

# Life Skill-based Early Childhood Education for Street Children in Surabaya

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Received: 6 April 2019;

Revised: 28 April 2019;

Accepted: 19 May 2019

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## **Abstract**

*Life skills in early childhood consist of personal skills and social skills. Life skills-based education in early childhood is, of course, related to aspects of child development, namely physical, cognitive, language, social-emotional, and spiritual. This research method used normative research. The approach used in life skills-based education was a contextual approach. Life skill-based education used interactive methods, role-playing, open discussion, and small group activities can also use modeling, observation, situation analysis, one to one rehearsal, debates, and games as a method of teaching life skills. This life skills-based early childhood education program consisted of daily living skills and personal or social skills with practical life, sensory, mathematics, language art, and cultural activities that were useful for children's personal development.*

**Keywords:** *early childhood education, life skills, street children*

## **Abstrak**

*Kecakapan hidup anak usia dini terdiri dari kecakapan personal dan kecakapan sosial. Dalam pendidikan berbasis life skills pada anak usia dini tentu saja berkaitan dengan aspek perkembangan anak yaitu jasmani, kognitif, bahasa, sosial, emosional, dan spiritual. Metode penelitian ini menggunakan penelitian normatif, dengan pendekatan yang digunakan dalam pendidikan berbasis kecakapan hidup adalah pendekatan kontekstual. Sedangkan metode yang digunakan yaitu metode interaktif, bermainperan, diskusi terbuka serta kegiatan kelompok kecil juga dapat menggunakan modelling, observasi, situation analysis, one to one rehearsal, debates, serta games sebagai metode dalam mengajarkan kecakapan hidup. Program pendidikan anak usia dini berbasis lifes kills ini terdiri dari daily living skills dan personal/social skill dengan materi practical life, sensory, mathematics, languange art, dancultural actioivity yang berguna untuk pengembangan diri anak.*

**Kata kunci:** *pendidikan anak usia dini, kecakapan hidup, anak jalanan*

## Introduction

Education is the right of children in order to develop themselves in accordance with their condition. It is affirmed in Law no. 20 in 2003 on child protection. Similarly, education is vital for early childhood, where all children have the right to get the opportunity through the provision of appropriate educational stimulation for growth and development in order to develop optimally in accordance with its potential.

Based on the developmental stage according to Piaget, an early child aged 2 - 7 years is in the operational period of concrete. Concrete operational life is a process whereby the child has been able to discriminate the properties in recognizing the parts, have started thinking abstractly and observations are real. Children have traits that tend to follow who influences them. It is at this stage that basic structures of complex behavior that are built throughout the life of the child should be laid. Laying the foundation of this behavioral structure which will be used as the foundation of the child to tread on the next development which is expected to be human as mandated in the national education system.

In response to the development of early childhood, the need for an educational program designed in accordance with the level of child development. A truly educational program lays on the groundwork for behaviors that children can tap into their future. Early childhood education and learning patterns based on life skills need to be developed. The pattern of learning should lead to the formation of academic intelligence, social intelligence, personal intelligence, and increased creativities child.

The success of an Early Childhood Education program is strongly influenced by the number of participating targets. In 2005, the target of Early Childhood Education

(PAUD) aged 0 to 6 years about 28 million are aged under 4 years amounted to 16.4 million and age 4 to 6 years amounted to 11.6 million people. In the meantime, only 28% of children served by kindergarten and RA are 33.2%. This number is not significant in 2006, especially in groups of children aged 4 to 6 years, the above figures give an idea that still the number of early childhood that has not been served by the ECD program.

Early childhood education contributes a lot to the preparation of children to basic education. But the availability of early childhood for poor children like street children is very limited. Whereas the existence of the school is needed for them besides functioning as a place to get a lesson is also expected to provide ease on the cost of education. A deep study and sustainable action are required in order to alleviate poverty, empower the potential of street children and the myriad of problems that surround their lives.

Based on background and preliminary observations, researchers are encouraged to design early childhood education based on life skills for street children in Surabaya. The authors hope that this developed plan is useful and necessary for children with very limited social and economic backgrounds in getting a better education.

