et.al. [7] stated the effective collaboration between parents and community remarkably improve the children social skills, create an inclusive environment, and educate diversity. The resource persons revealed after joining RuPin the children shows significant improvement. For examples, they do not cut off other people conversation, they let their friends talk first and wait for their turns, they do not make fun of their friends, and shows more sympathy and empathy. This finding is what Epstein`s Framework on Collaborating with Community expected to happen.

In the context of children development, the resource persons admitted that their decision to work with YAFSI to build RuPin is the best decision. The children have a safe space to learn, to grow, and to develop. This is supported by the findings [18] that is safe learning environment will improve the education quality, education achievement, and improve children development.

The effective collaboration between families and community in Block I succeed in empowering all the skills and talents of the parents and community members and transfer it to the children. Also, strengthen their relationship in discussing the obstacles and find the best solution [13], [14], [16]

The effective collaboration between families and community in children development hold a crucial role in ensuring the children develop optimally so they can complete all of their development tasks and achievement according to their age range and development needs [4], [5], [15]. This collaboration emphasizes Ki Hajar Dewantara`s concept of Three Center of Education and Epstein`s Framework that is children development is the active engagement of families, school, and community [5], [7], [15], [25]. Both parties can act as advocates for fostering children development needs, gathering all families to fully involve in their children development, and ensuring the neighbourhood is nurturing and safe to support the children`s development.

In Epstein`s Framework Type 6. Collaborating with Community [13], a partnership between families and community able to create family-like school. This type of school acknowledges every child unique characteristic and embraces all of their potentials for them to grow and develop in a nurturing environment. Family-like school invites all families regardless their backgrounds such as educational, professional, socio-economic, etc. The resource persons wholeheartedly stated they want all of the children in Block I have a better future than them. Therefore, they reinforce the importance of education and skills for the children. Partnering with YAFSI to establish RuPin is one of the ways to build the children`s skills, to motivate them to pursue their education degree, to build their positive characters, and to elevate the confidence that they can achieve success in the future.

Drawing from this finding and supported by the research done by [6], [8], [16], [23], [24] this collaboration will continue to grow and become stronger on the grounds that families and community actively engaged in developing themselves to create a safe and nurturing environment for the children. Families will be able to supervise their children with the help from the community, community will live in conducive neighbourhood, and the children are freely to actualize their potentials. The needs and the realities of the children, families and community must be taken into account to plan and deliver the activities that are doable, feasible, and equitable for all of them. When this collaboration shoes positive result on the children development, the children experience caring community and loving parents. Through their

lifespan, children will continuously be developing all of their development aspects with the guidance from their families and community [6], [22], [26], [27].

The active collaboration between families and community in this study not only contribute significantly to the children development but also become the strength for families and community to expand their network and provide better nurturing environment for the children. To build this strong collaboration, both families and community must have the same understanding and loyal commitment towards the best interest of the child. The values and norms in overseeing the children development under the same framework will automatically provide the children with safe and nurturing learning environment.

Conclusion

The resource persons proudly admitted their effective collaboration have shown a good result in children development. The children, the families, and the community will keep developing together. From the Epstein`s Framework, collaboration between families and community is important to be encouraged and reinforced. In the context of children development, active collaboration between families and community will provide a safe and nurturing environment for the children which in turn will enhance the children development. Once the collaboration exists, it must be maximized, expanded, and sustained. All of the activities deliver aiming to improve the children development are flexible and based on the needs of the children. Applying Epstein`s Framework in the context of children development will enrich the understanding on the importance of active and productive collaboration between families and community.

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