

How Are Emotional Intelligence Development Efforts in Improving Social Skill in Autistic Children?

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Abstract: This research aims to find out how methods and strategies can be applied in developing the emotional intelligence of children with autism, as well as the impact on their ability to interact with the social environment. Through approaches involving games, art, and relaxation techniques, children are taught to recognize and manage their own emotions, as well as understand the emotions of others. The research is a field study where researchers conducted research at Bina Anggita Yogyakarta. The approach used is a case study. Which explores a particular phenomenon, event, or situation in a real context to analyze and understand the complexity of a problem. The results of the study show that the improvement of emotional intelligence not only helps autistic children in their social skills but also increases self-confidence and more effective communication. With the right development methods, autistic children can make significant progress in social interaction, which supports their integration in society. This research provides important insights for parents, educators, and professionals in designing intervention programs that are appropriate for children with autism. More effective to support the development of children with autism.

Keywords: emotional intelligence development, social skills, autistic children.

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■ INTRODUCTION

Children with special needs, abbreviated as children with special needs, are children with significant developmental deficiencies compared to other children, thus requiring special attention in their education (Heo et al., 2024). One of the developmental disorders in children categorized as children with disabilities is autism. Autism, derived from the Greek word *autos* (alone), is known as a disorder called Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). ASD is a lifelong developmental disability that is characterized by difficulties in communication, social skills, and limited behaviors and interests as well as repetitive or repetitive behaviors. The disorder is complex and is usually seen before the child reaches 3 years of age,

characterized by social isolation, difficulties in communication, and repetitive behaviors (Hyde et al., 2024). Autism, as a behavioral syndrome, causes long-term disabilities that affect individual neural functions and have a significant impact on communication skills and Social Skills (Paige et al., 2024). Some cases that children Autistic children have difficulty in managing their emotions. They have intense or disproportionate emotional responses to certain situations. They also have difficulty in regulating negative emotions such as anger or anxiety (Bergsund et al., 2023).

Several studies have shown that developing emotional intelligence in autistic children is very important and can be done through various methods. For example, the use of visual learning

media has been shown to be effective in improving the emotional intelligence of autistic children (Edler et al., 2023). Another study showed that parents of autistic children often have moderate emotional intelligence, which may affect the way they support their children's development (Cicchetti & Aber, 1998). The number of people with autism is allegedly increasing in Indonesia, with an additional 500 children with autism each year. According to the latest data, by 2024, the number of children with autism in Indonesia will rise dramatically to around 2.4 million.

Meanwhile, data from PLA DIY shows that there are 662 children with autism registered at PLA DIY, consisting of 456 boys and 206 girls. Autistic children have difficulty in understanding and feeling other people's emotions. They have difficulty in reading the feelings and needs of others, making it difficult to respond empathetically. Autistic children have difficulty in controlling their behavior related to emotions. They may have a tendency to engage in repetitive behaviors or vent emotions inappropriately. Such cases are in line with the results of the study found that autistic children respond more to objects around them than people in their lives and the underlying causes of their emotions are usually situations, favorite objects, or people around them (Markovitch et al., 2023).

Study (Abidin et al., 2019) shows that Emotional intelligence in Indonesia is currently approached through various aspects, namely: education, many schools have begun to integrate education about emotional intelligence into the curriculum. Social Emotional Learning (SEL) programs are designed to help students recognize and manage their emotions, as well as improve social skills. Research on emotional intelligence in Indonesia, especially related to autistic children, is still in its infancy. However, several studies have shown that children with autism can benefit from interventions that focus on developing emotional intelligence. For example, programs that teach

social skills can improve their emotional interactions and understanding. Several non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and educational institutions have launched programs designed to support autistic children in developing emotional intelligence. These programs often involve training for parents and teachers so that they can better support their children. According to data from the Ministry of Education and Culture, only about 40% of schools in Indonesia have emotional intelligence development programs in their curriculum. A study by the University of Indonesia showed that autistic children who participated in an emotional intelligence development program showed significant improvements in their ability to recognize and manage emotions compared to the control group.

