

# The Role of Parents in Early Childhood Education During the New Normal Life

**Ni Nyoman Sudiani**

Sekolah Tinggi Agama Hindu Dharma Nusantara Jakarta

## **A. Introduction**

Education is a planned activity that must be done in order to change the mindset of the community. A country will develop if the members of the country and its citizens are educated. Through education, people are able to think about many solutions in various ways in solving any problem that they face and they are also able to create things that can be useful to the human kind. Creativity will arise if the society is educated. Education in Indonesia is carried out in stages, starting from basic education (elementary), first middle education (junior high) and intermediate advanced (senior high). But now, it is called 1st grade until 12th grade. Education from 1st grade to 9th grade is required for all Indonesians, the goal is to alleviate the illiterate in the society. The education gained from 1st grade to 9th grade is called 9-year compulsory education. Apart from that 1st grade to 12th grade of the education stages, then it needs to be seen the other side of education which is even more important is early childhood education. The importance of early childhood education is because of this education is the first step or stage about how to put basic life experiences to the children. The experience meant is the experience of the five senses and sense of propulsion (body movement), in Hindu teaching it is called *Panca Budhi Indriya* and *Panca Karmendriya*.

The implementation of education is currently experiencing obstacles because of the CORONA-19 virus is attacking the world. The plague of CORONA-19 virus cause all of the activities to stop, from education activity, economic side and entertainment. But when the state limits the movement of the community, new problem has arise namely economic problems such a poverty. Because of these economic problems, the governments re-open the economic activities. The society must follow some government strict health protocols. By re-opening the society movements and activities in CORONA-19 virus pandemic time, the government name it New Normal Life, by following the health protocols which have been st by WHO (World Health Organization). Beside the economic activities, the education activities also should be held in this new normal life because only through cognitive education human kind can be developed. It is not just for the cognitive development but also for developing the affective and psychomotor side. But because this New Normal Life due to the COVID-19 virus, the education that already held by face to face among teachers and students in the classrooms need to think again, especially for the early childhood students. Early childhood is far more dangerous when exposed to the COVID-19 virus because her/his body not as strong as adult person. Therefore, the decision to reopen the school foe the early children must be considered carefully.

In WHO website that coronavirus disease on July 15th 2020 at 05.01 pm written the amount of the new cases are 185.836, so the total cases until 15 July are 13.150.645 with the number of death is 574.464. The highest case happen in The United State of America with the amount case is 6.884.15. In South East Asia has reported the amount of case is 1.231.014 on July 15th 2020 ("WHO Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19)

Dashboard,” 2020). These data show that this disease has not ended yet to this moment. How about the COVID-19 in Indonesia? Kompas.com reported the new amount of the CORONA-19 virus case in Indonesia to July 28th 2020 is 1.525 cases. The increase in the number of new cases makes a total number of Covid-19 that has been confirmed is more than 4.838 cases, 57 cases increased from the previous day. Meanwhile, the amount of recovery patients come to amount of 1.518 people, the total is 58.173 people. These cases are spread in 34 province and 471 districts/cities in Indonesia. (Mukaromah, 2020). This statement shows that COVID-19 cases in Indonesia has not slow down yet, therefore we can not be careless and stay alert and keep following the government’s health protocol.

See the high of COVID-19 cases in Indonesia, the parents must apply the risk management in making decision for the early childhood education. Whether they should take their children to school or study at home. There are three central places for educating children, they are home, society and school. Parents take the most important role to accompany the early childhood when the education or study is held at home. Educating early childhood is more difficult than intermediate students because the development cognitive of early childhood (aged 2-7 years old) is in the preoperational stage. In this stage the children are more egocentric and intuitive than logical, because of that, if the education for the early childhood is held at home, the parents should think of some and variety methods in teaching their children. The children education method chosen must be suitable for early childhood education in order to be useful for the development of aspect religious-morals, physical-motor, cognitive, language, social-emotional and arts.

