

# Home-Based Learning for Children with Moderate Intellectual Disabilities: Collaboration between Teacher and Family

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## ABSTRACT

Changes that have occurred in the education system and the implementation of learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic have become a challenge for teachers, especially in learning for children with intellectual disabilities. The lack of collaboration between teachers and families is an obstacle in home-based learning for children with intellectual disabilities. This study aimed to describe the collaboration between teachers and families in maximizing the learning and development of children with intellectual disabilities in home-based learning. This study used a qualitative approach with the type of literature review that seeks to describe the importance of teacher and family collaboration in implementing self-development learning for children with moderate intellectual disability. This systematic review was conducted from November 2014 to April 2015 using PRISMA. The authors conducted searches in online databases with large repositories of academic studies and fully accessible by the authors. The results showed that: (1) Students need teachers who support, motivate and guide them, (2) families play a role in providing full support to children because home-based learning requires independence, willingness to learn, commitment and effort, (3) Collaboration is influenced by the belief in the importance of collaboration, systematic exchange of information, commitment from both parties, and mutual concern for optimal learning and child development. Families have the primary responsibility in the education of their children. The form of the role of the collaborative relationship between teachers and families greatly determines children's interest in learning, children's discipline in the learning process and maximum learning outcomes.

**Keywords:** home-based learning, teacher and family collaboration, and children with intellectual disability.

## INTRODUCTION

Children with special needs (Heward, 2003) are children with special characteristics that are different from children in general without always showing mental, emotional or physical disabilities. Children with special educational needs, who make up about 10% of the school-age population, may need extra help during all phases of learning. They need so-called "reasonable accommodation", and they need support from other school professionals (such as special teachers, educators and psychologists) but home confinement limits these types of professional social contacts (Petretto, Masala & Masala, 2020). They also need other accommodations during assessments and other study assignments. They also have the right to benefit from "accessible" learning materials and learning platforms, in accordance with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (Petretto, Masala & Masala, 2020). Children with intellectual disability have intellectual disabilities or limitations, below the normal average, so they experience difficulties in academic, communication, and social tasks, and because they require special educational services (Supena & Hasanah, 2020). The potential and ability of each child is different as well as children with intellectual disability, so for the sake of education, grouping children with intellectual disability is very necessary. The grouping is based on the severity of the impairment, on that basis, children with intellectual disability can be grouped into children with mild intellectual disability, children with moderate intellectual

disability and children with severe intellectual disability (Supena & Hasanah, 2020).

The special program for self-development for children with intellectual disability is a program that must be given to children. The special program for self-development is one of the subjects that must be given and carried out with the limited ability of children (Panjaitan, et al., 2013). This program must be given in stages and based on task analysis so that children can follow it well (Panjaitan, et al., 2013). The special self-development program is an educational process given to moderately children with intellectual disability in order to develop their abilities, such as taking care of themselves; cleaning oneself, eating, drinking, using own toilet, etc.,

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dealing with various problems in using clothes; choose suitable clothes, and can button their own clothes, fellow children with intellectual disability, and normal children in general.

Based on the findings of data on 35 participants, as many as 40% of children used the toilet independently, 42.86% of children were able to with assistance, and 17.14% were unable. Toilet training is one of the exercises taught both to normal children and to children with moderate intellectual disability so that they remain comfortable and clean (Wantah in Panjaitan, et al., 2013). Learning about toilet training is very much needed by children, but during the COVID-19 pandemic, children cannot carry out these activities optimally. Based on the results of interviews, parents tend not to care about the development of children's independence, especially the ability to use the toilet. When the teacher conveys the progress of achievements regarding toilet training and what parents must do at home, the response of people tends to accept it, but is not followed up in learning at home. In addition, teachers also find it difficult to communicate with parents caused by busy parents. Most parents are also not open and less willing to provide information about the condition of the child to be used as a reference in learning planning. The results of interviews and observations show that there is no awareness of parents about the importance of independence in children with intellectual disability in taking care of themselves, especially in using the toilet. In addition, there is no collaboration between teachers and families in self-development learning during the pandemic.