The condition of autistic children at the Bina Anggita Special School for Autism in Yogyakarta, shows that they often have difficulty playing and communicating with peers and have difficulty understanding game rules, sharing interests and they have difficulty reading body language, facial expressions, and voice intonation, which can hinder their ability to interact socially with others. Second, limitations in the ability to empathize, autistic children have difficulty understanding and feeling the emotions of others. They have difficulty recognizing and responding to other people's feelings, making it difficult for them to understand the dynamics of power in everyday social relationships. Third, limitations in the ability to regulate emotions, autistic children often have difficulty regulating their own emotions. They experience sudden changes in emotions and have difficulty expressing their feelings in words. This can affect their ability to interact socially with others.

Fourth, limitations in social problem solving skills, autistic children have difficulty in solving social problems that arise in daily interactions. They have difficulty in understanding unwritten

social rules and dealing with situations that require social problem solving. Therefore, there is a need for systematic and planned efforts in the world of education for autistic children in developing emotional intelligence and improving social skills in them to support the development of their social skills to make a positive contribution in dealing with the social demands around them. The method of developing emotional intelligence of autistic children at Bina Anggita Yogyakarta uses DIR (Developmental, Individual Differences, & Relationship Based) techniques or methods.

The DIR method emphasizes emotional development and interpersonal relationships. It focuses on understanding the child's individual differences and creating an environment that supports natural social interactions. DIR encourages emotional engagement and purposeful play to help children develop social and emotional skills in the context of broader relationships, which seeks to conduct a thorough assessment through natural and structured Social Skills (Lee et al., 2024). DIR (Developmental, Individual Differences, & Relationship Based) Floortime Method. The DIR floortime method was developed by Dr. Stanley Greenspan which is applied in games that aim to build a natural environment and can help children's language development or appropriate social skills abilities (Demetriou et al., 2024). DIR is a method that can be applied to manage and reduce ASD symptoms (Oshri et al., 2024).

From there, researchers will describe the efforts to develop emotional intelligence in improving social skills in autistic children at Bina Anggita Yogyakarta. Describe and analyze the process of developing emotional intelligence in improving social skills in autistic children at Bina Anggita Yogyakarta.

■ **METHOD**

Research Design

This study uses a case study approach to explore in depth the elements of emotional

intelligence development and social skills of autistic children at Bina Anggita School Yogyakarta. The aim is to explore the elements of emotional intelligence development that can contribute to improving the social skills of autistic children and the factors that influence the development process.

Research Subject

The subjects of this study consisted of the principal, four teachers, and students at Bina Anggita Yogyakarta. The principal played an important role in providing permission and support for the implementation of the research, as well as providing the necessary direction. The four teachers involved were those who directly taught and interacted with students, so they had deep insight into the learning process and student development. In addition, the subjects of the objects in this study were documents related to the problem being studied. These documents can include the curriculum, student progress records, and evaluation reports that provide additional information about the context and learning outcomes at the school. By utilizing these two types of subjects, the study is expected to provide a comprehensive picture of the dynamics of education at Bina Anggita Yogyakarta.

Data Collection

The researcher conducted direct research in the field. This researcher was at the Bina Anggita Yogyakarta school on Jl. Kanoman, Tegalpasar, Banguntapan, Bantul, Yogyakarta and conducted direct research on 1 class teacher. The researcher actively conducted first, observation in the period between January 2024 (as an initial observation) to March 2024 (as a follow-up observation). Second, the researcher collected data by conducting interviews. By conducting interviews, the information and data obtained are more and more in-depth. Important information that will be explored from the principal and teachers is related to their experiences in developing emotional

intelligence and social skills of autistic children, where one teacher and another teacher certainly have different ways, even though the results are the same. The type of interview that will be used to explore more deeply the class teachers as second parents at the school who are trusted by the parents of autistic students is using a structured interview type. Third, this method, the researcher the necessary data that is at the research location.

Data Analysis

The data obtained were then analyzed reductively case studies and edited during data collection. Some of the things done are reducing data, presenting data, drawing conclusions and carrying out data verification. Reducing data is an activity of collecting data from the field which is then sorted and selecting which data is essential and non-essential.

■ RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Reasons for Developing Emotional Intelligence in Improving Social Skills in Autistic Children at Bina Anggita Yogyakarta

The development of emotional intelligence is very important for children with autism as it can help them improve their social skills. Children with autism often have difficulties in social interaction and understanding emotions, both their own and others (Altschuler & Krueger, 2021). Emotions that occur frequently and are difficult to control can be an obstacle in the development of autism. In response to this, an approach is needed that can help individuals with autism cope with their emotions and develop better. By understanding and providing an environment that suits their sensory needs, individuals with autism can reduce stress and improve their emotional well-being so that they can fit into their environment (Sayang & Rahmatullah, n.d.).

Recognizing and Managing Emotions

Individuals with ASD tend to experience difficulties in various emotional aspects, such as

identifying emotions, facial expressions, voice intonation and body language. These difficulties hinder individuals with ASD in showing and managing their own emotions, as well as in understanding and responding to the emotions of other individuals (Demkowicz et al., 2024). One of the underlying difficulties in social interaction and communication is the difficulty in understanding and responding to the other person's emotional state based on facial expressions (Kaliush et al., 2024). In addition, children with ASD tend to look away from the face or eye contact of the interlocutor, thus showing slower development of emotion understanding ability (Pluess, 2024). These reasons result in individuals with ASD being perceived as less able to empathize with others (Myroniuk, 2024). This is in line with the statement by Mr. AF, one of the class teachers at Bina Anggita Yogyakarta said that:

“Contohnya ya mba salah satu siswa disini yang berinisial RS anaknya cerdas suka sekali dengan dinosaurus. Tapi dia mengalami kesulitan dalam berkomunikasi dan sering kali tidak bisa mengekspresikan perasaannya dengan kata-kata. Suatu hari mba, di ruang kelas, saya memperkenalkan aktivitas baru yang berfokus pada hewan, bukan dinosaurus. Ketika guru menjelaskan aktivitas tersebut, RS mulai merasa frustrasi. dia mencoba untuk mengungkapkan ketidaksukaannya, tetapi karena keterbatasan verbal, ia tidak mampu menyampaikan perasaannya. Akibatnya, yah RS ini mulai berteriak, membanting meja, dan melemparkan mainan yang ada di sekitarnya. Tantrum ini berlangsung selama beberapa menit mba, tapi kita biarkan, sampai dia merasa lelah dan akhirnya duduk di lantai dengan wajah tertutup. Habis itu baru kita tanya mau dia apa, kalau dia tidak jawab biasa kita bantu dengan menggunakan alat bantu gambar beberapa ekspresi nanti dia tunjuk ekspresi yang mana yang sedang terjadi padanya habis itu baru kita kasih

edukasi.” (Wawancara Bapak AF, Tanggal 22 Februari 2024)

Social Relationships

Without adequate social skills, these children may not be able to understand or respond well to social cues, which are essential for effective interaction. In addition, the communication disorders that autistic children experience can worsen if there is no effort to improve their social skills. This can result in frustration, anxiety and even depression, as the child feels unable to participate in desired social activities. In the long run, lack of social interaction can affect the child’s emotional and social development, as well as their ability to function in future educational and professional environments. Therefore, it is important to provide appropriate support and interventions to help autistic children develop their social skills. As conveyed by Mr. BU one of the class teachers at Bina Anggita Yogyakarta added that:

“Seperti itu mba, ada yang berinisial RN, dia suka sekali dalam hal menggambar, mewarnai, dan melukis. Jadi waktu istirahat juga dia pasti menggambar atau mewarnai. Tapi saat ekstrakurikuler pengelompokkan gitu mba jadi warnah yang gunakan itu 1 warna/krayon 2 sampai 3 tapi rina tidak mau, maunya sendiri saja sudah kami kasih pengertian dia tetap tidak mau dan pada akhirnya dia marah dan tantrum.” (Wawancara Bapak BU, Tanggal 22 Februari 2024)

Empathy

If an autistic child’s empathy is not enhanced, they can have difficulty in understanding and responding to the feelings of others. They may not be able to understand social cues or emotional reactions from others, which can lead to misunderstandings and conflicts in social interactions. This can exacerbate the frustration

and anxiety they may experience in social situations. In the long run, a lack of empathy can affect a child’s emotional and social development, as well as their ability to function in educational and professional environments. Therefore, it is important to provide appropriate support and interventions to help autistic children develop empathy, so that they can interact better and have a better quality of life. As conveyed by Mr. AF one of the class teachers at Bina Anggita Yogyakarta added that:

