

# The Supporting Activity for Mother Who Has Specially Needs Children

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## ABSTRACT

Children born with special needs provide exceptional dynamics activities for a mother's life. The reaction that the mother shows when the child is expected to have an abnormality can be negative. Mothers who can accept children with special needs believe that what they experience is a gift. This kind of acceptance can encourage gratitude for mothers. The purpose of this study was to determine the gratitude picture of mothers who have especially needed children. This study uses a qualitative method with a descriptive approach. Research subjects consisted of two mothers with low vision children and Cerebral Palsy. Research respondents were selected using a purposive sampling technique. Data were collected through observation and interviews. The results showed that several factors could cause gratitude to mothers who have children with special needs. Gratitude experienced by the mother has a positive impact on the lives of mothers, such as feelings of calm, devotion to God, and mothers that help one another. The results of this study are useful for mothers who have especially needed children to know how grateful that arises so that they can live a better life.

**Keywords:** *Gratitude, a mother, especially needs children*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Mothers are individuals who play a role in raising and educating children from an early age. Individuals who can act as fathers and mothers or individuals who are directly involved in educating children from an early age are intensively referred to as parents. Parents have a big challenge for raising their children. In many societies, it is believed that children are a gift and trust from God. Therefore, parents must protect and love them with all their hearts. Children are a priceless gift of God; so many families are waiting for the presence of a child.

Children are considered as a source of happiness. The presence of children is a long-awaited period and is very happy for parents. A survey by Wallis [1] on 900 women in Texas found that 77% of participants chose children as the most excellent source of happiness in life. Every parent wants children who are born healthy and perfect. There is nothing more desired by parents than the health and happiness of their children [2]. On the other hand, the situation in a mother will be different if the child is born in an imperfect physical condition or with a disorder that requires special needs. Disappointment will begin to emerge if the children born are not following the expectations of parents. [3]. Children with special needs are increasingly experiencing. The prevalence of children

with special needs from World Bank data shows the percentage of 85% are under 15 years of age, and more than two-thirds of the population is in Asia. The number of especially needs children in Indonesia, both physically, mentally, socially, and emotionally, occupies the fourth-largest community in the world. The United Nations estimates that the number of children with special needs aged 5-14 years is at least 10% of 42.8 million people. There are approximately 4.2 million children with special needs in Indonesia.

The Ministry of Health, Indonesia Government in 2013 through *Riskesdas* also collected data on children aged 24-59 months who have special needs. *Riskesdas* in 2013 collected data on people with visual impairment, speech impairment, down syndrome, visual impairment, cleft lip, and hearing impairment. The prevalence of children aged 24-59 months with one type of disability is 0.53%. Furthermore, the highest type of disability is blind, and the lowest is deaf. South Sulawesi is the fourth highest province with 270,182 inhabitants.

The presence of children with special needs has its impact on the family; the dynamics that occur in parents will be increasingly complex and severe. Models that are formed the daily lives of families who have especially needed children will experience changes that affect the

relationships and careers of both parents. Gupta and Singhal's research shows that stress levels in parents who have special needs children are higher than parents who have normal children [4], [5]. The stress level for mothers is 70% and for fathers is 40%. This is consistent with Hallahan and Kauffman who suggest that mothers are more vulnerable to stress than fathers [6].

The cause of parents to become stressed and depressed is a children limitation. The child's condition is deficient in terms of growth and development that can cause deep disappointment and will be a bitter reality that must be faced by parents. Caring for especially needs children would be different from caring for normal children, psychological pressure on mothers will be higher than mothers who have normal children. The causes are communication problems, difficulty understanding children, and environmental factors. Parents who feel ashamed to have children with special needs cause children to be rejected openly and many families withdraw from community activities.

For a mother, the existence of especially needs children will have an impact on their lives so that it will bring up various emotions and negative reactions. Among them are shock, distrust, sadness, reject reality, and feel guilty. The inability to adapt to the parental can cause they did not receive children's condition that was characterized by shock accompanied by stress, distrust of reality, neglect, and anger. The initial reaction was a feeling of sadness felt by NS's mother.