## Early Childhood Education

The term early childhood education began to be widely known around 2000 which was marked by the establishment of the Directorate of early childhood education. Early childhood education as stated in the 2003 National Education System Law Article 1 Paragraph 14 states that early childhood education is an effort aimed at developing children from birth to six years of age through the provision of educational stimuli to help growth and development so

that children have the readiness in entering further education.<sup>1</sup>

In the 2006 government regulation on early childhood education said that:

*Early childhood education is a coaching effort aimed at children from birth to six years old which is carried out through the provision of educational stimuli, to help growth and development so that children have the readiness in entering further education.*<sup>2</sup>

Early childhood education is a level of education prior to elementary education which is a coaching effort aimed at children from birth to the age of six years which is carried out through the provision of educational stimuli to help growth and physical and spiritual development so that children have the readiness to enter further education, which is held on formal, non-formal and informal channels.

Early childhood education is one form of education that focuses on laying the foundation for physical growth and development (fine and rough motor coordination), intelligence (thinking power, creativity, emotional intelligence, spiritual intelligence), socio-emotional (attitude and behavior and religion) language and communication, in accordance with the uniqueness and developmental stages passed by early childhood.

Furthermore, the function of early childhood education, as stated in Article 2 of the government regulation on early childhood education, states:

*Early childhood education functions to foster, grow and develop all potentials of early childhood optimally, so that basic behaviors and abilities are formed in accordance with the stages of development in order to have*

*readiness to enter further education in order to achieve national education goals.*

Early childhood education is the basic foundation for various children's developments that will greatly influence the child's life process in the future. Early childhood education is an effort to provide guidance to children from an early age through the provision of educational stimuli to help growth and physical and spiritual development so that children have readiness in entering the next basic education and life stage.

### Life Skills

Although life skills have been defined differently, the essence of understanding is the same. WHO (1997) provides an understanding that life skills are a variety of skills or abilities to be able to adapt and behave positively, which enables a person to be able to deal with various demands and challenges in his daily life effectively.<sup>3</sup>

In line with this, Anwar (2002) provides an explanation that life skills are the abilities needed to interact and adapt to other people, and the community or environment in which they are located, among others, decision-making skills, problem-solving, critical thinking, creative thinking, effective communication, fostering interpersonal relationships, self-awareness, empathy, overcoming emotions, and overcoming stress.<sup>4</sup>

The concept of life skills is the basic foundation of the curriculum, learning, and management of all community-based pathways, and types and levels of education.

<sup>3</sup> Department of Mental Health World Health Organization Geneva, "Partners in Life Skills Education," *Conclusions from a United Nations Inter-Agency Meeting*, 1997.

<sup>4</sup> Anwar, *Pendidikan Kecakapan Hidup (Life Skills Education) Konsep dan Aplikasi* (Bandung: Alfabeta, n.d.).

<sup>1</sup> NATIONAL EDUCATION SYSTEM, "Act of The Republic of Indonesia, No. 20," 2003.

<sup>2</sup> "Child Care Services (Child Care) Regulations," 2006.

In the implementation of life skills education should be based on the four pillars of education, namely: learning to know or learning to learn (learning to gain knowledge), learning to do (learning to be able to do / do work), learning to be (learning in order to become people who are useful according to their interests, talents and self-potential), and learning to live together (learning to be able to live together with other people).

Life skills are understood as the individual's ability to be able to learn so that someone gets success in life, is productive and is able to gain life satisfaction. Kent Davis suggests that life skills are "personal manuals" for one's body. These skills help students learn how to care for their bodies, grow into themselves, work well together with others, make logical decisions, protect themselves and achieve goals in their lives.<sup>5</sup>

Another definition of life skill was revealed by life skills 4 kids that, in essence, life skills are an "owner's manual" for the human body. These children's help skills are how to maintain their bodies, grow individuals, work well with others, make logical decisions, protect them when they have to and achieve their goals in life.

Essentially, life skill is defined as a kind of practical guidance that helps children to learn how to care for the body, grow to be an individual, work with other people, make logical decisions, protect them to achieve goals in their lives. So that in this case to be a measure of life skill in a person is located in his ability to achieve his life goals. Life skills motivate children by helping them to understand themselves and their own potential in their lives so that they are able to arrange life goals and conduct problem-solving processes when faced with life problems.