“Kalau empatinya kurang, banyak mba seperti ST waktu itu ada temannya tantrum disampingnya saat proses pembelajaran karena lupa membawa pensil dan maunya cuman menggunakan pensilnya ST ini tidak bereaksi apapun ke temannya jangankan mau menawarkan pensilnya melirik saja tidak dia juga asik sama dirinya sendiri” (Wawancara Bapak AF, Tanggal 22 Februari 2024)

Social Skills

Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) often experience difficulties in interacting with others, which can affect their ability to build healthy social relationships. If an autistic child’s social skills are not improved, they can face various challenges in everyday life. Difficulties in interacting with others can lead to social isolation, where the child feels alienated from peers and the surrounding environment. This can lead to low self-confidence and emotional problems, such as anxiety and depression. As stated by Mrs. RI, one of the class teachers at Bina Anggita Yogyakarta added that:

“Ada mba anak yang baru masuk FN dia suka sekali sama musik karena saya tau dia suka musik jadi pernah sekali sebelum belajar saya meminta mereka untuk menyampaikan musik apa yang mereka suka jadi ada yang suka dengan musik yang sama saya satukan dan maju kedepan untuk sama-sama nyanyi tapi FN tidak mau duduk sama

temannya dia cuman mengulangi lagu yang dia suka dia tidak mau berpindah tempat. Ketika temannya yang saya minta ke tempat duduknya dia merasa tidak nyaman dan mengakibatkan dia menjadi tantrum mba.” (Wawancara Ibu RI, Tanggal 22 Februari 2024)

Self-Confidence

If autistic children’s self-confidence is not improved, they can experience difficulties in interacting with others and participating in social activities. Low self-confidence can cause children to feel alienated and unable to communicate well, which in turn can worsen their social isolation. building self-confidence can be a challenging process as they often face difficulties in communicating and socializing. Limitations in social communication can make autistic learners feel isolated and undervalued, which exacerbates their low self-confidence. In addition, there are often differences in the way they process information and respond to their surroundings, which can lead to frustration and distress. As stated by Mr. BU, one of the class teachers at Bina Anggita Yogyakarta added that:

“Misal yah mba kita buat 1 proyek perkelompok hasil proyeknya harus dipresentasikan dan biasanya anak autis klau kita tanya hari dan presentasinya minggu depan meraka masih terima nurut-nurut aja tapi ketika saya bilang presentasinya hari ini pasti langsung cemas karena kurang percaya diri.” (Wawancara Bapak BU, Tanggal 22 Februari 2024)

Description of the Process of Developing Emotional Intelligence in Improving Social Skills in Autistic Children at Bina Anggita Yogyakarta

In the above study, it has been conveyed about the things that cause Bina Anggita Yogyakarta school to be more intense and

focused on developing emotional intelligence in improving social skills in autistic children at Bina Anggita Yogyakarta, in that they can learn to recognize and understand their own emotions as well as the emotions of others, reduce aggressive behavior and stress levels, help them overcome frustration and anxiety that are often experienced, contribute to cognitive development. Children who are able to manage their emotions well are more likely to focus and learn effectively, autistic children can become more independent in decision-making and in facing daily challenges, which can help them interact better in social situations.

Therefore, there is a need for systematic and planned efforts in the world of education for autistic children in developing emotional intelligence and improving social skills in order to support the development of their social skills to make a positive contribution in dealing with the social demands around them. Emotional intelligence and social skills play an important role in the development of autistic children. Emotional intelligence involves the ability to recognize, understand, manage and express emotions well. Meanwhile, social skills involve the ability to interact and communicate with others in various social situations. With good emotional intelligence, autistic children can develop the social skills needed to interact with others, understand their feelings and perspectives, and manage conflict and difficult situations. This will help them to build good and healthy relationships with others, and improve their ability to get along and participate in their social environment.