In another case, based on the 2009 West Java data, there were only 16000 children with special needs who received a formal education. While in 2008, there were around 62000 especially needs children in West Java. So that about 63% of especially needs children received an education. The low number was caused by the psychological factors of parents and the surrounding community. Parents "deal with" children with special needs at home, because they feel embarrassed and do not need to send their children to school.

People who have a thankful attitude have more positive emotions than others to receive things that are not in accordance with what they expect [7]. These individuals will have much greater satisfaction and expectations in their lives. Individual who is very grateful also have a higher score than individuals who are less grateful for pro-social measures. Being grateful for mothers who have children with normal physical and mental conditions is easier to do than mothers with children who have physical and mental limitations.

Based on the background, the researchers are interested in studying the description of how to supporting activity for the mother who has especially needed children. This study aims to find a description of gratitude from mothers who have especially children required, including (1) To find out the mother's reaction

when knowing that a child is born with special needs; (2) To find out the difficulties experienced by mothers while caring for and educating their children; (3) To find out the factors that encourage the emergence of gratitude from mother who has especially needed children; (4) To devised the stages experienced by mothers in achieving gratitude; and (5) To determine the impact of gratitude on the mother.

## 2. METHOD

This study has two research subjects, namely mothers, who have specialized needs children based on the phenomenon to be studied. The subjects of this study are parents, namely mothers who have anal needs physically, such as metra tuna, and who have physical disabilities. Besides, mothers here are focused on mothers who have stress levels in caring for and caring for their children. The determination of the subject in this study was conducted when researchers took preliminary data at South Sulawesi Province, Indonesia. The characteristics of the research subjects are as follows.

**Table 1.** The Characteristic of Research Subject

No	Mothers' initials	Job	Age	Disabilities Type	Children Age
1	NM	Housewife	50	Mentally Defective	12
2	NS	Entrepreneur	57	Blind	17

The sample in this study used a purposive sampling technique, which is a sampling taking into account specific criteria. Data collection methods used are (1) Interviews and (2) Observations; the type of observations made is non-participant observation. Researchers only see or listen to certain social situations without actively engaging in them. Data analysis was performed to interpret and provide an understanding of the results of interviews with research subjects. The validity of the data in qualitative research is used as an effort to examine the accuracy of research results using certain procedures [8]. The way that researchers do is to do member checking and invite the auditor (external auditor) to review the entire research project.

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this study, aspects of a mother who has especially needed children are expressed in expressing their gratitude. Data obtained based on interviews and observations with research subjects through interview guides compiled by researchers. Researchers arrange questions in accordance with the data needed. To get the results of the research as expected, the researchers categorizing the results of research into specific themes as follows.

### **3.1. Mothers' Reaction**

The various reactions experienced by the informants were related to the situation of children with special needs. Informant NS has a child with a blind condition. Sometimes she feels sad when she remembers that her child can't play with her friends outside the house. NS sometimes cries when she imagines the fate of her child in the future. But behind that, NS resigned. This reaction is a sign of his inability to change his son's fate.

The second reaction that came up was finding it difficult to take care of the child. The NM respondent with the child with cerebral Palsy described three reasons for the difficulty. First, their child, who cannot move independently, must be guided when moving. Second, NS finds it difficult to take children to schools and therapy settings. The third difficulty is the expensive medical and therapy costs

The reactions experienced by respondents related to the state of children with special needs are feeling sad, resigned, and worried. The respondent's initial reaction at that time was sad until every night, the respondent cried, thinking about the fate of the child.

### **3.2. Description of Difficulties Experienced by Mother**

The description of the difficulties referred to in this study is several circumstances that cause difficulties for mothers, who consist of difficulties in caring for children, experiencing difficulties in managing work, and difficulty managing financial management.

