

Educational Services for Students With Special Needs at Raudhatul Athfal

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Abstract. Every child has the same right to education and teaching, including children with special needs in an inclusive education system. This study aims to analyze the types of educational services for students with special needs at the kindergarten or Raudhatul Athfal level. This type of qualitative research is a case study with a research location at RA An-Nahl, Jakarta. The data collection techniques used are observation, interviews, and documentation, which are then analyzed descriptively with an interactive analysis model. The findings of the research revealed the existence of seven special services implemented at RA An-Nahl, namely: *first*, the examination and control of the development of psychologists; *second*, assistance from specialized personnel; *third*, the existence of *shadow-teacher* for students who need it; *fourth*, routine therapy in specialized clinics outside the school; *fifth*, *Individualized Education Program (IEP)* for children with special needs; *sixth*, *team-teaching* in each class, and *seventh*, the establishment of partnership relations. The implication of the results of this study is to provide information for early childhood education institutions in providing education services for children with special needs.

Keywords: *educational services, students with special needs, Raudhatul Athfal*

INTRODUCTION

Children have the same opportunity and right to grow and develop, play, rest, be creative, and learn in education. Parents and the government are required to provide educational facilities and infrastructure for children in the context of learning programs [1]. Basically, children with special needs are like other individuals, who have the right to be successful and develop in their lives with various interests and talents that may not be owned by others [2]. Children with special needs have characteristics that are not owned by children in general. It indicates that particular disorders require special handling in their daily lives or in maximizing their potential [3].

Educational services for children with special needs in Indonesia are classified as low, based on information from the Directorate of Special Education Development and Special Basic

Education Services. This is due to the lack of educators who are willing and able to educate children with special needs, as well as the lack of preparedness of schools in providing access to inclusive education. In addition, it is also influenced by the availability of operational budget from the Regional Government, which is very low for schools [4]. Data obtained from the Central Statistics Agency in 2017 on the number of children with special needs in Indonesia is 1.6 million, and only 18% have received services in inclusive education [5].

Some previous studies related to education services for students with special needs have been conducted, namely: the existence of partnership programs with parents who strongly support the success of education [6]; the *Individualized Education Program* for students with special needs [7]; the existence of specific special services from experts according to children's needs [8]; the existence of counseling guidance programs during the learning process [9]; the involvement and coordination between human resources in schools, teachers, parents, and the community [10]; the involvement of therapists, homeroom teachers, and teacher assistants in overcoming obstacles or obstacles found in the learning process [11]; the existence of a full mentoring system for students with low ability and severe disability, as well as free assistance for students with high abilities [12], as well as the modification of the learning flow which can accommodate the needs of all students [13].

Based on the background above, this study aims to descriptively analyze educational services provided for students with special needs at the level of early childhood education based on Islam, namely Raudhatul Athfal (RA).

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach, with the type of case study research. The researcher collected data and information directly to the research location, namely RA.An-Nahl Jakarta, which is located at Jl. Jeruk Manis IV/9 Kebon Jeruk, West Jakarta. The primary informants of this study are the Principal, the coordinator of inclusive education, and the teaching staff. Data collection techniques used were interviews, observation, and documentation.

Data analysis techniques use the Interactive Analysis model of Miles and Huberman. This interactive analysis model consists of four main things, namely: (1) data collection, (2) data condensation, (3) data display, and (4) conclusion: drawing/verifying [14]. Testing the validity of the data can be achieved by triangulating data and informants [15].

RESULT & DISCUSSION

The results of observations, interviews, and documentation show that there are seven services for students with special needs that are implemented at RA An-Nahl, namely:

a. Examination and developmental control of psychologists

According to informant-1:

... The psychologist is in charge at the beginning of learning, which is doing anamnesis and examination on students until finally obtaining the results of mapping the characteristics of students. Then the psychologist also helps the teacher in preparing learning plans, especially in setting individual learning targets for students. After that, the psychologist routinely checks the child's development and determines the next treatment according to the results of the development of child therapy reports. Psychologists also evaluate learning and provide explanations to parents who consult with their child's development...

Based on these interviews, it can be analyzed that in providing special education services, RA An-Nahl is assisted by experts, namely a psychologist who is responsible with guiding teachers and helping to arrange learning plans based on inclusive education, conducting observational activities in mapping student's characteristics, evaluating learning and development, and providing consulting services for teachers and parents about child development. The psychologists visit RA An-Nahl 3 times a week.

b. Assistance from special personnel

RA An-Nahl is also assisted by a specialized expert to conduct therapy for students in need. he is available every time at RA An-Nahl, to provide assistance for students with special needs, especially in the implementation of EIP. Informant-2 states that:

... students with special needs need special handling. Therefore we are assisted by psychologists, special staff, therapists, and also shadow teachers. Each teacher is provided with routine training in order to have the ability to cope with students with special needs...

From interviews and observations, it was found that RA An-Nahl was assisted by a specialized staff who assisted the teacher in the learning process, especially during *IEP*. After school time is over and the other students go home, some students with special needs who need assistance will attend the *IEP*. The specialized staff helps the teachers, especially when then students begin to show an

attitude of saturation and even tantrums. The specialized staff is also required to observe the development of children, including the development of mental, attitude, behavior, independence, and intellectual.

c. Shadow Teacher

Shadow teacher at RA An-Nahl can be parents of students with special needs or from social workers who are provided and funded by parents if the parents do not have time to accompany their children.

Informant-1 explains:

... we have trouble getting a shadow teacher, like days, no shadow teacher comes, because parents are all busy, even though we have agreed in the agreement letter. So, parents prepare shadow teachers for their children. However, often the promise is not fulfilled. Fortunately, the teachers at An-Nahl is able to overcome students with special needs, so that the obstacles in the learning process can be overcome...