<sup>5</sup> Kent Davis, *Life Skills 4 Kids News*, 2002, 1, Kdavis@Lifskills4Kids.com.

According to Supriatna, life skills can be divided into five, namely: (1) life skills to know oneself (self-awareness) or personal life skills which include: (a) self-appreciation as God's creatures, members of society, and citizens, and (b) realistic and grateful for the advantages and disadvantages they have; (2) rational thinking skills that include: (a) the ability to explore and find information, (information searching), (b) the ability to process information and make decisions (information searching and decision skills), (c) problem solving skills creatively (creative problem solving skill), (3) social skills which include: (a) communication skills with empathy and (b) collaboration skills; (4) academic skills or scientific thinking skills, and (5) vocational skills which are skills associated with certain occupations in the community. In the context of this research, the intended skills are oriented to vocational skills.<sup>6</sup>

Based on the above meanings, essential things can be taken with regard to life skills, that life skills are as practical guidelines that help students to learn how to care for the body, grow to be an individual, work together with others, make decisions - logical decision, protect yourself to achieve its life goals. Thus in this case, the benchmark of life skills in a person lies in his ability to achieve his life goals. Life skills motivate students by helping them to understand themselves and their own potential in life so that they are able to arrange life goals and conduct problem-solving processes when faced with life problems.

### Street Children

As the name suggests, street children are children whose lives are on the streets. According to Moeliono, it can be

<sup>6</sup> Mamat Supriatna, "Pengembangan KecakapanHidup di Sekolah," 2013, <http://www.google.co.id/#tbo=d&output=search&scient=psyab&q>.

said operationally that street children are children aged 5-18 who spend more than four hours on the streets both for work and other activities.<sup>7</sup>

Street children, according to the DIY Provincial Social Service, are children who skip or use most of their time to carry out their daily activities on the road, up to the age of 5-21 years.<sup>8</sup> Whereas according to the Department of Social Affairs, street children are children who skip or use most of their time to carry out daily living activities on the streets, including markets, shops and crowd centers, someone aged 0-18 years, including children who still in the womb.<sup>9</sup>

Another category that mentions the understanding of street children is abandoned street children, namely street children who are not related to parents anymore.<sup>10</sup>

Street children, homeless children, or sometimes called independent children, are actually children who are marginalized, marginalized, and alienated from the treatment of affection. This is proven because most at a relatively early age, they have had to deal with a city environment that is not conducive and even very hostile. The reason for street children who say that living on the streets is merely to eliminate hunger and compulsion to help families seems to be socially lacking or even unacceptable to the general public.

Based on some of the opinions above, it can be stated that street children are children aged 0-15 years, most of which

are passed over, spent and used to carry out daily living activities on the road.

## Methods

This research method used normative research, with a sociological approach, to support the proposed application of Early Childhood Education based on Life Skill. By conducting a SWOT analysis on the internal and external environment, in order to determine the proposed empowerment program can be applied appropriately to street children. So, it can be seen that early childhood education activities were really done simultaneously and earnestly.

Street children cannot be left alone. The academic and bureaucratic awareness should be more focused on eradicating the surrounding problems. The analysis used in this research refers to social research that is qualitative research. This study emphasizes secondary data in assessing the application of life skill-based early childhood education as well as elements related to research objects in field research. This research uses literary study and field study with sociologist approach so that data will be obtained either from the library or field.

This research was conducted by Taman Bungkul Surabaya area, where street children usually gather. The target of the study is, children aged 2 to 8 years. The reasons for the selection of the subject and the background mentioned above refer to the instructions given by Spradley that the subject of the study should: (1) be simple, only one social situation, (2) easy to enter, (3) not so subtle in research, (4) are easy to obtain permits and (5) their activities occur repeatedly.

Data required in this research are aspects that have to do with designing early childhood education based on life skill. These aspects focus on problem-solving:

<sup>7</sup> L. Moeliono, "Anak Jalanan di Jakarta: Antara Kerentanan dan Ketahanan.," *Warta Demografi* Volume 31, no. 4 (2001).