Based on initial interviews with Mr. AF as a class teacher at Bina Anggita Yogyakarta about whether there are methods used for the development of emotional intelligence of autistic students at Bina Anggita Yogyakarta, stated that:

“Ada mba, model yang kami gunakan adalah metode DIR (Developmental,

Individual Differences, & Relationship Based), sudah dilaksanakan kurang lebih 3 tahun mba.” (Wawancara Bapak AF, Tanggal 22 Februari 2024)

The method of developing emotional intelligence of autistic children at Bina Anggita Yogyakarta uses DIR (Developmental, Individual Differences, & Relationship Based) techniques or methods. DIR encourages emotional engagement and purposeful play to help children develop social and emotional skills in the context of broader relationships. which seeks to conduct a thorough assessment through natural and

structured Social Skills (Humphreys et al., 2024). DIR (Developmental, Individual Differences, & Relationship Based) Floortime Method. The DIR floortime method was developed by Dr. Stanley Greenspan and is applied in games that aim to build a natural environment that can help children’s language development or appropriate social skills (Hasselmann, 2023). DIR is a method that can be applied to manage and reduce ASD symptoms (King et al., 2021). There are several manifestations of the advantages of the DIR method that are “recognized” by teachers at Bina Anggita Yogyakarta, namely:

Table 1. DIR method “recognized” by teacher

Teacher Name	Benefits of the DIR Method
Mr. BU	<p>Focus on Emotional Connection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DIR emphasizes the importance of a strong relationship between the child and the adult, which helps the child feel safe to express and understand their emotions. <p>Holistic Approach</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This method considers all aspects of a child's development, including emotional, social and cognitive aspects, thus helping children develop emotional intelligence as a whole. <p>Personalize the Experience</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DIR is customized to each child's unique needs and characteristics, allowing for a more effective approach in addressing their emotional challenges.
Mr. AF	<p>Empathy Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through purposeful interaction, children learn to recognize and understand the feelings of others, which is an important component of emotional intelligence. <p>Increased Self-Awareness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DIR helps children develop self-awareness by exploring their emotions, so that they can recognize and understand the feelings that arise in various situations.
Mrs. RI	<p>Emotional Response Strategy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children are taught how to respond to emotions in a constructive way, helping them manage emotional reactions in social situations. <p>Use of Play Activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This method often uses play as a tool for learning, creating a fun environment and allowing the child to explore emotions without pressure.

	<p>Support for Parents</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DIR engages parents in the process, providing them with tools and strategies to help their child recognize and manage emotions at home.
Mr. KI	<p>Flexibility in Approach</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DIR can be applied in a variety of contexts and situations, allowing for adaptation according to the emotional needs of the child. <p>Development of Facing Skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By building trust and teaching emotional skills, children become better able to deal with challenging social situations.

As stated by the teachers, the DIR method has been proven to be effective in improving the emotional intelligence and social skills of children with autism. Teachers at autism special schools observed that the application of this method can bring about positive changes in children's emotional regulation and social interaction. One of the main focuses of the DIR method is to help children manage their emotions. With a relationship-based approach, teachers can create a safe and supportive environment where children feel comfortable expressing their feelings. This is very important as the ability to recognize and manage emotions is the foundation for good social skills. Every child has different needs and ways of learning. By understanding these differences, teachers can customize their approach to meet each child's specific needs. This not only increases the child's engagement in the learning process, but also strengthens the relationship between teacher and child, which in turn supports their emotional and social development. Thus, the DIR method not only focuses on developing emotional intelligence, but also significantly improves the social skills of autistic children, preparing them to interact better in society.

DIR Method Process (Developmental, Individual Differences, & Relationship Based)

The DIR method is an approach that can be applied to help children with autism disorders

to improve their emotional intelligence and social skills. According to teachers at Bina Anggita Yogyakarta school, the DIR method is an approach that can be applied to help children with autism disorders improve their emotional intelligence and social skills. Since it was implemented 3 years in 2021 until now 2024, this method focuses on the holistic development of children, taking into account their individual differences and interpersonal relationships. The techniques used are more flexible and focus on more natural interactions.

