



Father's Role in Early Childhood Parenting: a Seminar in Tanjunganom Village, Rowosari Subdistrict, Kendal Regency

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Abstract. *The active involvement of both parents in parenting is critical to the development of early childhood. In Indonesia, however, fathers are often less engaged in child-rearing due to the perception that their primary role is to provide financially. This seminar aimed to raise awareness among fathers in Tanjunganom Village, Rowosari Subdistrict, Kendal Regency, about the importance of their involvement in early childhood parenting. The seminar was structured to include presentations, discussions, and ongoing support. The outcomes indicated a significant improvement in fathers' knowledge and their ability to balance time between work and childcare. Children with more actively engaged fathers exhibited improved social, emotional, and cognitive development. The results reinforce the importance of fathers' involvement in parenting as a shared responsibility between both parents.*

Keywords: *Father's Involvement, Early Childhood Parenting, Social and Emotional Development, Parental Roles, Parenting Seminar.*

1. BACKGROUND

Parenting is a shared responsibility between both fathers and mothers. However, in Indonesia, mothers often carry a disproportionate burden in child-rearing and fulfilling daily needs, while the role of fathers remains limited. Ideally, both parents should collaborate in raising their children, with equitable and balanced role distribution. Although a survey by Parapuan (Keizer et al., 2020). revealed that 86.52% of married couples in Indonesia claim to share parenting duties, the reality is that mothers still bear the majority of domestic and childcare responsibilities (Alaoui, 2023). This imbalance indicates that the distribution of parenting roles is not yet fully equal (Nomaguchi & Melissa A. Milkie., 2020). Research shows that active involvement of fathers in child-rearing has a significantly more positive impact on a child's development compared to when parenting is solely managed by mothers. Initial observations at PAUD Cempaka in Tanjunganom Village, Rowosari Subdistrict, Kendal Regency, revealed that out of 50 parents surveyed, 31 fathers were too busy with work to engage in childcare, while 19 were involved but contributed only 30-40% of the overall parenting responsibilities. This data underscores the need for balanced parenting between fathers and mothers to optimize child development. Fathers often engage in informal and recreational activities with their children, while mothers focus more on household tasks and

the daily care routine. Achieving this balance is critical for the child's social, emotional, and cognitive development (Ramdhini et al., 2024).

Based on initial observations through a distributed questionnaire, it was found that more than 50% of fathers in Tanjunganom Village were preoccupied with work and did not allocate sufficient time to participate in their children's upbringing. The remaining fathers did help with childcare, but their involvement was still far from optimal. Interviews with the mothers revealed that around 84% of childcare responsibilities were placed on women, whether as wives or mothers. Strong traditional views still position fathers as primary breadwinners, while the full responsibility for child-rearing is placed on mothers. Many mothers also expressed that fathers do not need to be involved in childcare, as their work is already exhausting. This reflects an ongoing gender role imbalance in families, which can have significant implications for child development (Archer, 2022). However, research indicates that father involvement is crucial for the optimal social, emotional, and cognitive growth of children (Archer, 2022).

The primary issue driving the need for training on father involvement in early childhood parenting is the widespread perception among fathers that their role is limited to earning income, with no need to engage in childcare. This perception is often rooted in traditional and religious views that associate the father's role with providing for the family, while the mother's role is seen as managing the household and raising the children (Schoppe-Sullivan et al., 2021). According to Nurjanah et al. (2023), children often view their fathers as "superheroes" who protect them and their families (PRATIWI & Hidayatul Nurjanah., 2023). Historically, the husband's role was focused on earning a living, while the wife took full responsibility for childcare and education. As a result, when developmental issues arose with children, the mother was typically blamed, even by the father (Gavron, 2024). However, in the modern era, the roles of parents should be equal. Many mothers now work, and many fathers are also involved in household duties, including childcare (McConnon & Clare Conry-Murray., 2022). This parenting seminar aims to enlighten fathers on the importance of their involvement in early childhood parenting, which has positive effects on child development. Additionally, this seminar seeks to help mothers understand that childcare and household responsibilities are not solely the wife's burden but a shared responsibility that should be divided fairly with the husband. The program is expected to provide solutions through seminars, ongoing support, and evaluation.

2. METHODS

This community service program was conducted through a parenting seminar aimed at promoting the active involvement of fathers in early childhood parenting. The method used in this program combined theoretical presentations, practical guidance, and continuous follow-up support to ensure the sustainability of the seminar's impact. The steps involved in the program are as follows:

Preparation:

The preparation phase involved coordination between the community service team (KKN POSKO 5) and local stakeholders, particularly PAUD Cempaka in Tanjunganom Village. Initial meetings were held to align the seminar's goals with the needs of the local community. The team developed a series of seminar materials focused on educating fathers on their roles in early childhood development, ensuring the content was relevant and practical for the participants (Henry et al., 2020).

Participant Recruitment:

The participants of the seminar were selected from the parents of children attending PAUD Cempaka. Invitations were extended to both fathers and mothers, with a particular emphasis on encouraging fathers to attend. The seminar was promoted through local networks and community leaders to maximize participation (Emery & Flora, 2020).

Seminar Implementation:

The seminar was conducted as a face-to-face event at PAUD Cempaka. It was divided into several key stages:

1. **Introductory Session:** The seminar began with an assessment of the participants' existing knowledge about parenting roles. Fathers were asked about their level of involvement in childcare, the time they spend with their children, and the types of activities they engage in with their children.
2. **Presentation of Material:** The core of the seminar focused on educating fathers about their crucial role in their children's cognitive, social, and emotional development. The presentation emphasized how balanced parenting can positively affect children's growth. The presentation was supported by a motivational video highlighting father-child relationships.
3. **Discussion and Q&A Session:** A discussion session followed the presentations, where participants were encouraged to share their experiences and challenges. This open forum allowed for real-life problem-solving strategies to be discussed, with a focus on practical solutions that fathers could implement at home.