In practice, not all students need a shadow teacher. If the class teacher is able to handle the child, then he does not need a shadow teacher. But in certain cases, for example, children often experience tantrums (emotional outbursts/rampage), then the existence of a shadow teacher is needed.

d. Routine therapy

Based on the documentation shown by informant-1 regarding the statement letter of parents who have children with special needs who want to be educated at RA An-Nahl, there are several points of agreement that must be fulfilled by parents, namely: the willingness to prepare shadow teachers, the willingness to undergo routine therapy and report the progress to RA at least every three months.

The statement requires parents to bring their children to do therapy by the therapist. Therapy is done outside of school, can be in hospitals, autistic clinics, child development clinics, and other clinics that receive therapy services for children with special needs.

The role of RA An-Nahl, in this case, is to prepare individual learning plans, modify the learning flow, design special activities, prepare facilities that support the learning process, and determine the appropriate treatment for students with special needs based on reports on the development of child therapy results, and through consultation with psychologist at An-Nahl. For this reason, it is important for parents to provide reports of the child therapy to school so that the school can determine the right educational services in accordance with the students' needs. In addition, the therapeutic report is also useful as a comparison or reinforcement of suggestions that psychologists will give to parents so that their children experience optimal progress.

e. IEP implementation

The results of the interview with informant-2 explained about the *Individualized Education*

Program (IEP) if in an inclusive class, there are students with special needs who have not achieved the expected learning outcomes, then after school, class teachers, shadow teachers, and special staff do additional learning to help the students. Individual learning plans for students with special needs have individual targets based on their capacity and abilities, so they cannot be compared to normal students.

Informant-3 explained that the implementation of *IEP* was in a regular classroom environment. And then, the individual curriculum was carried out outside the study hours or additional hours. There were co-teachers if needed, a special meeting with a psychologist, therapy session with therapists or special staff to achieve the desired learning outcomes.

Based on observations and interviews that have been conducted, it can be analyzed that with an integrated approach (inclusive classical) and individual (*IEP*) in handling students who focus on the development foundation, children with special needs will get optimal education services that can maximize their growth and development at Raudhatul Athfal.

f. Team-teaching

Based on observations made by researchers in the field, it appears that RA An-Nahl teachers are very patient and can handle students with special needs. Each class at RA An-Nahl has two teachers who are tasked with educating and guiding students in the form of *team-teaching*. The teachers work together in preparing learning plans, learning implementation, and evaluation to handle students with special needs. RA An-Nahl provides educational services with *team-teaching* so that teachers can collaborate in the implementation of the learning process. Each teacher carries out their respective assignments in accordance with the portion and division of tasks that have been assigned with the Principal so that there is no overlapping of tasks and responsibilities.

It is important for schools that implement an inclusive education system to pay attention to the readiness of teachers in teaching. *Team-teaching* is one way that can be taken to ease the task of the teacher in carrying out the learning process in inclusive classes.

g. Establishing a partnership

Based on interviews with informant-1, it is known that the partnership developed by RA An-Nahl as an inclusive school is to establish relationships with parents or families so that they can support in optimizing children's development. It also collaborates with health clinics, child development clinics, doctors, psychologists, special workers, therapists, and so on.

Based on research data obtained from observations, interviews, and documentation, it can be analyzed that it is important for teachers who

teach in inclusive classes to understand and know how to handle children with special needs so that they can provide appropriate educational services. Principals, psychologists, specialized staff, and therapists routinely support and control the development of students with special needs, so that an increase in changes in student behavior tends to begin normally, along with good social relations with normal peers in inclusive classes.

RA An-Nahl is an outstanding RA who was awarded as an Autistic Friendly School from the Governor of DKI Jakarta in 2015. As an inclusive RA, every teacher must have more competencies, such as being able to detect the characteristics of children, able to manage inclusive classes and *IEPs* with room settings and facilities that support learning, and are able to work with psychologists, specialized staff, therapists, and parents.

The findings of this study reveal that there are seven educational services implemented by RA An-Nahl for students with special needs, namely: *first*, examination and control of child development carried out by psychologists. This is in line with Flannigan's study which states that the Guidance and Counseling program provides a role in helping students throughout the learning process [9]; *second*, assistance from special workers which is in line with Lestarinigrum which states that children with special needs need guidance from experts to meet certain needs [8]; *third*, the existence of a shadow teacher, this is similar to the research by Rusdianto and Akrim and Harfiani who found a complete and loose assistance system according to the level of ability and needs of students [12].[13]; *fourth*, conducting routine therapy in specialized clinics outside of school performed by therapists, as revealed by Kusna that there must be coordination between therapists, homeroom teachers, and shadow teachers in reviewing students' obstacles or constraints during the learning process [11]; *fifth*, the implementation of the *Individualized Education Program (IEP)*, as research by Heldanita which states that in general inclusive educational institutions facilitate the existence of an *IEP* for students with special needs [7]; *sixth*, applying *team-teaching* in each class. Lamture & Gathoo states that the supporting factors for inclusive education are the involvement and coordination between resources, namely schools, teachers, parents, and the community [10], and *seventh*, the existence of partnership relationships that support services special education, this is in line with the research by Chan & Yuen which shows that the partnership program strongly supports the delivery of special education services in the inclusive education system [6].

CONCLUSION

Educational services for students with special needs at Raudhatul Athfal involve a variety of

human resources, such as; psychologists, specialized staff, *shadow teachers*, and therapists. The school is also facilitated with the *Individualized Education Program (IEP)*, *team-teaching*, and partnership relations. The implication of this research is to provide information for early childhood education institutions in delivering educational services for students with special needs.

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