## **B. Discussion**

### **1. Parent's Decision Regarding Education Of Early Childhood At Home**

Although the government has decided to treat the New Normal Life, it does not mean that the citizens can do the activities freely pretend there is no CORONA-19 virus anymore. New Normal Life is a situation or a new normal life which is conducted because uncertainty the time of CORONA-19 will over. New Normal Life situation will be conducted as long as the CORONA-19 virus vaccine has not found yet. The policy in conducting the New Normal Life is to restore economic conditions that had collapsed because of the disease that spreads around the world. If the economy stops will cause a new disaster such as starving, economic bankruptcy and poverty.

Rules in conducting the New Normal Life must be strictly obeyed to avoid cluster or new group in spreading the CORONA-19 virus. In order to protect human being from the CORONA-19 virus, WHO issued rules regarding to the preparation for enforcement of the New Normal Life delivered by Director General of WHO Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus (Nugroho, 2020), such as:

- a. The ability to control transmission,
- b. The health system is able to detect, test, isolate, tracking contact in all positive cases,
- c. Minimize the risk of outbreaks, especially in health facilities and nursing home,
- d. School, office, and other important places or public places able to do and implementing prevention efforts,
- e. The risk of import cases can be handled,
- f. Society community is really educated, get involve, and strengthened to live in new normal life.

It clearly shows that to be able to conduct New Normal Life time, the six rules above that has been established by WHO must be obeyed for our safety. President Joko Widodo ( Jokowi) also said, “when new normal conduct, it is very important for the society even for the whole citizens to pay attention and to obey the health protocol rules of COVID-19” (Sumartiningtyas, 2020). Every person must be discipline, social distancing, wearing mask, washing hands and obey cough ethics when we are outside the house. About social distancing, World Health Organization (WHO) recommend a meter or around 3,3 feet or more distance from one to another to avoid potential spread of corona virus (Sumartiningtyas, 2020).

Indonesian lung doctor association (PDPI) issued a number of appeals respond to the official statement from the World Health Organization (WHO) who acknowledge the corona virus SARS CoV-2 has potential spreading through the air. Based on WHO guidelines, corona virus possibly spread through the air or airborne. At the previous, known that corona virus contagious through droplet or from the infected person sparks and it can stick to the skin surface and to objects. The difference, contagious through the air can occur at a distance more than one meter, whereas contagious through droplet can occur in a distance less than one meter. Beside that, airborne last long in the air, droplet does not last long in the air. This significant differences carry different implications in handling prevention and control of the Covid-19 virus (Rizal, 2020). Contagious of the Corona-19 virus through the air occur in closed rooms with poor air ventilation.

WHO appeals shows that the current situation is more dangerous than before. Letting the early childhood go to school for studying face to face with other students and teacher in this New Normal Life time is not a right choice.

The best decision is when parents decide to keep their early childhood get the education at home.

## **2. Parents Take Role In Early Childhood Education At Home**

If the situation is not possible yet to conduct the learning in the school classrooms, so the children learning keep doing at home. And if the learning is done at home, the parents must take an important role to help their children study at home. According to Ki Hajar Dewantara, "there are three places of association as the center of education that very important for the children life, they are : family, college realm and the youth movement, and those three called System Trisentra" (Dewantara, 2004, p. 70). Based on the Ki Hajar Dewantara statement, it meant that education centers are in the three locations, the locations are: family, society and school. Therefore, the education is not just must be done in the school buildings, but also can be done at home and the society.

In this pandemic of COVID-19, conducting education from school and society is risky. Even though the education carried out at home does not as perfect as at school, but education that carried out at home is much safer. Education is an important thing, but health is much more important. Pestalozzi believed that a mother can teach her children in the best way (Morrison, 2012, p. 62), it means, children education that carried out at home in this New Normal Life time does not need to be worry because a mother is the best teacher for her son and daughter. The high risk of conducting the education face to face in school due to the spreading of the Corona-19 virus is not over yet. In this New Normal Life period, the addition of the exposed patients from the deathly virus is getting high and there are new clusters of spreading CORONA-19

virus, such as in the markets. Kompas.com reported the amount of CORONA-19 virus new cases on July 28th 2020 is 1.525. This addition of the new cases make the total confirmed number of Covid-19 get through 100.000 cases, there are 100.303 cases. Beside that, the number of death getting higher become 4.838 body, increase 57 death body from the day before. Meanwhile, the patients that confirmed cured increase to 1.518 people. These cases spread in 34 provinces and 471 districts across Indonesia (Mukaromah, 2020).