<sup>8</sup> Dinas Sosial, "Pengertian Anak Jalanan" (Yogyakarta: Dinas Sosial, 2010), 6.

<sup>9</sup> "Department of Social Affairs," 2006.

<sup>10</sup> P. Gilbert, J. Gilbert, dan J. Sanghera, "A Focus Group Exploration of The Impact of Izzat, Shame, Subordination and Entrapment on Mental Health and Service Use in South Asian Women Living in Derby," *Mental Health, Religion & Culture*, 2004.

1. Child-centered
2. Effective learning
3. Organizing children
4. Assessment

Data analysis is the process of searching and compiling systematically the data obtained from field notes, documentation and interview results by organizing data into categories, describing into units, synthesizing, sequencing into patterns, choosing which is important and which will have studied and made conclusions so easily understood.<sup>11</sup> The researcher conducted descriptive observation, participant observation, depth interview, and documentation to obtain optimal research result.

#### 1. Descriptive Observation

The descriptive observation is done by research upon entering a certain social situation as a research object. At this stage, the researcher conducts a general and thorough observation, describing everything seen, heard, heard and perceived. All data is recorded. Observation of the description will produce the first conclusion. The results of this observation are analyzed, called domain analysis.

#### 2. Participatory Observation

Participatory observation basically means to observe and listen as closely as possible to the smallest possible. Observations participated as research characterized by long-term social interaction between research and subjects in the subject environment and during which data in the form of field notes were systematically collected.

#### 3. In-depth Interview

This was done to find out in depth and to examine what is the focus of this research. Two interview techniques were conducted, i.e. structured interviews, the implementation was strongly tied to existing guidelines and free interviews (unstructured) i.e. interviews conducted by mastering the subject matter without question list. It aimed to create a harmonious and intimate relationship and is expected to give freedom in telling the problem. Interviews expressed many opinions according to what is done during the learning process.

#### 4. Documentation

Documentation is derived from the word document, which means goods written. Documentation method means how to collect data by recording the data already. This method is easier compared to other data collection.<sup>12</sup> This method of documentation was used by the researcher to collect data during the research, such as data (a) facilities and infrastructure; (b) the number and identity of learners; (c) learning materials; (d) learning schedule; (e) methods and media used and; (f) learning practices.

### Result and Discussion

Creating an increasingly empowered and increasing society in the quality of life both physically and non-physically, based on economic stability and high legal awareness, is certainly not as easy as turning a hand. Therefore, researchers are trying to do early childhood education based on life skills

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<sup>11</sup> Sugiyono, *Memahami Penelitian Kualitatif* (Bandung: Alfabeta, 2010).

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<sup>12</sup> Yatim Riyanto, *Metodologi Penelitian Pendidikan Kualitatif dan Kuantitatif* (Surabaya: UNESA University Press, 2007), 91.

to help them in living a better life again because of the life skills they have. The life skills education given to the child aims to create an independent person and have life skills. Therefore, the child is expected to have the provision of knowledge and skills in order to be able to live a better life and to continue living without depending on others (independent life).

Life Skill is the knowledge or skill in solving life problem faced by someone so that can adapt to the social environment well. Life skills are divided into groups. In the guidebooks issued by the Ministry of National Education, life skills education is grouped into four types: personal skills, social skills, academic skills, and vocational skills.<sup>13</sup>

Life-oriented education can be provided in various levels of education including the preschool level. Based on the characteristics of early childhood development, life skills are tailored to the level of child development that is generally still in preoperational thinking. The life skills education orientation consists of personal skills and social skills.

To facilitate educators in applying and teaching life skills in early childhood, the two Life Skills are detailed as follows:

#### 1. Personal Skills

Personal skills consist of the awareness of who I am and the awareness of my potential. Awareness of himself (who I am specified to be: (1) religious education which aims to shape the personal character of a foster child who believes and cautious of God Almighty, knowledgeable, *berakhlakulkarimah*, discipline, and self-confidence, (2) character development between (3) learning to nurture the

environment While awareness of self-potential can be detailed into: (1) learning to help yourself in dressing, eating, toileting, (2) learning to grow self-confidence and not whiny through various activities and learn to care for themselves, (3) recognize the functions of the limbs and how to optimize it, for example, to enable both hands to work.