Four priorities as a change in the school system during the COVID-19 Pandemic, namely: protecting the health and safety of students, staff, and the community; maximize student learning and development; support teachers and staff, and build a secure operational and financial foundation (Ro'fah, Hanjarwati & Suprihatiningrum, 2020). The Ministry of Education and Culture (Kemendikbud) issued several circulars related to the prevention and handling of Covid-19. One of them is Circular Letter Number 4 of 2020 concerning the Implementation of Education Policies in the Emergency Period of the Spread of Coronavirus Disease (Covid-19), regarding learning from home through home-based learning which is used as a guide for teachers while schools are closed with a spirit of freedom to learn and it also contains the importance of the role of the teacher, among others, regarding the learning process from home and the need to involve parental support. This policy is aimed at all students from preschool to higher education, both public and private, including students with special needs. The challenge of learning from home through home-based learning should ideally still be able to accommodate the learning needs of students to develop talents and interests according to their education level. In addition, in its implementation home-based learning also requires full support from the family.

The role and involvement of parents is an important factor for children's education. The role of parents in children's education will actually develop as children get older, it is important for parents to be actively involved in their children's education. Parents have a great influence on the development of children. The relatively short duration of meeting with the teacher or not can guarantee the success of handling in education. Therefore, the teacher must be able to provide full support to the family (Irvan & Jauhari, 2020). Parents' attitudes towards education can inspire and empower children when they are studying, and when they enter elementary school, children are usually more able to learn on their own without being accompanied. The preparation of learning programs for children with special needs also requires family involvement so that the programs that have been prepared are in accordance with the needs, abilities and barriers of children. Education is closely related to learning, but the data found in the field show that when children are at the elementary school level, parental involvement is still low and learning is more burdened on teachers at school.

In addition, another potential barrier to parental involvement is parents' perceptions of the level of explicit and implicit invitations to engagement. When parents think that parental involvement is not appreciated by the teacher or school, they are less likely to be involved (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler 1997 in Hornby & Lafaele, 2011). Therefore, parents' perception of invitations from schools is considered important in developing effective parental involvement. Epstein (2001) in Hornby & Lafaele (2011) has found that parents are most effectively involved when teachers actively encourage parental involvement. Teachers with positive attitudes and facilitating parental involvement encourage more parents to be involved and increase the effectiveness of parental involvement (Eccles & Harold 1993 in Hornby & Lafaele (2011). When parents perceive that teachers are not open to involving parents, this act as a major barrier to parental involvement (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011).

As an effort to overcome barriers to adaptive behavior for children with intellectual disability, a self-development program was developed. Self-development is directed at developing the ability of children with intellectual disability to carry out activities related to their own lives so that they become independent. Growing the independence of children with intellectual disability is very important because by having the independence of children with intellectual disability will get used to doing their own needs. During the COVID-19 pandemic, everyone is required to stay at home, including learning activities that are carried out without having to come to school. Learning that generally takes place during the COVID-19 pandemic for children in general is home-based learning. This approach also applies to children with intellectual disability and requires parental involvement

and teacher and family collaboration. However, in the implementation of the intervention, there were complaints from families and teachers. The lack of family support and assistance for children during home-based learning is caused by the low awareness of families regarding the importance of collaboration with teachers. In addition, teachers also have not implemented learning strategies that involve parents in planning, implementing and evaluating learning. This makes it difficult for teachers and families to maintain good collaboration in a relationship so that development cannot be achieved quickly in various aspects of children's abilities. Learning is a process so that students can learn well and the collaboration of teachers and families plays an important role. Thus, this study aims to examine problems in the implementation of teacher and family collaboration and consider the best solutions related to problems in home-based learning for children with moderate intellectual disability in the aspect of toilet training.

## METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with the type of literature review that seeks to describe the importance of teacher and family collaboration in implementing self-development learning for children with moderate intellectual

disability and focuses on factors that influence the occurrence of collaboration between teachers and families in home-based learning. Sources of data in this study in the form of journals, books, research results starting in 2003. This literature review was conducted from January to July 2022 using PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) reporting guidelines. According to these guidelines, there are several steps in this study: 1) defining eligibility criteria; 2) defining information sources; 3) study selection; 4) data collection process; and 5) data item selection. Figure 1. explains the steps of this study in conducting systematic review.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Learning for Children with Intellectual Disability

Intellectual disability or mental retardation is a term used to denote impaired mental capacity. According to the American Psychiatric Association, intellectual disability is a developmental disorder followed by a lack of intellectual functioning, adaptive in conceptual, social, and practical skills. Barriers experienced by children with intellectual disability often make parents hide their children from their community and environment (Endriyani & Yunike, 2017). Children with intellectual disability experience limitations

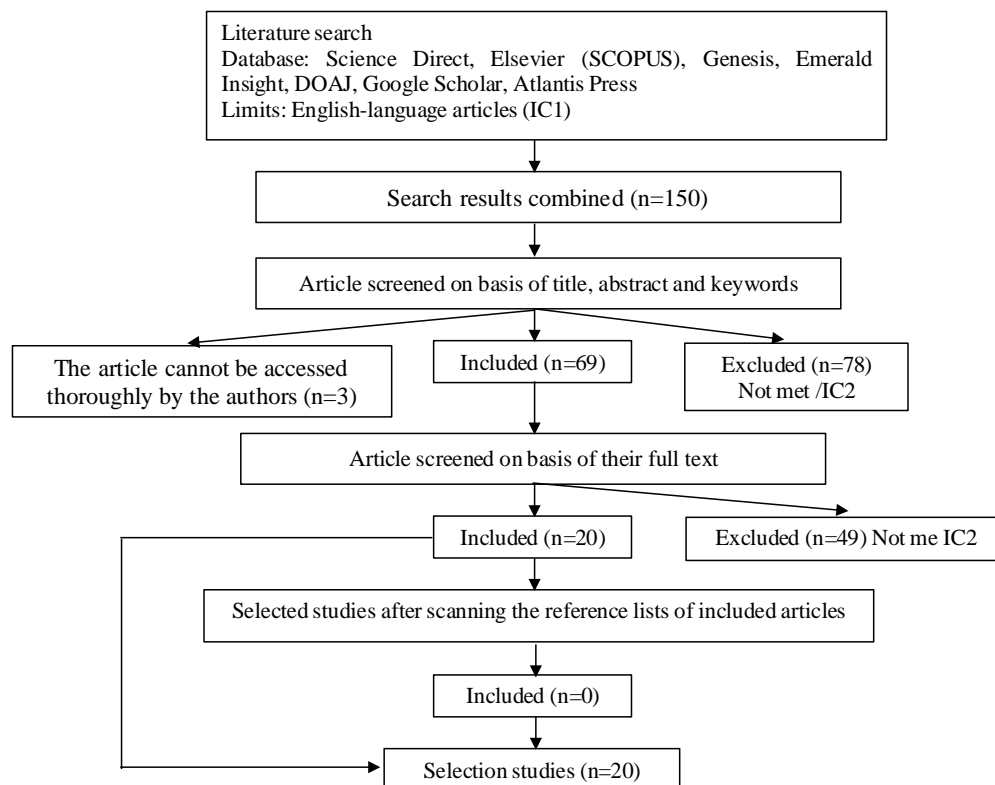


Fig. 1: PRISMA flow diagram

in communication, self-care, social and interpersonal skills. They have difficulty in meeting the needs of daily living and functioning in society because of their intellectual abilities, limited motor skills and adaptation to the environment. Other studies have shown that parents feel ashamed to have children with intellectual disability because of difficulties in dealing with behavioral problems such as screaming, crying, unable to concentrate, aggressiveness, stubbornness, etc. Often, children may not understand how disturbing their behavior is to others and why they are angry.

