

The Role of Parents and Teachers in Sexual Education for Special Needs Children

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ABSTRACT

Children with special need often become targets of sexual harassment, 105 cases of sexual violence against women with disabilities were recorded in 2023 not just that children with special need can even be a culprit of sexual harassment because they did not know what they doing is wrong, like if they suddenly kissing or hugging other people without their consent. Therefore a sex education is important to be taught to them. But where should sex education be held? at school or at home? It is actually taught at both place, in school it is a teacher duty to teach about sexuality and when at home it become the parents role. The end result of this article is parents and teacher have an important roles to teach special need children about sexualities. Parents role is to teach them about sex education from the basic knowledge such as who can touch and see their body parts at home, beside that parent is also having a role in becoming a figure that will be an example for their children about marriage relationship. As for teacher, they usually teach about periods, norms about sex in society, genders and how to behave in a relationship. Teacher also need t be an example for their students from how they dressed, how they interact with another gender, and also giving their student an advice on what can or cannot be done in a relationship.

Keywords : *Sexual Education; Special needs children*

INTRODUCTION

Every child is created by Allah SWT with their own strength and weakness. Every weakness and perfection from a physical perspective have an attractiveness to the beauty and strength of the body.. whereas spiritually humans given sense and minds to develop themselves so they can be the most perfect creature on this earth. This perfection is actually not all of the humans get it, because God created minorities of people that's having imperfection, whether it's physically, mentally or that we used to call disabled or special needs children.

Special needs children can be interpreted as a children that having difficulties that needed a special treatment in a special school because a normal school maybe won't be as effective. Special needs children also can be seen as a child that have disable physically, mentally, intellectually, or even emotionally so that they need a special education. (Atmaja, 2018)

Special needs children with their difficulties, often become targets of sexual harassment or even can do sexual harassment without their knowing about it, like if they suddenly kissing or hugging other people without their consent because that child did not know it is a bad things to do. (Pratiwi & Romadonika, 2020).

Quoting from the National Commission on Violence Against Woman annual records (CATAHU), in 2017 there were 117 cases of sexual violence against women with disabilities, which increased in 2018 to 57 cases. In 2019 the overall level of violence against women with disabilities decreased, but the

number of cases of sexual violence increased to 69 cases. Then in 2023 105 cases of sexual violence against women with disabilities were recorded (Komnas Perempuan, 2024).

Sexual harassment is an act that disturbs, annoys, or makes fun of someone by using physical actions carried out with the aim of fulfilling sexual satisfaction, this action is included as a criminal act. This included sexual violence that involving penetrative contact (Aziz, 2015) (Ismadi, 2021).

Sexual harassment to a child include asking or forcing child to do a sexual activity, showing them a privacy area, showing pornography material whether it audio or video or even just an image, doing a sexual intercourse with children, seeing or touching children genital (unless it needed in a medical conditions like if a doctor need to do a check medically), and using children to produce pornography material. (Tandry, 2015)

Sexual harassment can causing a lot to a child, they can suffer physically like having an infection or something like a sexual transmitted disease, mentally or psychologically because of the trauma that caused by a sexual harassment.

That is why a sexual education is really important for children with special need, so they can learn and protect themselves from someone that want to harm them in a sexual way.

Because sexual education has a wide scope, it need to be teach since a young age. The right time for starting with the sexual education is when child is starting to get curious and asking a lot of question. The answer to that questions need to be adjust to their cognitive levels. But parents can not suddenly give all of the knowledge about sexual education in one time, it need to be given gradually.

Parents and teacher hold an important role in providing sex education for special need children and ensuring they have the knowledge and resources to lead healthy and safe live. because parent is the first educator in their children's life and they are the foundation of information about childrens sexuality, bodies, boundaries and relationships with other people.

That's why it's so hard for parents to tell about sexual education for child alone and they also can not give all the responsibility to the teachers in school. They need to work together so the child can learn in a best way about anything relevant with sexual education. Based on that problem, the purpose of this article is to determine what parents and teacher role in sexual education for children with special need.

RESEARCH METHODS

This article is using a qualitative methods, which is literature review. Literature reviews means a research whose used sources were obtained through the results of the late studies or another literature that being analyzed systematically then being concluded. Literature review is a technique for collecting data using books, literatures, notes or reports that have a connection with problem that want to be solved.

Writing technique that used in literature review can done by searching for similarities from a few references, taking conclusion from the references and summarize what writer got from the studies that writer read. Data that writer collected is the one that having connection with parents and teachers role in self-help for physical disability children. Beside that writer read, learn, analyze, and compare one recourse with others so we can get the answer from our questions about what is the role of parents and teachers in self- help for physical disability children.