Emotional Development

As explained earlier, the DIR Method (Developmental, Individual Differences, & Relationship Based) is an effective approach in helping to develop emotional intelligence and social skills. The DIR method has been shown to lead to positive changes in autistic children's emotion regulation. By creating a supportive environment, children can learn to recognize and manage their emotions better:

Emotion Recognition

"Iya mba, cara kami untuk pengenalan emosi menggunakan boneka atau mainan dari karakter kartun yang disukai ini untuk mendorong permainan imajinatif. Misalnya, menciptakan skenario di mana karakter tersebut mengalami berbagai emosi (senang, sedih, marah) atau biasa juga mba, kami

menggunakan beberapa ekspresi menggunakan kartu nanti kami meminta mereka menebak/menyebutkan ekspresi apa yang kami tunjukkan, ini dapat mengajarkan anak untuk mengenali dan mengekspresikan emosi mereka sendiri dan orang lain melalui permainan, gambar, atau cerita.” (Wawancara Ibu RI, Tanggal 22 Februari 2024)

According to Ms. Ri By applying the DIR/ Floortime method, children not only learn to interact with others, but also to understand and express their emotions. This is crucial in helping them build healthy social relationships and improve their emotional intelligence.

Emotion Regulation

“Contohnya mba SI, dia sering mengalami ledakan emosi, terutama saat menghadapi situasi yang tidak terduga atau ketika aturan permainan berubah. SI kesulitan mengidentifikasi dan mengelola perasaannya, yang sering menyebabkan frustrasi. Nah kalau dia tantrum kita memberi aba aba seperti tarik nafas buang berulang-ulang atau menghitung, jika masih tantrum mba, kita sudah membuat “kotak ketenangan” berisi barang-barang yang menenangkan seperti bola stres, mainan fidget, atau buku gambar. SI diajarkan untuk menggunakan kotak ini saat merasa kewalahan. Sampai tenang baru SI ikut lagi belajar atau bermain bersama kita.” (Wawancara Bapak BU, Tanggal 22 Februari 2024)

According to Mr. AF, with emotion regulation training, children can learn to control their reactions to negative emotions, such as anger or anxiety. This is very important for their social and emotional development.

Individual Interaction

Personalized Approach

“Jadi mba mereka memiliki perbedaan kebutuhan dan kemampuan masing-masing dalam menerima pembelajaran jadi setiap

aktifitas pembelajaran baik itu teori ataupun praktek ada yang cocok dan ada yang tidak cocok sama mereka, ketika mereka tidak suka mba reaksinya sama seperti siswa normal lainnya yang beralasan ngantuklah, lapar, ingin ke toilet dan ini bisa mempengaruhi temannya yang lain.” (Wawancara Bapak KI, Tanggal 22 Februari 2024)

According to Mr. KI as the class teacher at Bina Anggita Yogyakarta, understanding the individual differences of each child, including the way they learn and interact, so that teaching methods can be adjusted. Individual variations of autistic children in the classroom have different needs and characteristics. This creates challenges in determining how to teach autistic children. Although each child is an individual who responds to teaching methods in different ways, there are some strategies that are commonly applied to help autistic children achieve their educational goals. The learning difficulties that autistic children face must be in accordance with their background. Learning difficulties in autistic children need to be studied and solutions sought.

Social Relationships

“jadi mba dengan metode DIR ini pembelajarannya itu mbak lebih kreatif banyak prakteknya seperti contoh pembelajarannya IPA dengan praktek membuat telur asin secara berkelompok, nah nanti di situ pasti ada anak tidak fokus entah itu dia cuman jalan-jalan di tempat, ada juga duduk sambil teriak, ada juga nendang2 lantai, ada juga yang fokus buat telur asin tapi kalau tidak diarahkan dia akan lakukan itu-itu saja tidak pindah ke step berikutnya. Di situlah tugas kita untuk tetap memfokuskan mereka walaupun itu akan terjadi berulang kali, agar terjadi interaksi sosial dan pengendalian emosi mereka.” (Wawancara Ibu RI, Tanggal 22 Februari 2024)

According to the teachers at Bina Anggita Yogyakarta, one of the DIR methods has been

proven to be effective for the development of emotional intelligence and skills of children with autism, namely building social relationships with various kinds of interactions in and outside of learning. This method is very effective in creating a supportive environment for children, where they can feel safe and comfortable to interact with others.

