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## Strengthening teachers in realizing child-friendly schools for positive character development

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### ABSTRACT

This article contains the results of community service carried out by postgraduate lecturers at the PTIQ Jakarta Institute. The implementation of the activity was motivated by the common understanding of teachers on child-friendly school programs in developing students' character, which became a national issue. Implementing the service is expected to improve the competence of teachers in Tanggamus Regency, Lampung Province, especially in realizing child-friendly schools. The implementation method used is training with demonstration. The use of the method is considered following the target and assisted object. The training participants consisted of teachers in Tanggamus Regency, Lampung Province, totaling 75 people, and it was held on Wednesday, September 15, 2021. The implementation of this activity showed that teachers in Tanggamus Regency did not comprehensively understand child-friendly schools in students' character development. After the activity, it was found that all teachers understood conceptually child-friendly schools, and teachers understood the urgency of realizing child-friendly schools. This program has the potential to develop the character of Indonesian children.

### ABSTRAK

Artikel ini memuat tentang hasil pengabdian masyarakat yang dilakukan oleh dosen pascasarjana Institut PTIQ Jakarta. Pelaksanaan kegiatan ini dilatarbelakangi rendahnya pemahaman guru terhadap program sekolah ramah anak dalam pengembangan karakter peserta didik yang menjadi isu nasional. Terlaksananya pengabdian ini diharapkan dapat meningkatkan kompetensi guru di Kabupaten Tanggamus Provinsi Lampung khususnya dalam mewujudkan sekolah ramah anak. Metode pelaksanaan yang digunakan adalah pelatihan dengan demonstrasi. Penggunaan metode ini dianggap sesuai dengan target dan objek dampingan. Peserta pelatihan ini terdiri dari guru-guru di Kabupaten Tanggamus Provinsi Lampung berjumlah 75 orang, dan dilaksanakan pada hari Rabu, 15 September 2021. Hasil pelaksanaan kegiatan ini menunjukkan bahwa guru-guru di Kabupaten Tanggamus belum memahami secara komprehensif tentang sekolah ramah anak dalam pengembangan karakter peserta didik. Setelah kegiatan, diketahui bahwa semua guru telah memahami secara baik tentang sekolah ramah anak secara konseptual, serta guru memahami tentang urgensi mewujudkan sekolah ramah anak. Program ini berpotensi mengembangkan karakter anak-anak Indonesia.

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## 1. Introduction

Today, discussions about child-friendly schools are re-emerging in the community. Child-friendly schools or known as CFS, are educational and learning activities that are conducive, healthy, and clean and have concern for the social and cultural environment, are ready to fulfill respect and respect children's rights, and provide guarantees of protection for those caused by violence, discrimination and keep did not receive lousy treatment [1]. Such schools support children's participation in teaching activities in planning, implementing, and evaluating learning activities. In addition, child-friendly schools can meet protection at all levels of education [2]. Child-friendly schools are considered places of school education that can provide children's rights in their activities at school. Child-friendly schools are very important to implement in ensuring the protection of children from various threats. Child-friendly schools include human resources, including qualified educators, facilities, and infrastructure, with attention to risk management.



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The child-friendly school model is a school model developed by UNICEF which makes the concept of child-friendly the basis by providing comfortable, safe, and protected schools, trained educators, adequate resources, and an environment [3]. Child-friendly schools in Indonesia have been ratified by the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1990, a policy to fulfill children's rights. Child-friendly schools are defined as programs to create conditions for children while in academic units that are safe, clean, healthy, caring, and environmentally cultured, which can guarantee the fulfillment of children's rights and protection from violence, discrimination, and another mistreatment, and support children's participation, especially in planning, policy, learning, and supervision [3]. Based on the statement, it can be concluded that a child-friendly school is a program that conditions schools into comfortable second homes for children by ensuring that children's rights are fulfilled and that there is protection for them.

Many studies on child-friendly schools include; [4], said child-friendly schools adopt a rights-based education approach, namely: Preventing discrimination, secondly, prioritizing the best interests of children, making children feel comfortable and safe, and freeing children to express themselves. The emphasis here is on access that creates opportunities for learning, qualities that support cognitive and affective development, and respect that values language, culture, religion, and individual perspectives. Then [5] said that child-friendly schools are required for every child to have a safe and comfortable place to study emotionally and psychologically. Next, [6] said that child-friendly schools understand and provide all children's rights to education and learning, can express opinions freely, avoid cyberbullying, violence, and discrimination, and can express themselves in various activities at school. The opinion above is emphasized by [7] that the purpose of child-friendly schools here is to provide a sense of security and comfort to students.