RESULTS

Sex education is an important aspect in a child development and really crucial because it can help children navigate the things about their bodies and sexuality. For special need children sex education is

even more important cause they may face difficulties and additional challenges in understanding and expressing things about sex and sexuality.

Because sexuality is still in the private realm and confidentiality must be maintained, sex education is still considered taboo or unusual in society. It would be very good if sex education was introduced from an early age, if necessary, schools could include sex education in the elementary school education curriculum. When the families do not have awareness of the importance of sex education, the experiences that children with special need have without education can lead to inaccurate learning. (Imron, 2017) (Yildiz & Cavkaytar, 2017) (Ismadi, 2021).

People tend to believe that children with special need did not have any feelings, sexual desire, innocent and to teach sex education to them is unnecessary. These things make their parents to be overprotective and ignorant because they think sex education for their child will be worthless. A few parents also think that teaching their children about sexuality is taboo, embarrassing and not important. But that way of thinking is wrong because a person with special need is also experiencing sexual desire. (Ariadni, Prabandari, & DW, 2017)

Parents and teacher hold an important role in providing sex education for special need children and ensuring they have the knowledge and resources to lead healthy and safe lives. Because parent is the first educator in their children's life and they are the foundation of information about children's sexuality, bodies, boundaries and relationships with other people.

The good way to teach about sexuality to a special need child is to have the parents and teachers work together, only in this way special need children can result in their independence and healthy sexual behavior and also can prevent them from sexual harassment or unplanned pregnancy. A sexual education that tells about gender, human rights, relationships etiquette can help reduce marriage by accident because of unwanted pregnancy or a young age marriage (Ariadni, Prabandari, & DW, 2017) (Sari, 2017) (Bano, 2022).

There is a saying that said parents are their child's first teacher, that is why their part in child independence to do activity of daily living is having a really big impact. That is why child education can't be divided with their family, because family is the first place for a child to learn expressing themselves as a social creature in interaction with their environment.

Parents have a major role and first for children's education, namely nurturing, raising, and educating children are tasks that cannot be separated from various obstacles and challenges. Through their family children learns about love, appreciating and become confident and independence.

In going through each child development, parents have an important role in which parents help children with their developmental process, so their children can achieve independence to live in society. The individual diversity of children with special needs has an impact on the child's needs as a whole. There are various things too, one of needs of children with disabilities is carrying out activities of daily living. Parents role is to become a guide, a teacher, and as a role model.

Usually in learning about sexuality, mothers having a bigger role because a lot of mother from a child with special need are their main caregiver and having a very large role in their children education as well. Based from the late research mothers also has more awareness, knowledges, practices and empowered about sex education then the fathers. (Yildiz & Cavkaytar, 2017) (Saini, Ahmad, & Nazli, 2021)

Parents playing important roles in giving sex education for their child, such as providing informations. To teach their children about consent and boundaries and also about menstruation and anatomy of reproductive system is a few topics that a lot of parents think are important to teach to their special need children. Because of what they need to teach is kinda a lot, parents also need support and

training about bodies and sexualities because it is a parent job to teach them about it. (Colarossi, Riquelme, Collier, Perez, & Dean, 2023).

It is hard for a parents from a special need children to teach about sex education to their child, because a lot of special need child especially the one with cognitive or mental disabilities need to be teach with a special way like keep giving the education again and again and again because one time is not enough for them to understand immediately. That thing will sure be hard for child that have a working father and mother. But that does not meant all of the responsibilities to teach sex education can be given to the child's teacher.

Parent's opinion on whether or not their child being teach about sexuality is also various, usually a parents with boy agree that their child need to be taught about sexuality so they know which sexuality behaviour is okay which one is not, but parents with girl will said they did not want any sexual contact for their child even if it is for the girl's knowledge.

A lot of parents thinks that sex education is important so their child that have special need is safe against any sexual abuse, parents believe that sex education need to be teach by the teacher at school. Even though the formal education for sex education is important, the base of sex education itself need to be taught since young age like what is the name of a sexual part from their body, which part of the body that can be touch by someone else, etc. That making sex education for the child become more effective. (Saini, Ahmad, & Nazli, 2021)

It is usual also for parents to be confused because they did not know where to start teaching their child about sexuality, this happens because the parents are laking knowledge about sex education. Few parents do the sex education when their child start asking or when they have a sexual problems, another parents telling the sex education while connecting it with religion, they will told their child something like "it is a sin to walking outside without clothes" or something similar like that. (Ariadni, Prabandari, & DW, 2017)

Parent must create a safe and open environment where their child can feel comfortable to asking questions and discussing their concern about sexuality. This kind of communications is essentials for children with special need who may struggle with communication and understanding social cues. Parents should also be aware of their child unique cognitive and emotional needs and adapt their approach to sex education according to their difficulties.