Communication Skills

Verbal Communication

“Contohnya mba seperti ekstrakurikuler mereka kami ikutkan semua ekstrakurikuler di sekolah nanti baru kita tanya suka yang mana biar mereka pilih suka dan nyamannya di mana, ada yang suka gamelan, melukis, buat kerajinan tangan. Dan hasil mereka ini, mereka bisa dapat upah mba kaya melukis mba hasil lukisan mereka kami jual dan laku mba ratusan bahkan sampai jutaan mba, kalau gamelan mereka kita ikutkan lomba, event-event atau mereka juga diundang langsung. Dan untuk hasil kerajinan tangan nanti jadinya ada seperti gantungan kunci itu kita jual atau titip di toko hasilnya kita kasih mereka. Lewat ekstrakurikuler ini mereka kita ajarkan bagaimana mencari uang mba dan membantu sekali dalam komunikasi dan mengontrol emosi mereka.” (Wawancara Ibu RI, Tanggal 22 Februari 2024)

According to Ibu RI Encourage the use of language in social contexts, for example, through structured dialog or the use of alternative means of communication where necessary.

Non-Verbal Communication

Awalnya mba kita pengenalan emosi menggunakan kartu gambar wajah yang menunjukkan berbagai emosi (senang, sedih, marah, bingung). Setelah itu kita minta tunjukkan setiap gambar dan jelaskan situasi yang sesuai dengan emosi tersebut. Contoh: “Ini wajah senang, seperti saat kita bermain.”

Tanyakan, “Bagaimana seharusnya wajahmu ketika temanmu senang?” dan kita dorong dia untuk menunjukkan ekspresi wajah yang sesuai atau biasa juga mba, menggunakan cermin dan minta mereka untuk melihat wajahnya saat mengekspresikan emosi dan mencoba berbagai ekspresi wajah dan menyebutkan emosi yang dia rasakan. (Wawancara Bapak KI, Tanggal 22 Februari 2024)

According to Mr. KI, teaching children to understand non-verbal cues, such as facial expressions and body language, is important in social interactions.

Support Environment

“Iya mba salah satunya keterlibatan orang tua, karena banyak dari mereka yang tidak tinggal dengan orang tua mereka, banyak dari mereka juga yang sehari-harinya hanya dengan penjanganya, jadi setiap ada pertemuan orang tua atau kita butuh bicara sama orang tuanya pasti tidak datang dan yang datang malahan tante, kakak, atau bahkan penjanganya. Jadi kerja sama kami untuk membentuk rutinitas positif di sekolah dan di rumah kurang terdukung, jadi anaknya di sekolah baik pulang kami tidak tau seperti apa, besok balik lagi sekolah anaknya tantrum dan ini sering terjadi mba dan kita aga kesulitan mengatasinya karena kurangnya kerja sama antara di sekolah dan dirumah.” (Wawancara Bapak AF, Tanggal 22 Februari 2024)

According to Mr. AF, involving parents in the process, such as providing them with strategies to interact and support the child's emotional development at home. Parents have a very important role in helping autistic children develop their emotional intelligence and social skills. Research shows that the interaction and support provided by parents can have a positive impact on the social and emotional development

of autistic children. Through daily interactions, parents can model positive social behavior and teach autistic children about social norms. They can also involve the child in social activities, such as playing with peers or joining community activities, to help the child practice their social skills. So when parents don't care it can be a hindrance in their emotional intelligence and social skills.

Reasons for Developing Emotional Intelligence in Improving Social Skills in Autistic Children at Bina Anggita Yogyakarta

Based on what was found in the field regarding the reasons for developing emotional intelligence in autistic children at Bina Anggita Yogyakarta is very important to improve their social skills. Emotional intelligence helps these children in understanding and managing their own emotions as well as the emotions of others, which is a crucial aspect in social interaction. Through specially designed programs, such as adaptive physical education learning, autistic children can improve their physical, emotional, social and intellectual skills. Activities that involve social interaction, such as music therapy, have also proven effective in improving the social skills of autistic children. By developing emotional intelligence, these children can adapt more easily in social settings and build better relationships with peers and adults.