Post-Seminar Support:

After the seminar, continuous support was provided to participants through a structured follow-up process. Fathers were encouraged to implement what they had learned by scheduling regular activities with their children. This post-seminar phase included:

1. **Activity Schedules:** Fathers were guided to create weekly schedules that included specific time blocks for activities with their children, such as reading, playing, or helping with educational tasks.
2. **Follow-up and Monitoring:** The community service team conducted periodic check-ins with participants to monitor the progress of their involvement in childcare. Feedback from both fathers and mothers was collected to assess the long-term impact of the seminar.

Evaluation:

To measure the effectiveness of the seminar, a pre-test and post-test evaluation method was used. Participants were given questionnaires before and after the seminar to assess changes in their knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors regarding their role in parenting. This evaluation helped to quantify the seminar's impact and identify areas for improvement in future iterations of the program (Lishinski & Yadav, 2021).

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The parenting seminar on "Father's Role in Early Childhood Parenting" at PAUD Cempaka in Tanjunganom Village, Kendal Regency, yielded several notable outcomes. A total of 30 parents, predominantly fathers, attended the seminar. The results from the pre-test and post-test evaluations indicated a significant increase in participants' knowledge and awareness of the importance of father involvement in early childhood development.

Increased Knowledge and Awareness:

Prior to the seminar, many fathers were unaware of the positive impact their involvement could have on their children's cognitive, emotional, and social development. The pre-test results showed that more than 50% of the participants believed that their primary role was solely as breadwinners, with little to no responsibility in child-rearing. After the seminar, this perception shifted significantly. The post-test results revealed that 85% of the fathers now understood the importance of balancing work and active engagement in parenting, particularly in early childhood.

Enhanced Participation in Childcare:

The seminar motivated many fathers to take a more active role in their children's lives. Before the seminar, 31 out of 50 fathers indicated that they were rarely involved in daily childcare activities due to work commitments. Following the seminar, 70% of these fathers reported making conscious efforts to spend more time with their children. This included participating in activities such as playing, helping with homework, and being present for important milestones.

Positive Feedback from Mothers:

The feedback from mothers highlighted the positive changes they observed in the home. Mothers reported that fathers became more involved in everyday tasks, including caregiving and emotional support for their children. This shift relieved some of the burden previously placed solely on the mothers, leading to a more balanced distribution of parenting responsibilities. Mothers also noted improvements in their children's behavior, with children showing more confidence and emotional stability as a result of increased fatherly involvement.

Challenges Faced:

Despite the positive outcomes, some challenges remained. Many fathers cited difficulties in balancing work with family time, particularly those with demanding jobs or long working hours. Although the seminar provided strategies for time management, the practical implementation of these strategies proved difficult for some participants. Additionally, cultural expectations and long-standing gender roles continued to be a barrier for full father engagement in childcare. Fathers expressed the need for continued support and guidance to help them maintain their newfound roles in parenting.

Long-Term Impact and Sustainability:

The long-term impact of the seminar will depend largely on sustained follow-up and support. The community service team (KKN POSKO 5) plans to conduct regular check-ins with the participants to monitor progress and provide additional resources as needed. The introduction of weekly activity schedules for fathers and children has been successful in reinforcing the lessons learned during the seminar. Fathers who consistently follow the schedules reported stronger emotional bonds with their children and improved family dynamics.

The results of this seminar underline the importance of targeted educational programs in shifting traditional perceptions about gender roles in parenting. The significant increase in father involvement post-seminar demonstrates that with the right knowledge and support, fathers are willing and able to take on a more active role in their children's upbringing. This

aligns with existing research, which shows that balanced parenting between fathers and mothers leads to better developmental outcomes for children.

The seminar also highlighted the ongoing challenges related to work-life balance and cultural norms. While the program made progress in shifting attitudes, continued support will be crucial to ensure that these changes are sustainable. Further efforts to address these challenges, such as workshops on time management and discussions around cultural perceptions, may be necessary to achieve deeper, long-lasting change in parenting practices.

4. CONCLUSION

The parenting seminar conducted at PAUD Cempaka in Tanjunganom Village successfully increased the awareness and involvement of fathers in early childhood parenting. Fathers who previously viewed their role as primarily financial providers gained a deeper understanding of the importance of their active participation in their children's development. The seminar led to notable improvements in father-child interactions, with many fathers beginning to take on a more balanced role in their families. This positive change was also reflected in the feedback from mothers, who reported more equitable distribution of parenting responsibilities and enhanced emotional bonds within the family. However, challenges such as balancing work commitments with family responsibilities and overcoming traditional gender roles still persist. Overall, the seminar has demonstrated that with appropriate education and support, fathers can play a critical role in fostering their children's social, emotional, and cognitive development.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To build on the success of this seminar, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. **Continued Support and Follow-up:** Ongoing mentorship and check-ins with fathers are essential to ensure the sustainability of the changes made. Regular workshops, group discussions, and activity planning sessions can help reinforce positive parenting practices.
2. **Work-life Balance Programs:** Future initiatives should include more focused strategies on managing work and family time. Offering time management workshops or creating supportive networks among fathers may help them better balance these responsibilities.
3. **Addressing Cultural Norms:** Further seminars should aim to challenge and gradually shift the cultural perceptions that associate childcare solely with mothers. Community-

based discussions involving both fathers and mothers could help create a more supportive environment for shared parenting roles.

4. **Expanding the Program:** This program could be expanded to other areas within the subdistrict or regency, involving more communities to spread awareness and promote father involvement in early childhood development across a broader population.

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