

# Vocational Education Services in Schools for Children with Special Needs

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## ABSTRACT

The lack of employment opportunities, forcing everyone to master certain abilities and skills to have the opportunity to get a job. This condition becomes the basis for the need to implement vocational programs to equip students to be ready to face the world of work. Vocational education in Indonesia is generally applied to students who do not have certain obstacles in carrying out activities. This fact is a big challenge to minimize the number of unemployed people with disabilities. Children with special needs also have the same rights to get a job as stated in the law. Therefore, children with special needs also need to get a vocational education program. This article aims to examine further vocational education that should be applied in the scope of special education for children with special needs. Based on the literature review, it is concluded that the application of vocational education for children with special needs is given according to their talents and interests. Besides that, you must pay attention to aspects of needs and abilities.

**Keywords:** vocational, education, children with special needs

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Work is a conscious activity carried out by a person to achieve results as expected. The aspects involved in work activities are awareness, planning, results and achievement satisfaction. Work is an aspect of life that is very important for someone because the fulfillment of life's needs and the value of social status in society is obtained from work. Before working, one must first have readiness, the readiness in question, which is a point of one's maturity to accept and practice certain activities. According to Sofyan (1992) job readiness is a person's ability to complete an activity or job without experiencing obstacles with maximum results.

When entering the productive age, everyone is required to work. By having a job, a person gets an income so that they can make ends meet. In the current era, increasing job competition forces everyone to master certain abilities and expertise. To meet the demands of stake holders, dedication, hard work, and honesty are needed at work. The existence of experience and skills in a person can deepen and expand the work ability of that person. The more often people do the same job, the more skilled and the faster the person completes a job. An increase in a person's performance is obtained from the large variety of work performed as well as many and extensive work experiences. Everyone has the right to work without exception for children with special needs

(Aji & Haryani, 2017). Equality in work is a basic right in the workplace, everyone has the right to equal treatment in the world of work (Pradana, n.d.), (Huripah, 2015). Everyone has the opportunity to get a job regardless of their financial / disability, gender or other personal characteristics, and can contribute and participate in the labor market according to their capacity, including children with special needs (Tampubolon, 2019).

Children with special needs are children who need special needs due to disturbances in aspects of development or other disorders experienced by the child. According to Heward, (2006) children with special needs are children with different characteristics from children in general who do not necessarily show physical, mental or emotional disability. In the midst of society, children with special needs are often called mentally retarded children. And there is still a lot of stigma in society that thinks children with special needs are idiots, curses, crazy, or contagious disabilities, not infrequently the existence of children with special needs is still considered negative by society.

The existence of this view in the community regarding the existence of children with special needs raises a critical attitude in education and in the world of work. This discriminatory attitude is due to the limited abilities of children with special needs. This limitation of

ability is caused by the accompanying characteristics of disability experienced by children with special needs. Another problem faced by children with special needs in the world of work is the lack of experience and training that children with special needs get during their education at school so that when children with special needs graduate from education the children do not have sufficient abilities and experience to enter the world of work.

The vocational program is an educational program at the higher education level that aims to prepare personnel who have expertise and skills in certain fields (Ozawa & Yeo, 2006) who are ready to work and ready to compete in the world of work (Bonaccio, Connelly, Gellatly, Jetha, & Martin Ginis, 2020). In the vocational program, there is a combination of theory and practice in a balanced manner, oriented towards the work readiness of the graduates. The intended work readiness is the ability of a person to complete a job without experiencing difficulties and obstacles with satisfactory results.

For this reason, vocational programs are needed in special schools, inclusive schools and higher education levels because they can provide skills to students to develop various potentials of children with special needs according to their talents, interests and abilities so that they can become provisions for life in the community. The provision of this vocational program is specifically for children with special needs in the light category because even though children with special needs are in the light category, they have limitations in certain matters, but children with special needs have other potentials that can be trained to be developed as provisions to enter the world of work.

This article aims to examine vocational education services that should be applied to children with special needs. The literature review approach is used to describe vocational education and its relationship with the work readiness of children with special needs. Through this descriptive description, it is hoped that it can be an input for education providers to facilitate vocational education for children with special needs for future work readiness.

## **2. EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN**

Education is the basic need of every human being in ensuring his survival. Therefore, the government must provide quality educational education services to every citizen without exception. Inclusive education is a special education service system that allows all children with special needs to be served in public schools together with their peers. The implementation of inclusive education is one of the conditions that must be met to build an inclusive society (Sunardi, 2009).

A community structure that respects each other and upholds the value of diversity as part of the reality of life. The function of education for children with special needs

has many benefits for the children themselves. With education, teachers can find out the ability of children with special needs to be further developed and can be useful for the survival of children with special needs in society. With education, children with special needs are trained to be disciplined and independent so that they do not depend on those around them.

With education, children with special needs can socialize and communicate directly with the community so that children with special needs feel part of the community (Husna, Yunus, Gunawan, 2019). With the education of children with special needs, they can create a better life in the future. Therefore, ABK education must be able to provide skills so that children are ready to live independently in the community such as vocational service education.