A few things that a parents can teach to their special needs child about sex education to prevent something bad happen such as sexual harassment is :

- Starting to teaching them about how or where to change clothes
- Where to go if they want to pee or taking a dump
- Controlling, and supervising their child use of gadgets to make sure that their child did not accessing something that inappropriate such as porn or something vulgar or anything that has sexual content inside it
- Teaching them about stranger danger and also supporting children if they reporting a sexual harassment or just actually did not feel comfortable to someone. (Ismadi, 2021)

With technologies growth these days information can be easily accessed by a lot of youngsters as well, that thing is also happen to children with disabilities. Nowadays sexual harrasment can happen from an internet as well. There is a lot of child predators that used internet as their place to search for a prey. That things can be really dangerous because that can ended with the predators asking for a nude pcitures from child, doing a video call while showing off their private area or even asking the children to showing off their private area, not ending there that thing can also lead to a kidnaping cases if the children is not

careful enough. That is why parents need to control and supervising the gadget used by their children so the parents can see what their child actually doing in the internet. (Tandry, 2015)

Parents can try to do this thing so you children can safely using the internets :

- For a 2 – 4 years old child, fully supervise your child when accessing the internet, and give them a fun experience such as searching for an interesting images or videos like animals or cartoons.
- For a 4 – 7 years old child give them a restricted freedom for them to choose what sites they like, remind them about which sites or games that they can used.
- For a 7 – 10 years old children use a filtering application in your computer or gadgets
- For a 10 – 14 years old children tell them how important to save a private data and introduce them to the danger of internet
- For a 14 – 17 years old children teach them about responsibilities, parents role is as a friend for their child in social media. Tell your children about strangers danger and be careful if they want to accept invitation to meet an online friend in real life.

Besides all of that parents can also do these things to provide extra protections :

- Using passwords for internet access so your child need you permission first before using the internet
- If your children having an activities in social media check what their upload
- Put computers in open space area not in the children room so you can supervising them in an easier way
- Use a parental control app
- Find sites that your child will like and show it to them so they will immerse in that sites more then any other sites, this can also prevent them to search sites by themselves were the sites is maybe not safe enough for them

Parents emotional approach to their child is really important as well for their child mental health. Parents need to maintain communication and become their children place to expressing their emotions, make your child comfortable with you so they will tell about their problems and curiosity about anything especially sexuality. (Tandry, 2015)

Underwear rule is a simple guidelines for parents to teach their children about communication rules, interaction and skinship with other people. This rule is teaching assertiveness about principal and values to children that their body is their own properties. There is no one that can touch or hurt it, not even parents or siblings.

Parents need to teach their children about body parts with their real name, do not teach children to said a penis is “bird” or “squid” but teach them the real word like penis or vagina and explain to them that there is some body parts that another people can see nor touch, unless it is for medical reason. Try to not giving another name or a nickname when introducing children private parts. This thing need to teach again and again so that the child know how to react if someone touching their private parts. (Tandry, 2015) (Oktavianingsih & Fazriatin, 2019)

Parents also need to teach their child that if someone touch their private parts or even just gazing at it they need to tell parents or teacher about that, tell your child that keeping secret is fine but if it is something that make them sad, frustrate or angry they need to tell that to someone else that they can trust just like parents, teacher or even their siblings.

Tell your children that it is okay to say no to a hug or a kiss even from their own uncles or aunts, because if parents do this they already teach their children that they bodies is their own and they can set up rules for their own body.

Even though a special need children sometimes kinda hard to understand like children with autism, but parents need to believe anything that their own child tell. Trust them if they said someone touching

their private area even if that person is a relatives or someone that close with your child. after that parent can do the next right thing like going to police or doctor.

Also parents need to teach their children about rejecting any gifts whether it is a food, drink, toys or even a ride to go home from a stranger or someone that they did not know. If something like that happen teach them to say no or even running to a place that more safe. (Tandry, 2015)

What parents did at home is a basic of sexual education, in schools usually people with special needs will be teach about attitudes an behaviours that they can and cannot do such as they can shake hand with friend but do not kiss them suddenly, they will given knowledge and having a discussion about gender, and also social/society rules and demands about sexuality. But in home usually parents just scold the child whenever they saw a sexual behaviour that they seem unfit, and they also talk about stranger danger and who can or cannot touch their child bodies. (Astuti & Andanwerti, 2016)

As for curriculum for sex education in school it conclude reproduction systems for male and female, pregnancies, periods problem for female, contraception or safe sex, the danger of sexual abuse, sexual transmitted infection (STI), teen pregnancy problems and sexual abnormilities. (Ismadi, 2021)

The teacher becomes the person that also holds the important role in coveying sexual and sexuality education information to chidren with special needs is because the duration of interaction with teachers is quite long compared to parent or companion. Teachers have a responsibilitiy to teach about sexual education in school is because teacher are parents for children at school. Teacher is also a person whose duties are to teach, educate, guide, direct, train, and evaluate students. (Sunesni, Furwasyih, & Edyyul, 2022).