#### 2. Social Skills

Social skills are divided into two parts, namely communication skills with empathy and cooperative skills. Communication skills with empathy can be developed through storytelling, listening to other people or other friends telling the story intently, pouring thoughts/ideas through pictures or writing (if they can). While the skills of cooperation, can be developed, among others, through group work, group members and group leaders and working-class gotong-royong.<sup>14</sup>

In accordance with the principle of Life Skills education, which is oriented to everyday life, then another approach that can be used is a contextual approach. This approach must, of course, be used in life skills learning in early childhood. It is based on the purpose of life skills education, which is the education aimed at getting children to solve every problem faced quickly and precisely. The problem that happens is a real thing that happens in the environment of childhood. For that, activities given to children should be activities that can be found in a contextual life.

Teaching life skills in early childhood is not enough to use only one method of teaching. Life skills should be taught using

<sup>13</sup> Depdiknas, "Pedoman Penyelenggaraan Progam Kecakapan Hidup (Life Skill) Pendidikan Luar Sekolah" (Jakarta, 2002).

<sup>14</sup> Barie Hopson, *Lifeskills Teaching* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1982).

a variety of integrated methods. In addition to interactive methods, interaction methods, role-playing, open discussion, and small group activities can also use modeling, observation, situation analysis, one-to-one rehearsal, debates, and games as a method of teaching life skills. Through these methods, the child can actively act and do so that they will find a variety of knowledge that can be used to solve various problems to be faced.

In the world of education, methods and patterns of teaching serve as one tool to present the lesson material in order to achieve the goals set. The purpose of early childhood education is to develop life skills that include attitudes, knowledge, creativity, and skills in children. Giving stimulation of early childhood development is essential to boost aspects of child development that include: visual, hearing, physical-motor development, language and communication, social-emotional, moral, spiritual and cognitive abilities.

Life-oriented education is education that provides basic provisions and exercises done correctly to learners about the values of everyday life so that the concerned able, capable and skilled in carrying out their life that is to maintain survival and its development. The following is an explanation of early childhood development that is closely related to life skills:

#### 1. Physical Development

Physical development is the basis of mental development, meaning that mental development can work well if physical development is also good. Physical and spiritual development are closely related, as is the development of reason, closely related to physical development.

#### 2. Cognitive Development

Cognitive is often interpreted as intelligence or thinking. Cognitive development is the development of children's way of thinking. The ability of children to coordinate various ways of thinking to solve various problems can be used as a measure of the growth of intelligence. They know how to learn through initiative, experience and also the habitual learning from experience. Here, the children will learn to continue on certain things to become standard behavior for children.

#### 3. Language Development

During early childhood, children have a strong desire to learn to speak. This is due to two things. First, learning to speak is a basic tool in socializing. Second, learning to speak is a means of gaining independence. To improve communication, children have to master two basic tasks that are important elements of speaking. First, they must improve the ability to understand what others are saying and secondly, they must improve their speech so that others can understand it.

#### 4. Emotional Social Development

During early childhood emotions are very strong. This is a time of imbalance as children "get out of focus" in the sense that they are easily carried away by emotional explosions that are difficult to guide and direct. At this time the child's mental development takes the maximum opportunity to avoid the possibilities of being retarded. It is in this mental development that children need intensive, well-planned help.

Social development is usually intended as a behavioral development of children in adjusting to the rules that apply in the community where the child is located. Social behavior is something learned, not just a result of maturity. Social development of a child is obtained apart from the process of maturity also through learning opportunities response to the behavior of children.