Some of the studies above explain the urgency of implementing child-friendly schools holistically through good management. Abdullah emphasized that child-friendly schools emerged triggered by the moral crisis of students. Moral, in a more general sense, is character. Character education is the main object of education in Indonesia. The process of children's education is expected to change attitudes and behavior for the better [8]. The act of decreasing the character of students is quite a concern for all of us. The action is motivated by parents' great attention to children with noble characters. Immoral acts or violence that often occur in schools today cause most parents to worry about their children at school. Therefore, a child-friendly school (CFS) was formed. Child-friendly schools also aim to prevent further acts of verbal and non-verbal violence [9]. If there is no prevention, acts of violence and bullying will continue. Supervision by the school, such as supervision from teachers, is essential.

Teachers have an essential role in implementing child-friendly schools in Indonesia. Teachers are the main driving force for the success of the crucial program. Thus, it is considered essential to increase the capacity of teachers as drivers of child-friendly schools [10]. The task of educators in the educational process is not only aimed at producing intelligent students but also positive characters. The situation ultimately motivates schools to take policies that pay attention to student character development. Education itself is not only concerned with knowledge but also with students' character because a good education is an education that will print children into human beings who can place themselves well in society [11]. Therefore, the role of all parties, such as parents, teachers, education personnel, the school environment, and the community environment, determines the best outcome for the goal.

However, the moral decline of students today is a severe threat to educational institutions. Additionally, the implementation of child-friendly schools has not been evenly distributed in Indonesia because the concept is not well distributed. School stakeholders and teachers lack awareness of the importance of creating a sense of security and comfort for students in the learning process. Child-friendly school management can be defined as a process that provides supervision on all matters involved in implementing policies and achieving goals, including activities for developing the positive character of students. The situation finally prompted researchers to make efforts to increase teacher capacity to create child-friendly schools through mentoring teachers in schools.

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## 2. Method

Training methods with demonstrations and examples carry out this service activity. The point is that there are implementers who act as resource persons who explain concepts about the meaning, goals and benefits, and characteristics of child-friendly schools in educational institutions as well as moral crises that often occur in the community so that the issue of child-friendly schools is echoed again and after the resource persons explain conceptually then accompanied by demonstrations and examples of immoral acts and the decline of the character of students in the field as well as examples of the success of schools that implement child-friendly school bases. Among the implementers, some act as instructors and facilitators. The objects of the training are teachers in Tanggamus Regency, Lampung Province, totaling 75 (seventy-five) people. The selection of the location was based on the work program of the Indonesian Child Protection Commission (KPAI) which wants direct assistance for teachers in Tanggamus Regency to have an overview and support in realizing child-friendly schools in educational institutions in the region. The mentoring activity was carried out on September 15, 2021, for 1 day of mentoring.

The strategy used in carrying out this service activity is in the form of training.

- a. Resource persons explain child-friendly school programs starting from the understanding, goals, benefits, and characteristics of child-friendly schools, and their explanations are always accompanied by practical examples related to immoral actions from students and demonstrations;
- b. When the resource persons explain the material for the trainees to listen and think about what they have experienced, they feel that it is relevant to the example given by the resource person;
- c. Training participants are given the freedom to ask questions either when the resource person explains the material or after finishing the explanation of the material, which the moderator controls;
- d. Training participants are expected to have a comprehensive understanding of child-friendly schools in developing the character of students who are part of the objectives of the activity;
- e. The activity will be described and analyzed descriptively. The results of this service activity will be described following the findings of data and facts in the field conditions before and after mentoring.

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## 3. Results and Discussion

To realize a child-friendly school in students' character development, the implementers consider it essential to provide detailed and comprehensive assistance on teacher strengthening as a driver of character education in schools. The material for strengthening teachers in realizing child-friendly schools contains criteria including the definition of child-friendly schools, goals, benefits, and characteristics of child-friendly schools in developing positive character. Based on the service activities carried out, the results of the service implementation can be described as follows:

### 3.1. Child-friendly school concept training

The presence of the implementers in the activity gives new hope to the training participants. They hope that the presentation of material on child-friendly school concepts can refresh and inspire them to be able to carry out social school programs for children in developing the character of students in the future. In general, the training participants did not understand matters related to child-friendly schools in detail. The statement is based on the participant's response to the stimulus given by the resource person before starting the explanation of the material. For the reason, the selection of primary materials related to child-friendly schools follows the initial abilities of the trainees.