Children with moderate intellectual disability have general intellectual abilities and behavioral adaptations under mild intellectual disability. Martin in Panjaitan, et al. (2013) stated that approximately 10% of children classified as having intellectual disabilities fall into this category. Children with intellectual disability have an IQ of around 35-55. Children with intellectual disability can do work and tasks such as self-help activities, but still need help from others. Learning is essentially not just conveying messages but also a professional activity that requires teachers to use basic teaching skills in an integrated manner and create efficient situations (Mashudi, T., et al, 2007). Therefore, in learning teachers need to create a conducive atmosphere and learning strategies that attract students' interest. Learning for children with intellectual disability must be contextual, meaning that the implementation of learning follows the context to be taught and is related to the goals to be achieved. To carry out functional, relevant, and contextual learning, teachers can develop several learning models (Browder, Hudson, & Wood, 2013 in Supena & Hasanah, 2020). Learning for children with intellectual disability can help make it easier for children with intellectual disability to complete their daily activities. Learning is functional and must be functionally adaptive so that learning follows the circumstances and needs of the child. Besides being functional, additional learning materials are also relevant to everyday life. Relevant learning will be functional because children are presented with learning related to everyday life, and children are expected to use their knowledge to solve problems.

Vygotsky in Muhtari (2015) views that knowledge is not generated from within the individual but is built through interaction with other people, conditioned and collaborative knowledge. Vygotsky in Muhtari (2015) explains that children's social interactions with more skilled adults and peers are important in enhancing child development. Muhtari (2015) with socio-cultural cognitive theory describes child development as inseparable from social and cultural activities. Through the concept of Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) and mediated learning, Vygotsky examines child development. Alimin (2009) in Muhtari (2015) explains that the Zone of Proximal Development referred to by Vygotsky is the distance between adult competence and the actual

developmental position that has been achieved by a child. The learning process is the process of closing the distance between the competence of adults and the actual development of the child, and if the distance between the two is getting closer, it means that development has occurred. In this zone, the learning process actually occurs in a child, and development is seen as a learning outcome.

Quality learning really depends on the motivation of the creativity of the teacher, learning that has high motivation is supported by teachers who are able to facilitate. This will lead to the successful achievement of children with intellectual disability which can be measured through changes in students' attitudes and abilities through the learning process. Motivation can result from the desire to succeed or avoid failure. This is influenced not only by environmental stimuli (eg the environment in which the child is raised) but also by physical and mental tendencies (Król, 2020). The development of children's motivation is strongly influenced by the involvement of parents in the educational process, which manifests itself for example through maintaining intellectual development, generating interest, discovering the world (Król, 2020). Excessive requirements have a demotivating effect, so it is important to match the requirements to the abilities of students, especially those with special educational needs. For reasons beyond their control, they cannot achieve the same results as their counterparts, therefore they must be supported (Król, 2020).

### Home-Based Learning

Home-based learning is a form of self-directed learning that is systematically organized, in which counseling, presentation of learning materials, supervisors and monitoring of student success are carried out by a group of teaching staff who have different responsibilities (Belawati, et al., in Irvan dan Jauhari, 2020). Home-based learning is an effort to overcome educational problems with limitations between teachers (tutors) and students to meet face-to-face by holding learning that separates teaching staff and students with the help of printed media containing material that can be accessed by students, without any time and geographical limitations. Home-based learning is coordinated by the school to plan, organize, and monitor.