#### 5. Spiritual Development

The religious potential of a child has existed since in the womb that in human nature there is a natural readiness to know God and obey Him. The recognition of the position of God as God is firmly entrenched in his nature, how the development and maintenance of the potential (religious feeling) that exist in the child, then this is where the role of educators in developing religious children. In human life has the potential of religion even the potential is already considered as the spiritual needs of human beings. According to Jalaluddin, the innate potential (religion) requires development through steady guidance and care, especially at an early age.<sup>15</sup>

Religious signs in the child grow integral to the development of psychological functions in the child. The absence of religious activity on the child due to some psychiatric functions that have not been perfect. However, the experience received by the child from the environment will form a sense of religion in the child. Therefore, it takes effort guidance and training from educators along with the development of children.

The development of the soul of religion in children is growing when accompanied by the affection of the people who are around him. The development of the religious spirit of the child begins at birth and will continue to grow to start with the child can talk and mention the name of God until finally he saw the people around the worship as the command of Allah that finally the soul of religion in children will continue to grow along with the behavior of religious parents and directing his son with the right education. Therefore, life skills education is vital to prepare children with life skills, both to administer and control themselves to interact in the school environment and society as well as skills for work.<sup>16</sup>

Early life education program based on life skill can be applied after going through the process of adjusting the condition of the target group and the environmental potential of both natural environment and socio-cultural environment. Here is an overview of implementation in early childhood street education:

1. Daily Living Skill
  - a. Personal needs managers
  - b. Personal finance management
  - c. Health awareness
  - d. Security awareness
  - e. Management of food-nutrition
  - f. Clothing management
  - g. Spare time management
  - h. Recreation
  - i. Environmental awareness
2. Personal / Social Skill
  - a. Self-awareness (interests, talents, attitudes, skills)
  - b. Confidence
  - c. Communication

<sup>15</sup> Rosalind Charlesworth, *Understanding Child Development* (USA: Wadsworth, 2011).

<sup>16</sup> Abdul Mujib & Ahmad Madkur, *Islamic Based-Life Skill Education on State Vocational High Schools in Metro* (Metro: Muhammadiyah University of Metro, 2016).

- d. Taste & caring
- e. Interpersonal relationship
- f. Understanding & troubleshooting
- g. Finding and developing positive habits
- h. Independence
- i. Leadership

Implementation of life skills-based learning program for early childhood needs to pay attention to the following matters:

1. The Curriculum in early childhood education is designed according to child development level.
2. The materials and educational methodology used in the framework of early childhood education should pay attention to the level of development. Paying attention to the rate of development also takes into consideration their developmental task, as each developmental period also carries out certain developmental tasks.
3. Academic competence is a tool for achieving goals, and manipulation is seen as a useful material for children's self-development.<sup>17</sup> Montessori suggests the need for different areas to represent the environment provided:

- a. Practical life provides the development of organizational tasks and cognition sequences through self-care, environmental care, training of gratitude and mutual respect, & coordination of physical movements.
- b. The sensorial area enables the child to be able to massage, classify and explain sensory impressions in relation to length, width,

temperature, period, color, period, and so on.

- c. Mathematics utilizes manipulation of material so that children are able to internalize the concept of numbers, symbols, sequences of operations, and memorization of basic facts.
- d. Language art which includes the development of spoken language, writing, reading, the study of grammar, dramatization, and children's sake. Basic skills in writing and reading are developed through the use of letters from paper, sandpaper words, and achievements that allow children to connect between sounds and symbols and express their thoughts through writing.
- e. The Cultural activity takes the child to know the geographical, historical and social sciences. Music and other arts are part of the integrated curriculum.

Through early childhood education based on life skills for street children in Surabaya, can change the mindset until the behavior becomes more independent children, productive, well behaved, and have a more positive orientation of life view. Children have good personal skills as a provision to become a better person. And have a good social skill as a provision of children to adapt to the environment so that later children are viewed well in the eyes of the community.

### Conclusion

Based on the results of research that has been implemented and described in previous chapters, about life skill-based early childhood education for street

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<sup>17</sup> Dom Garrison, *Life Skills Education and The Skills Centers*, 1997.

children in Surabaya, obtained the following conclusion:

1. Research begins with preliminary observations and interviews with street children, parents, and communities. The result of this observation is the lack of effort in early childhood education for street children.
2. The step in this research is to design life skill-based early childhood education for street children in Surabaya.
3. The result of this research is the change of behavior of street children after receiving life skill-based education.

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