The early childhood are very happy when they meet their friends of the same age and they play together, whereas in this pandemic of CORONA-19 period, social distancing is very important part to avoid the contagious of the disease. It is very impossible for the early childhood play in long distance from their friends. They will not happy about the physical distancing. Moreover, after a long time they never allowed to go to school and they never meet their friends too long. When they meet each other, the early childhood must be very happy and they will play directly. While the early childhood play, the teacher will find difficulties to remind the children to always do the physical distancing and obey the health protocol in New Normal Life period. Furthermore, according to the result of WHO research that the CORONA-19 can occur through the air, this thing is very dangerous for the early childhood health.

Hindu teachings recognize four types of teacher called *Catur Guru*, they are consist of 1) *Guru Rupaka* (parents), 2) *Guru Pengajian* (school teacher), 3) *Guru Wisesa* (government) and 4) *Guru Swadhyaya* (The All Mighty God). Because teacher at the school can not give the tutorial of the school subjects face to face, then parents can replace the school teacher to teach their children at home. Children in Hindu teachings are the gift from God

who have to be protected and educated in a good way, so they will grow up become human who have god's attitudes that called *Daivi Sampat* (Pudja, 2004, pp. 371–372). Teaching method for the early childhood according to Slokantara book is treating the children as a “king” (Sudharta, 2003, p. 85). It means that parents must fulfill every single kids wishes for their growth, just like people obey their king. The needs of all five senses such as, listening, seeing, tasting, touching, smelling and also motor sense such as hands and feet have to get attention and fulfillment so it can develop aspects of the early childhood growth.

According to the UNICEF based on survey that held in 2011 about things that make child happy is the time with their family (Waller & Davis, 2014, p. 3). UNICEF survey meant that children can experience the happiness when they are with their family. Closeness and time together with family can improve happiness to the early childhood, and from that happiness cognitive, affective and psychomotor of the children will develop. When a child experiences the happiness, it will easier for them to absorb positive things such as school lessons. Closeness with the family will grow self confidence to the early childhood, and this will also as a positive impact in the child grow up moment. Based on that statement, it is very precise if the early childhood educated by the family member at home in this New Normal Life period. It means, parents take a very important role in early childhood education at home in the period of the New Norma Life in development of cognitive, affective and psychomotor.



### **3. Early Childhood Education Method At Home By Parents**

In the context of carry out the early childhood education at home, ideally parents must know the education method. However, not all of the parents have knowledge about the education method for the early childhood. But it does not mean parents can not do their duty to educate children at home. The most important thing that parents should give attention is the early childhood education is directed to the development of religion-moral, physical-motor, cognitive, language, society emotional and arts in accordance with the 2013 PAUD curriculum based on PERMENDIKBUD No 146 in 2014 (Azizah, 2015, p. 4) should be done in many and variety ways. The main point is the parents will be able to educate the early childhood at home in a good and meaningful if the education conducted with many activities. According to the early childhood education expert, teaching the early childhood must be done through the five senses (Morrison, 2012, p. 61), it means, those five senses function of child must be used when the parents educate the early childhood. Education that based on variety activities will make the early childhood five senses function work optimally, so the cognitive, affective and their psychomotor will develop proficient.

The early childhood education at home by parents can be done by playing and creativity. According to Paulette, "play and creativity are two important, overlapping, aspects of early childhood theory and practice" (Seefeldt & Wasik, 2006, p. 129), however, in my opinion child creativity can be extracted and develop through play. Playing makes the child happy and they do not realize that they are studying too. Therefore, the most important thing in educating early childhood is centered on child activity which is done by playing. Every activity of the

lesson is done by playing will able to make child happy. When the child feel happy, parents will get easy to ask them to study. If the parents can embed the education to the children with a simple way it will develop the psychomotor, affective and cognitive of the children, by means, parents have take important role in the early childhood education.