**Figure 1. Presentation of training materials by resource persons.**

In explaining the material for child-friendly schools, the resource persons started with an explanation of the definition of child-friendly schools, the understandings explained were in the form of conclusions drawn from experts' opinions regarding the definition of child-friendly schools. As explained by the informant that what is meant by child-friendly schools are "schools that prioritize order, security, comfort, and cleanliness of the school environment to provide a sense of sympathy for students to carry out the learning process well." From the speaker's explanation of the notion of a child-friendly school, the participant's response was very good, even though many of the participants received the latest information about the meaning of a child-friendly school.

After explaining the meaning, the resource persons continued explaining the goals and benefits of child-friendly schools. Based on the explanation of the sources, it can be seen that the purpose of the child-friendly school is to provide a sense of security and comfort for all stakeholders of educational institutions in schools, both teachers, education staff, students, and parents. In the concept, several indicators can be used as a foothold in child-friendly school bearers. Some of these indicators include:

- a. Proactively inclusive,
- b. Healthy, safe, and protective,
- c. Community participation,
- d. Adequate and child-centered, and
- e. Gender equality.

The implementation of SRA requires the involvement and participation of all parties in creating a learning atmosphere and the Active, Innovative, Creative, Effective, and Fun Learning process (PAIKEM) for children, teachers, and other school members [1]. The explanation shows that the goals and characteristics of child-friendly schools do not run away from a desire to improve learning or improve services in learning. The explanation from the sources explained above follows the opinion of experts who say that child-friendly schools are a program that provides children's rights at school in terms of comfort, security, and freedom of expression. Child-friendly schools are formal, non-formal, and informal education units that are safe, healthy, and clean, care about environmental culture, guarantee, fulfill, respect children's rights and protect children from violence and other mistreatment support child participants. From the explanation above, the resource persons then presented experts' opinions about the characteristics of child-friendly schools.

According to [12], an area can be included in the child-friendly category if it has the following characteristics: First, children make decisions about the future of themselves, their families, and their environment. Providing open opportunities, for example, in making decisions about the future of themselves, their families, and their environment, accompanied by confidence in children's abilities, is an attitude teacher highly expect. Without the attitude, no matter how great the equipment provided at the school is, it will not be optimal in helping children's development. The teacher must believe in the ability of the child. The belief and trust will make his attitude provide flexibility and place the child as the subject and center of learning. So, the child will be helped to believe in himself and his abilities. He will not hesitate to try and realize his desire to explore and develop his potential.

Second is the ease of obtaining primary education, health, and other services for growth and development. The resource person then emphasized that through the education, everyone learns all the things that are not yet known. Through education will be born a knowledgeable person. Similarly, health is very important for human survival. Concerning the development of child-friendly areas, a child must get education and health services quickly because children are the generation that continues the continuity of the life. The resource person added his explanation about the function of children in the development of the nation's civilization by mentioning that today's Indonesian children will significantly influence the sustainability of human life.

Third, there is an open space for children to gather, play, and be creative with their peers safely and comfortably, which the school must also pay attention to. The resource person assessed that this is very important to anticipate accidents that can occur anytime and anywhere, considering the age of children who are still physically and mentally immature in planning and using their bodies. Experts agree with the opinion of the informants that open spaces for children are very urgent, especially children's creative spaces will continue to develop if they are carried out in open spaces that can be seen and reached by children. The resource persons encouraged all participants to always give serious attention to increasing students' creativity through open spaces in school educational environments.

Fourth, some regulations protect children from forms of violence and exploitation. The resource persons gave many cases of violence experienced by children, especially students at school, including cases of bullying, acts of sexual violence perpetrated by parents on children, and cases of pornography. Cases of violence that often occur must be given full attention in the world of education. The case is because, on average, cases of violence occur at the

age of elementary school children, either sexual violence or discrimination. Therefore, the school must pay attention to and protect children from all forms of violence by making regulations and policies that support child protection.