Some parents expressed their opinion about the advantages of homework in home-based learning, a group of parents found the quality of homework was poor and teacher expectations from students were insufficient (Ozge & Ergulec, 2021). One parent explained that it would be much better for teachers at the school to try to encourage children to do research or projects related to culture, history, and crafts than giving out academic assignments. In addition, family involvement in the form of collaboration with teachers is also very necessary.

Parents must work closely with schools to follow directions, make changes, and adapt to identify available resources for

activities at home and daily learning (Srivastava, de Boer, & Pijl, 2017 in Supena & Hasanah, 2020). Being a parent of a child with intellectual disability during the Covid-19 period is not easy, parents and students must learn and understand each other. In addition, the condition of each house also affects the learning of children with intellectual disability. Therefore, it is hoped that parents and children can learn from each other.

## DISCUSSION

Teachers have the authority and duties in the world of education and teaching in formal educational institutions (Usman, 2002). The teacher's duties include teaching, educating, giving direction, training, providing assessments, evaluating, and giving moral and mental encouragement to students (Usman, 2002). According to Sari, Rosyidamayani & Maningtyas (2020), parental involvement during home-based learning is in the form of providing facilities and infrastructure in home-based learning such as media, giving permission to play outside the home during the Covid 19 pandemic, taking time to accompany children during learning at home, foster children's interest in learning at home, assist in carrying out school assignments, understanding learning materials by parents, managing children's play and learning at home, and utilizing various learning media.

Collaboration is a grouping that occurs among living things that we know (Thomas & Johnson, 2014). According to Clistrap (2008), collaboration is an activity in groups to work on or complete a task together, in this collaboration usually occurs interaction between group members and has the same goal to be achieved together. The presence of children with intellectual disability in the family requires support from the family or the surrounding environment. In carrying out their duties as parents, participants are assisted by families (both nuclear and extended families), and also from the surrounding environment, such as neighbors and special groups in society (Endriyani & Yunike, 2017). The results showed that emotional support was obtained from extended family and other family members which was manifested in the form of attention and affection, as well as community social support such as support from neighbors and the community (Endriyani and Yunike, 2017). Support related to the care and training of children with intellectual disability is unavoidable. If there is no support, it will cause emotional changes such as anger, depression, and maladaptive behavior.

The results showed that the social support provided by the family and the environment can help overcome stress and can see the positive aspects of the life that is lived by having a child with intellectual disability (Endriyani & Yunike, 2017). The support provided makes them feel valued and cared for, this can make them have a positive self-defense mechanism and be able to adapt to all situations and the impact of having a child with intellectual disability, even to prevent anxiety

and depression. This is in line with other research which shows that family support is a coping strategy for parents who have children with intellectual disability in the form of moral support, attention, sharing and sympathy (Endriyani & Yunike, 2017). In addition to getting support from family, parents also get support from people they trust, close friends and friends. This is what makes them feel that there are people who always pay attention, respect and love them.

Joint planning involving parents and families increases school effectiveness (Alameda, 1996; Alameda-Lawson & Lawson, 2000; Lawson & Briar-Lawson, 1997 in Anderson & Ashton, 2004). There are two reasons for this finding. First, family-centered practices are power-based and empowering. It encourages parents and families to help themselves, with support from others. Second, when parents are drawn into a supportive role at school, they are also more likely to get support from the school when they need help (Anderson & Ashton, 2004).

Other benefits of parental involvement include: better parent-teacher relationships, teacher morale and school climate; improvement of school attendance, attitudes, behavior and mental health of children; and, increasing parents' confidence, satisfaction and interest in their own education (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011). Christenson and Sheridan (2001) in Hornby & Lafaele (2011) have suggested that four key elements for increasing parental involvement are: approach; attitude; atmosphere; and action. Epstein (2001) in Hornby & Lafaele (2011) has distinguished six types of parental involvement: parenthood; communication; volunteer; home tutoring; involvement in decision making; and, collaboration with the community. Epstein's model presents family, school, and community as overlapping spheres of influence, the fit of which is critical for children's optimal development.