As for learning activities that parents can do are:

a. Cooking

Cooking activity is one of the activities for the early childhood education, because from this activity child cognitive will develop, such as their ability in basic math for example, one to one correspondence, counting, classifying, shape, space, comparing, seriation (sequence) (Charlesworth & Lind, 1995, pp. 1 & 9). Through this cooking activity, parents can make dialog with their children by asking some question, “ how many carrots are there?”; “how many chilli are there?”; “which one is vegetable, which one is fruit?”, “how is tomato shape?”; “how is glass shape, cup, spoon and plate shape?”; “which one is bigger carrot or cucumber?”. Those questions can develop the math concept the early childhood. According to Mayesky, “such question reveal mathematical ideas involved in simple activities and lay the foundation for children's understanding of more complex mathematical concepts as they grow older” (Mayesky, 2012, p. 494).

Cooking time also useful in introducing color, parents can ask some question such as: “what is the color of the carrot?”; “what is the color of cucumber?”; “which one is white?”.it also can be an opportunity to introduce kitchen and dining stuffs, such as: spoon, plate, glass, fork and knife. Child language can develop by conversation with the parents while cooking activity. Child asked to giving help to take the vegetable, chopping the mustard green,

put the spoon, and stir flour, these activities will develop physical-motor aspect. Child given the opportunity to chop the carrot in many shapes, make cookie dough in animals, flowers and toy cars shape to whet the art aspect of the early childhood. Developing the religion-moral aspect can be done by asking the child to pray before having meal. Praying before having meal is the way we thank God for His gift in the form of food, so the family can enjoy the food everyday.

Cooking activity is an activity to weave closeness between parents and the children. The early childhood generally feel happy when they ask to cook. She or he also allowed to taste many different taste of food, how does sweet, bitter, salty, spicy and sour taste. Parents can see the child expression when they are trying the food. Studying through playing, such as cooking definitely loved and make the children be happy. Good education is the education that can attract interest of the children to study, so the experiences or stimulus that given by the parents easily accepted by the children. Dewey said that the best way for children to show their interest is through the activity which use daily skill, such as cooking (Morrison, 2012, p. 68). Things Dewey convey is very clear that child is happier study through daily natural activity.

#### b. Gardening

Gardening is an outdoor activity that can be done to educate the early childhood at home for the New Normal Life period. Through gardening activity can develop the child love feelings to the nature. Loving environment must be implanted to the child since the early childhood. According to Sudiani, loving the environment has been taught to the human kind since the Veda teaching passed down (Sudarsana et al., 2020, p. 140). Gardening is also

an interesting activity for the early childhood, because it is done while playing. Child can learn about many kinds of plants, leaf shape, shape and the color of the flower and this done directly in the garden.

Child can be taught not to pick and step on the plants. Every plant must be protected because of plants are very useful for the human kind, such as prevent erosion, seasoning, foods, to decorate the yard and other else. Preservation of many kind of plants can be implanted to the child since the early childhood while playing. Without touching experiences of plants, such as leaf, flowers and trunk, how the child become a plant lover when she/he grow up. Plants can be groped accordingly to their type, such as flowers, seasoning and medicine, or grouped based on the color. By the gardening activity, child has been taught about grouping plants, shape, low-high size, long-short and color.

How does the gardening can improve the sixth ability the development aspect of the early childhood? The development of physical-motor aspect can be done by asking the child to move such as: ask the child to take the bucket, squat down, hold the plant trunk, pick the withered leaf and watering the plants. Language development can be done by asking the child mentions the plant's name, leaf's and flower's color. For example, "this is frangipani flower tree", "please tell me, what is the flower's color?", "what the leaf's color?", "how many leaf is there?", "please count how many flower crown?", etc. Art development is done by asking the child to take a paper, then try to draw and coloring the plants that she/he planted before.

Social emotional development done as long as the gardening activity which is implanted the child love to the plants. Religion and moral value develop by asking the

child to grateful for the God's gift who has grown fertile planted crops. Gardening activity can help in developing cognitive aspect such as basic math by introducing the size of high-low, wide-narrow, long-short, grouping and counting. Gardening activity is a part of experience that very important to the early childhood cognitive development. This information acceptance known by name assimilation by Piaget. Assimilation is the process of taking in, of absorbing some event or experience to some scheme (Bee, 1999, p. 49). Experience while gardening is the acceptance process and absorb the knowledge for the early childhood, such as color, size, shape and physically acts.

