

THE ROLE OF TEACHERS IN INTRODUCING HEALTHY AND NUTRITIOUS FOOD IN THE SUPPLEMENTARY FEEDING PROGRAM AT RA DDI AL MUTTAQIN PAOMALLIMPOE SOPPENG DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to describe the role of teachers in introducing healthy and nutritious food to early childhood through the Supplementary Feeding Program (PMT) at RA DDI Al Muttaqin Paomallimpoe, Soppeng Regency. This research employed a descriptive qualitative approach, with data collected through observation, interviews, and documentation. The results show that teachers play a crucial role in shaping children's understanding of the importance of consuming healthy and nutritious food, both through thematic learning, group eating activities, and role modeling in food choices. Teachers also collaborate with parents and nutrition officers to ensure that the food provided meets early childhood nutrition standards. The PMT program, when implemented consistently and systematically, can improve children's awareness of nutritious eating habits. Therefore, active teacher involvement is essential in supporting healthy eating behavior from an early age as part of early childhood health education.

Keywords: Teacher's Role, Healthy Food, Child Nutrition, Supplementary Feeding Program, Early Childhood.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Childhood, especially early childhood, is a golden period in physical and mental development. During this time, the need for balanced and nutritious nutritional intake is very important to support optimal growth, intelligence, and endurance. Unfortunately, there are still many young children who are not accustomed to eating

healthy and nutritious food, either due to lack of knowledge or lack of habits instilled early on.

Schools, especially early childhood education institutions such as RA (Raudhatul Athfal), have a strategic role in shaping children's healthy eating patterns. In this context, the teacher becomes the central figure who not only teaches, but also guides and gives examples in introducing healthy food to their students. Through a fun approach, thematic learning, eating together, and good communication with parents, teachers can instill an understanding of the importance of nutritious food to children. One of the concrete efforts made in introducing healthy food to early childhood is through the Supplementary Feeding Program (PMT). This program not only aims to meet children's nutritional needs, but also as a means of nutrition education that involves teachers as the main facilitator. In RA DDI Al Muttaqin Paomallimpoe Soppeng Regency, the PMT program has become part of routine activities that require active teacher involvement so that nutritional messages can be received by children appropriately.

Based on this background, it is important to examine the extent of the teacher's role in introducing healthy and nutritious food through the implementation of the PMT program at RA DDI Al Muttaqin. This research is expected to contribute to increasing awareness of the importance of nutrition education from an early age and strengthening cooperation between schools, teachers, and parents.

2. METHODS

This study used a descriptive qualitative approach with the aim of describing the role of teachers in introducing healthy and nutritious food to early childhood through the Supplementary Feeding Program (PMT). The research location is RA DDI Al Muttaqin Paomallimpoe, with the subject of teachers and principals.

Data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation. Data analysis techniques used the Miles and Huberman model, which included data

reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. Data validity was tested through triangulation of sources and techniques.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Based on observations and interviews with teachers at RA DDI Al Muttaqin Paomallimpoe, it was found that teachers have an important role in introducing healthy and nutritious food to early childhood. This role is realized through:

a. Providing Early Nutrition Education

Teachers introduce the types of healthy and nutritious foods through thematic learning and picture media. Children are introduced to fruits, vegetables, milk, and staple foods through songs, stories, and educational games.

b. Exemplary Diet

Teachers set a direct example by participating in eating together, choosing healthy food, and inviting children to enjoy nutritious food with enthusiasm.

c. Supplementary Feeding Activities (PMT)

The PMT program is carried out regularly and planned. Teachers supervise the process of food consumption by children and ensure that the food provided meets nutritional standards. Children are encouraged to try different types of healthy food to get used to it from an early age.

d. Cooperation with Parents

Teachers also communicate with parents about children's eating habits at home. Through this communication, teachers and parents support each other in forming sustainable healthy eating habits.

Discussion

The role of teachers in the PMT program at RA DDI Al Muttaqin shows a significant contribution in shaping children's awareness of the importance of healthy

food. The introduction of healthy food from an early age is very important, because at this age children are forming eating patterns that will affect their long-term health.

This research is in line with Bandura's social learning theory, which emphasizes the importance of modeling in behavior formation. Early childhood children tend to imitate the behavior of adults around them. Therefore, the involvement of teachers as positive models in food selection is very effective.

In addition, a fun and participatory approach from teachers has been proven to make children more interested in trying new and healthy foods. The PMT program is a medium of education as well as habituation that has a direct impact on children's attitudes and eating habits.

However, the success of this program is also determined by the continued role of parents at home. Teachers cannot work alone, but must actively collaborate with parents so that children get consistent messages about the importance of healthy food..

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the study, it can be concluded that teachers have a strategic and active role in introducing healthy and nutritious food to early childhood through the Supplementary Feeding Program (PMT) at RA DDI Al Muttaqin Paomallimpoe. This role is realized in the form of:

- a. Providing nutrition education directly through fun and age-appropriate learning activities.
- b. Being a role model in choosing and consuming healthy food through eating together.
- c. Supervising and guiding children during the implementation of PMT so that children get used to eating nutritious food.
- d. Collaborate with parents to create a continuity of healthy eating habits at home and school.

Thus, teachers' involvement in the PMT program not only serves as a fulfillment of children's nutrition, but also as a means of character and health education. The active role of teachers is very important in shaping children's awareness and habits towards the importance of healthy eating from an early age.

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