## **3. VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AS A SYSTEM**

Meanwhile, vocational service education is part of the national education system that plays a role in the creation of a skilled workforce (Cawley, Kahn, & Tedesco, 1989). Vocational education is education that helps mastery certain applications. With the existence of vocational service education, it is hoped that children with special needs will be able and able to play an active role in building the whole community (Fasching, 2014). The direction of the goals of vocational service education is so that children with special needs have skills and character to encourage children with special needs to be independent. Vocational education services should be provided to children with special needs starting from secondary education to upper education. This education service can be in the form of formal or non-formal education.

Formal vocational education can take the form of an apprenticeship or direct placement in the workplace, while non-formal vocational education takes the form of special institutions and training, community learning activity centers, job training centers, and other institutions that provide skills-based education. Vocational education for children with special needs must focus on local needs/wisdom while still meeting national or international needs, given that vocational education is closely related to the economy and employment (Malle, Pirttimaa, & Saloviita, 2015).

Teachers have a very important role in the balance between vocational education as a contributor to the workforce and the world of work as users of these graduates. Teachers who provide vocational services should be teachers who are competent in certain skill areas and have received official evidence of the competence they teach. The curriculum for children with special needs related to vocational education and independence is a top priority.

The curriculum comparison weight is 40% academic and 60% practical. Vocational learning is an important point for the lives of children with special needs so that they must have a larger portion than others. It is intended that when children with special needs graduate from education, the skills taught can become provisions for living independently in society. Students who are given vocational service programs are usually students who do not have severe special conditions or still have potential that can be trained and developed with various skills so that service providers can help students to live independently (Bonaccio et al., 2020).

Children with special needs have great potential if they can be developed according to the skills they like. Therefore, secondary education schools should be able to provide facilities that can develop the skills of children with special needs. The provision of vocational services is usually provided according to the interests and talents of children with special needs. The vocational service programs in secondary schools for children with special needs are: (1) culinary art; (2) fashion; (3) cosmetic; (4) massage; (5) computer and informatics engineering; (6) simple automotive; (7) art; (8) plantation & fisheries; and (9) entrepreneurship. Schools can develop their own independence options according to regional points, child characteristics, interests, and talents of children with special needs/students with special needs.

#### **4. THE NEED FOR A VOCATIONAL PROGRAM WITH A STAKE HOLDER**

Provision of good vocational service education must be in line with developments in science and technology and in accordance with the needs of the workforce. Teachers and educators have full responsibility for implementing learning activities at school. Teachers must be able to adapt themselves to various times and demands of increasingly high standards.

Teachers who teach vocational service education must be able to condition children with special needs in facing the demands of the times related to skills (Polidano & Mavromaras, 2010). Teachers must have extensive experience and know firsthand how the development of the world of work environment is in order to actualize competencies for children with special needs.

The implementation of vocational education services in schools must lead to the mastery of competencies according to business and industrial developments outside of schools. Schools and companies must be able to work together in providing experiences to students, coaching teachers about information and skills according to the latest developments, the concept of implementing vocational service education, among others: (1) the content of the material and adjusted to the needs of students; (2) learning objectives are formulated in order to achieve learning outcomes of functional skills and vocational skills as a provision for post-school life; (3)

skills learning strategies with an apprenticeship system in the appropriate industry or place of business; (4) learning resources must be in the form of a replica or real work environment with effective media; (5) providing knowledge about marketing learning outcomes for children with special needs by taking advantage of school cooperatives; (6) assessment of learning outcomes must apply the achievement criteria for the performance level of skills and apply independent work skills tests; and (7) human resources have the competence to master the content of the material, and how to learn skills.

Therefore, service education is very much needed at the secondary education level because it has a very important war in the development of students and economic development. Vocational service education is very important service at the secondary and higher education levels for children with special needs.

The knowledge taught to children with special needs at the secondary education level must be in the form of appropriate knowledge to provide facilities in developing the skills of children with special needs to become independent individuals in the community. General knowledge and vocational skills must work in harmony with children with special needs and there should be no partiality. If vocational service education does not play a role at this level of education, then this education does not play a role in the development of the education community for children with special needs to be isolated and separated from society and the world of work (Griffin & Nechvoglod, 2008).

The availability of facilities at schools affects the implementation of vocational education services in schools. Teaching human resources to play an important role in producing skilled children with special needs. Teacher improvement programs are needed in order to improve the ability of teachers to carry out their duties as teachers of vocational education. Capacity building is intended to improve and develop abilities, attitudes, and skills. Teacher improvement programs should be designed to assist teachers in enhancing recent experiences so that teachers gain the knowledge, skills, and attitude enhancement needed to carry out work in accordance with their responsibilities.

#### **5. CONCLUSION**

Based on the research results, it can be concluded that vocational education in special schools and inclusive schools plays an important role for children with special needs in developing their skills and abilities. Thus, vocational education services in the scope of special education need to be developed in order to meet their needs in preparing themselves to face the world of work and to be independent in the future. In addition to considering talents and interests, vocational education must also consider aspects of their needs and abilities in carrying out work demands.

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