### c. Singing

Singing is a natural activity for everybody. According to Young, cheerful and admiration of the music experienced spontaneously by everyone include the children. Songs and music are the main part of the beginning of the meeting (Seefeldt & Wasik, 2006, p. 296). Singing can make children feel happy. Parents can educate their children at home through *Gending Rare* which is the song of the people of the Bali, and with that music the children become cheerful (Sudiani, 2015, p. 61). Educating the early childhood through *Gending Rare* is much easier because of *Gending Rare* is Balinese folk song, so the children has closeness to the song. Every culture has their own folk songs (Seefeldt & Wasik, 2006, p. 311), can be said that folk songs are education tools since for along time ago.

Songs can develop language capability and the character of the early childhood. Children can study many kind of vocabularies from song lyrics and the values from the song can educate the early childhood character. The values that can be found in *Gending Rare* full of character

education, such as religious, responsibility, independent, environment care, team work and strong. Not only in developing language, song also develop the ability in math and awaken the arts aspect of the child. Therefore, if the parents can educate their children through song at home, the ability of language, math, art and character of the early childhood will develop.

#### d. Story telling

Storytelling is an ancient art form, before the book is printed; it is the main way that history and culture are preserved and passed on to the next generation (Koster, 2012, p. 376). History and culture can be known throughout the ages by the different generations, if the history and culture are delivered continuously from generation to generation. Before writing was found, the way people delivered the history through story telling. The same thing also mentioned by Bruce that ancient stories were told orally, long before people write (Jaekle et al., 2013, p. 115). Until now story people still doing the story telling both oral and book. Parents who own story books, the story telling activity can be done by reading the books.

Story telling can be as a media for educating early childhood at home by parents. Parents can create an interesting story so it attracts the children interest in studying. Story is an effective media of character education for young children, because they love to hear story and still looking for a role model for their behavior. Parents are encouraged to give a good model for their child (Sudiani, 2017, p. 63). Stories become an effective media for education because the early childhood are easier to accept the study through messages that delivered by story telling. If there are some messages in a story, the parents should give emphasis into that part so

the story can be understood by the children. Giving the emphasis can be done by repeating the story's sentences or raising the voice intonation, so the early childhood focus on that sentence.

Benefits of story telling are closeness of the parents and the children and also developing the religion-moral aspect, psychomotor, cognitive, language, social emotion and arts. Parents can create figures in the story to attract the child attention and also by making shape or picture or the figures in the story. Story telling also can be completed by using dolls, *wayang*, toy cars as the cast to get the child attention. Story telling equipped by figures has been done or a long time ago, for example in Bali, story telling using *wayang* as media and the *wayang* character names are Arjuna, Bhīma, Ghaṭotkaca, Hanoman, Sri Kriṣṇa, Yudhiṣṭhira, Dewi Kunti, Dewi Draupadī, etc. These *wayang* characters very famous in Balinese, and also throughout archipelago. Hindu teaching that originated from Veda Holy Book, before written was found also spread orally by the holy teachers. Parents can educate their children at home for the period time of New Normal Life in developing the six early childhood development aspects by story telling.

### **C. Conclusions**

Letting the early childhood going back into school during this New Normal Life is a risky decision, therefore, parents must think seriously. Beside studying at school, child also can study at home, parents must take the important role in educating the early childhood at home, accompany and guide them while studying. Parents can educate their children at home with the learning based on activity which conducting by playing to get the child attracts to study. As for the activities that can be done are cooking, gardening, singing and story telling.

All of the study activities at home are useful to maintain the closeness between parents and children and for the development aspects are religion-moral, psychomotor, cognitive, language, social emotional and arts of the early childhood. Through playing, children will not aware if they are studying, children are happy, so they do not get bored. When the children are happy, parents can give them a new experience to develop the development aspects of the early childhood such as: religion-moral, psychomotor, cognitive, language, social-emotional and arts.

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