Fifth, there is no discrimination related to ethnicity, race, religion, or class. Resource persons support the attitude that discrimination should not occur in creating child-friendly areas. Indonesia consists of various ethnic groups, races, religions, and groups. Therefore, it is necessary to cultivate an attitude of mutual respect and respect for each other, which, of course, starts with a child. The attitude can be done in learning activities and daily life. Teachers have a significant role in realizing an anti-discrimination learning process among fellow students. Even the teacher holds a more significant function of directing students who are friendly with each other.

From the characteristics of child-friendly education above, it can be concluded that education can be said to be child-friendly if, by looking at the conditions of a safe, comfortable, and loving learning environment at school, the relationship that exists with love and affection between students and teachers. Parents and peers are very influential in shaping a child's character. Meanwhile, according to [13], child-friendly schools have the following characteristics:

- a. Fair treatment for male and female students.
- b. The learning process with varied learning methods makes students feel happy to follow lessons.
- c. Teaching media support the teaching and learning process.
- d. Students are involved in various activities that develop competence.
- e. Students are involved in a classroom arrangement.
- f. Students are involved in expressing their ideas in creating a school environment.

### 3.2. Increasing the capacity of teachers in realizing child-friendly schools with character

After the resource persons explained the basic things that must be known to realize child-friendly schools, they then explained the role of teachers and their capacity to realize child-friendly schools supported by increasing character values. The resource person emphasized that teachers must be able to teach, educate, and train students in Indonesia to become children with character like the demands of today's education. The resource persons classified the types of characters to be instilled in students, as stated in the national education system, namely: first, the character of God's love and all of His creation; second, independence and responsibility; third, honesty/trust, diplomatically; fourth, respect and courtesy; fifth, generous, likes to help and cooperation/cooperation; sixth, confident and hardworking; seventh, leadership and justice; eighth, kind and humble, and; ninth, the character of tolerance, peace, and unity [14].



**Figure 2. The training participants listen to the speakers' explanation.**

Furthermore, the resource persons explained that character has meaning, namely the values of human behavior related to God Almighty, oneself, fellow human beings, environment, and nationality, which are manifested in thoughts, attitudes, feelings, words, and actions based on religious norms, laws, manners, culture, and customs [7]. Character education is a system of inculcating character values in school members, which includes components of knowledge, awareness or willingness, and actions to implement these values, both towards God Almighty (YME), oneself, others, the environment, and nationality so that they become human beings[8]. Meanwhile, according to [8], the notion of character education is a deliberate effort to help someone so that he can understand, pay attention to, and carry out core ethical values.

The resource persons linked character education with child-friendly schools based on several relevant previous studies. Among these studies is research [3] showing that in understanding and implementing child-friendly education, classroom teachers should always provide good habits such as greeting before and after learning, lining up sequentially before entering class, and paying attention to homework and student uniforms. In addition, as parents, teachers always position themselves as examples for their students so that wherever the teacher is, the teacher behaves politely, dresses neatly, is disciplined, and is clean. Through this, the teacher tries to shape the students' character well.

The resource person gave the results of the second study [3] describing that child-friendly education will be able to create the character of students to be noble because, in the application of child-friendly education, there must be the fulfillment of the rights of the child or student, namely, fundamental rights such as protection or protection and student participation in learning. From the explanation of the resource persons based on the research results, it can be understood that the child-friendly school program can create the character of students to be noble because of the support of a quality environment and encouragement from teachers, and an excellent educational environment. However, the resource person suggested that the child-friendly school program would be successful if teachers were given serious reinforcement and assistance in realizing child-friendly schools in an educational environment, even though this is an essential and main point.

#### 4. Conclusion

From the explanation above, it can be concluded that the training participants in Tanggamus Regency, Lampung Province initially did not have comprehensive knowledge about the child-friendly school base which is currently an important issue in educational institutions. Meanwhile, with the training and mentoring, the trainees already know it, starting from conceptual concepts such as the understanding, goals, benefits, and characteristics of child-friendly schools with the character development of students already understanding well. In addition, the training participants also understood the crucial aspects that differentiated between child-friendly schools and anti-child schools. The improvement in the skills of these participants confirmed that the activity had a positive impact on all training participants, which were dominated by teachers throughout the Tanggamus Regency, Lampung Province. Through the mentoring activity, it is hoped that there will be a new breakthrough from the teachers in Tanggamus Regency in creating child-friendly schools in educational institutions so that the child-friendly program will become a national reference for all educational institutions in Indonesia.

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