Teachers that handle special need children should teach a few things to them such as avoiding physical contact like which area from their body that can or cannot be touch by other people. This thing can prevent students from sexual abuse or harassment. (Buyukbayraktar, Er, & Kesici, 2018)

Before teaching or using any method to teach reproductive and sexual health education to adolescent students with special need, teacher need to study the curriculum that can be apply, thinking about what rules and norms that will be used while learning, and plan program for reproductive and sexual health education learning that appropriate for student with special need. A few teachers include role play and training to teach about reproductive and sexual health. (Jalanindhi & Azizah, 2022)

According to Safrudin Aziz (2015), teacher have the most vital role in teaching sexual education for children ith special need. This because teacher job is to teach and to educate children moral as well as their character. So in sexual education teacher have a role as an example such as teacher need to chose their words whenever talking, maintaining a good interaction with another gender, giving them advice for their friendship interaction. Besides that teacher is also need to be an inspirer such in inspiring studen to be brave in behaviour especially brave when there is something not right happen about sexuality, motivator as in motivating student to keep doing a personal hygiene or maintaining a healthy sexual behaviour, dinamisator which mean teacher keeping the learning environment fun and not boring, and evaluator to see if the sex education program going well.

Teacher method in teaching sex education for children with special need is for them to make sure that their teaching method is interesting, fun and easy to understand by the students and besides that because of their difficulties the teaching methods used for teach a special need students need to be based on their individuals needed. Teaching method also need to develop and embed main values and attitudes that expected can bring good habits for daily live. (Amka, 2021)

Teacher can also cooperating with parents about their methods or what did they tell to the students about sexual education so the parents can continuing or do the same in house or even the teacher can also tell parents what they need to do so the learning method can be applied maximally to the children and then

the parents will helping the students to understand it deeply about what they learn in school at house, teacher will also tell the parents about the children development while learning what they teaching at that time. (Amka, 2021)

Children with special needed have a different strategy or way of learning cause they have different difficulties, teacher needs to differenciate their teaching method based on the difficulties of them because of course deaf children cannot having a same way of learning with a blind children.

For blind student teacher need to give the students a chance to learn their environment through an explorations by touch about situation and things that around them. So to teach sex education with that teacher can used a dolls or a mannequin to teach them about body parts. Teacher can combine this method with experience as well just like for education about who can and cannot touch their body, teacher can used an experience about going to doctor because a doctor can touch them if they having a sickness to check what should they do.

For a student that deaf, teacher need to do a face to face learning so that the child can read the teacher lips or can read the sign language in the most comfortable way. Besides that teacher can also used media such as videos or images to teach them about body parts or which part can be touch by another person and with part cannot. Of course teacher need to choose an appropriate image or videos to show it to the students, the media also need to be adjust to the student needs.

For a student with intelegent disability that having a lot of difficulties such as they tend to forget fast about something they learned so teacher need to teach them again and again so they did not forget about that, children with intelegence disability also can not really learn with something abstrcat and usually learn with imitating rather than reading definitions, usually a children with intelegence disabilities understand and remeber things based from things or situation that they experienced directly so to teach them teacher can used a similar method with blind student using a story telling with experience and also used a learning by doing method that can make them touch which part of their bodies that can be touch or can not be touch by other person. (Amka, 2021)

Children need to know that they can ask anything to parents or teachers so they did not think that asking something about sexuality is consider as a taboo, if this thing left as it is child can also afraid or reluctant to ask or telling stories openly to the parents or teacher. They prefer to keep it by themselves if they happen to getting harassment or abuse or even when they feel something wrong with their medical condition (Oktavianingsih & Fazriatin, 2019)

CONCLUSIONS

Both parents and teacher have an important roles to teach special need children about sexualities. Parents role is to teach them about sex education from the basic knowledge such as who can touch and see their body parts, teaching them about underwear rules, about how to set boundaries in a relationship at home, beside that parent is also having a role in becoming a figure that will be an example for their children about marriage relationship and also supervising their child when they play gadgets so they did not open something that is not appropriate or something vulgar. As for teacher, they usually teach about periods, norms about sex in society, genders, how to behave in a relationship and another things that include in sex education curriculum at their school. Teacher also need to be an example for their students from how they dressed, how they interact with another gender, and also giving their student an advice on what can or cannot be done in a relationship.

Special need children need a special treatment as well in their sexual education because of their diffiulties, such as blind children that need lesson based on touch or audio, deaf children that need audio or sign language method to learn about sexuality, for children with intlegence disability they need to learn

based on experience so it will be easier for them to remember and they also need to be teach in a repetitive way so they not easily forgotten what they already learned.

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