- Difficulty in parenting, including taking care of the child when going to shower and guide the child because the child cannot move alone
- Difficulty in undergoing work, including NS, was exhausted from having to take and wait for children at school and still have to work at night. NM was exhausted even though she is only a housewife when children start being stubborn.
- Difficulties in terms of cost, including NS having difficulty buying glasses and NM having difficulty providing care and therapy for children with special needs.

### **3.3. Factors Affecting Gratitude**

- Support. Family support for mothers with children with special needs has special meaning for respondents. The family support obtained by both respondents came from husband, children, and other close relatives. Also, support from people around the respondent, for example, teachers in children's schools.

- They were comparing the disability condition of children. Respondents felt a sense of gratitude when they saw the condition of other children that were worse than the respondent's children.
- Positive changes in children. Children who experience positive changes, such as more independent children, children experience an increase in academics. Children begin to be able to talk with others, these things cause mothers to feel more happy and grateful.
- Spiritual Conditions. Respondents consider the situation experienced as a destiny from God that must be accepted. The destiny in the form of the presence of a child who is considered a gift from God.
- The tendency to act positively. The positive action in question is an effort to nurture and pay attention to children, provide education to children, prepare funds and facilities for children, and include worship.

### **3.4. Impact of Gratitude**

Gratitude has a positive influence on the spiritual, psychological, and social aspects of the lives of mothers who have especially needed children [9]. Parents will experience a reaction by rejecting the existence of children with special needs, angry, depressed, and slowly parents can accept all the conditions of the child. Mothers must be creative in managing the time between household chores and provide more time for caring for children with special needs [10]. The most important point is the sense of acceptance of the mother because with a sincere sense of acceptance, the mother will pay attention to the development of children's abilities with great affection and love. With the form of acceptance of the mother will bring gratitude for the gifts given by God. Although parents who have a feeling of gratitude accepting children with special needs, the family and others will try to provide and prepare the best education for their children's future.

### **3.5. Discussion**

Mothers will show a psychological reaction if they know that having children with special needs is a feeling of sadness, resignation, and worry about the future of the mother and child. Mothers who have blind and physically challenged children have difficulty in caring for children, difficulties in carrying out work and developing a career, and difficulties in the cost of treating children. Mothers who have blind children have difficulties in raising their children, including difficulties in managing children's activities, taking children to school, preparing the needs for work, and difficulties to buy children's glasses, while mothers who have physically challenged children have difficulty guiding children due the condition of children who are not can move around, sending the child to school

and to the place of therapy besides that the mother has other duties in taking care of all the needs of the family, and will have difficulty in arranging the costs of care and therapy for children. Some factors encourage gratitude for mothers are a change in the self of a mother to act better. She need support from people around such as family and teachers, children with special needs experience positive changes, and conditions, spiritual mother.

The stages to achieve the gratitude that is owned by the mother start from the negative reaction of feeling sad, resigned, and worried from the mother herself. The negative reaction is followed by the difficult conditions experienced by the mother both in caring for children, doing work, and in terms of medical expenses.

If the mother has feelings of anxiety she is a desire to pay more attention to positive actions in children. This is based on the expectation of child change and development. Mother gets support from family and teachers.

Various positive efforts by the mother to produce changes for the sake of change for the child, this change raises the mother's gratitude for the condition of her child and then the mother compares the condition of the child's disability with other children which is more severe, this further raises the gratitude of the mother. The spiritual conditions encourages her gratitude. She feels that having the special needs child is a gift from God. She believes that her children must be best guarded, cared for, given the best possible education.

Mothers who already have gratitude will have an impact on psychological and psychological aspects, such as feeling happy in living their lives. In the end, everything undertaken will be easier; apart from that positive changes will emerge from the mother. It will further improve herself towards various things, and in the end, will also contribute to support other mothers who experience the same conditions.

## 5. CONCLUSION

The results showed that several factors could cause gratitude to mothers who gave birth to children with special needs arising. Gratitude experienced by the mother has a positive impact on the lives of mothers, such as feelings of calm, devotion to God, and mothers that help one another. The results of this study are useful for mothers who have especially needed children to know how grateful that arises so that they can live a better life.

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