In addition to the school, parents essentially have the main responsibility in the education of their children (Ariani, et al., 2019). Limited time, energy, and limited knowledge make parents have to ask for help from other parties (schools) in the education process of their children (Ariani, et al., 2019; Yoneda & Miura, 2021)). However, this does not mean that parents give up their responsibilities at school, considering that the active involvement of parents is very important in the learning and development of children with special needs (Chao, 2018; Sugiarti, 2013 in Ariani, et al., 2019).

Collaboration with parents is carried out in terms of providing information about children's development, learning processes and materials in class, assignments, or children's needs in the learning process related to understanding and responsibility for school assignments which are still relatively low (Ariani, et al., 2019). Particular care is needed in considering the heterogeneity of families and their needs. The need to differentiate teacher strategies is important, and family circumstances must be seriously considered when

leading to successful parent-teacher communication, even within the same educational context (Symeou, 2006). Teachers who value parental involvement, approach parents honestly and respectfully, and actively seek involvement can build supportive relationships, even with parents who are mostly poor, uneducated, and initially reluctant to be directly involved (Symeou, 2006).

Active and frequent communication and collaboration from teachers and parents provide interdependence and intensity in school-family relationships (Symeou, 2006). Activities and practices that allow teachers, parents, and children to interact and get to know each other on a personal level allow them to feel that they are part of the same community (Symeou, 2006). As parents become acquainted, they become familiar with ongoing school programmes, practices, and activities; they observe their children's actions at school; and they share information about children with teachers (Symeou, 2006). Through building connectedness and interdependent relationships, children strengthen their educational resources to fully develop their potential in the school system (Symeou, 2006).

The necessary conditions for effective collaboration between families and schools include: (1) the belief of both parties about the need for collaboration, (2) the systematic exchange of information about the child and his progress, difficulties and efforts to overcome these difficulties, (3) the commitment of both parties to creating a friendly atmosphere in the classroom, at school and in peer groups, (4) mutual concern to ensure optimal material conditions for learning (Cwirynkałhai & Bartnikowska, 2020). Communication skills are very important in order to establish good cooperation (Cwirynkałhai & Bartnikowska, 2020).

Teachers, parents and students find themselves in an uncomfortable situation, which has created many challenges for all participants in home-based learning. For teachers, using tools that enable them to carry out lessons, change teaching methods, forms and methods, and verify student knowledge. For families, greater support for children in learning, helping children use tools, controlling children's learning processes. In addition, for the development of children with intellectual disability, it requires independence so that they can participate in learning activities and explore lesson content.

## CONCLUSION

Home-based learning in a crisis situation, which requires a lot of independence, willingness to learn, greater commitment and effort to get used to the lesson, read, understand the material. Independent learning is a big challenge for children, one of the reasons is not being able to see each other. However, it should be emphasized that all families are very involved in the education process of their children by providing support to their children. In the learning process, a student needs a teacher who will

support, motivate and guide him. The necessary conditions for effective collaboration between teachers and families, namely the belief of both parties about the need for collaboration, the systematic exchange of information about the child and his progress, the difficulties experienced and efforts to overcome them, the commitment of both parties to create a friendly atmosphere in the classroom, at school and in peer groups. In addition, concern from various parties is also needed to ensure optimal material conditions for learning.

Collaboration between teachers and families of children with moderate intellectual disabilities is one of the factors that support the success of home-based learning. Teachers and families specifically collaborate to develop strategies, lesson plans that are in accordance with the characteristics or needs of students with special needs and inform families so that they can be escorted both at school and at home. Everything that is learned and developed at school can be repeated at home by parents. Recommendations for further research are related to the development of a good collaboration model between teachers and families in improving the ability of children with special needs through the implementation of home-based learning from various aspects of development, especially in social skills, vocational, and sex education for children with disabilities.

## Declaration of Interest

The authors declare that they have no potential conflicts of interest.

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