As stated by Daniel Goleman, emotional intelligence involves the ability to recognize, understand and manage emotions, both in oneself and others. This is very important for autistic children, to be able to interact effectively and build healthy social relationships. Goleman emphasizes that the ability to recognize one's own and others' emotions, and to manage those emotions, is key in the development of emotional intelligence. This includes aspects such as empathy, self-control, and coping skills. social, all of which contribute to an individual's ability to interact well in a social

setting. By understanding and managing emotions, autistic children can more easily adapt and communicate with others, which in turn helps them in building better and healthier relationships.

Daniel Goleman's statement is reinforced by O'Brien emphasizing that developing empathy as part of emotional intelligence helps autistic children understand the feelings of others, which is key to interacting in a social context. By increasing empathy, children can be better at collaborating and socializing and confirms that the development of empathy as part of emotional intelligence is very important for children with autism. By improving the ability to understand the feelings of others, children can better collaborate, socialize and have more fulfilling social interactions.

As informants pointed out, emotional intelligence helps autistic children recognize and understand their own emotions, which is the first step in interacting with others. With a good understanding of emotions, children can learn how to manage their feelings, such as coping with anxiety or frustration. Developing emotional intelligence allows the child to be more sensitive to the feelings of others, which is important in building social relationships. the ability to recognize the emotions of others, the child can respond in a more appropriate way in social situations. Emotional intelligence helps children understand the importance of body language and facial expressions in communication. Children who have good emotional intelligence tend to be more confident in speaking and interacting with peers.

Children who are able to manage their emotions tend to have less aggressive behavior or excessive emotional reactions. The development of emotional intelligence creates a more positive atmosphere, both at home and in social settings. Children who have good emotional intelligence are better able to build and maintain relationships with their peers. Good social skills facilitate cooperation in groups, both at school

and in other activities. At Bina Anggita Yogyakarta, an approach that focuses on developing emotional intelligence can create an environment that supports children's social growth. Involving parents and educators in this process is also important to create consistency in teaching and support.

Based on results findings in the field that the development of emotional intelligence in autistic children at Bina Anggita Yogyakarta is very important to improve their social skills. By understanding and managing emotions, children can interact better, build positive relationships, and reduce unwanted behaviors. This approach not only benefits the child, but also the parents and the community as a whole. As Simon Baron-Cohen reviews talks about "theory of the mind," which referring to the ability to understand that other people have different thoughts and feelings. Autistic children often struggle in this aspect. The development of emotional intelligence can help children understand other people's perspectives, improving their social skills. Similarly, Coverdale highlights the importance of emotional support in helping autistic children learn social skills. By building emotional intelligence, children can more readily receive support and help from those around them. The development of emotional intelligence carried out in bina anggita Yogyakarta teaches autistic children to recognize facial expressions can improve their emotional intelligence, so that they can interact better in social situations.

The Process of Developing Emotional Intelligence in Improving Social Skills in Autistic Children at Bina Anggita Yogyakarta

There are various approaches that can be used to address the emotional and skill problems of children with autism spectrum disorders, one of which is using the DIR approach (Cushing et al., 2024). DIR is an approach based on the principles of Developmental (development), Individual Differences (individual differences),

Relationship (relationship with the environment) which aims to better understand individual development and how each individual can manage emotionally to interact with the outside world uniquely and differently (Bilgin et al., 2024). In the DIR technique, the adult's role is to facilitate the child's optimal development by being the child's interactive play partner and helping to increase the interaction in play to make it more meaningful. The DIR approach also focuses on how to form meaningful interactions between parents and children (Yoon et al., 2023).

In children with autism spectrum disorder, parental involvement is very important in the process of the intervention because the child will spend more time with parents than with teachers at school. In addition, the DIR approach is based on the principle of functional-emotional capacity development of children with ASD (Zhang et al., 2022). Functional-emotional capacity looks at the extent of a child's development to integrate various capacities (both motor, cognitive, language, spatial and sensory aspects) to achieve a meaningful goal, including to communicate (King et al., 2021). The results of a literature review related to the application of the DIR method in Indonesia show that there are several positive impacts of applying the DIR approach as one of the treatments for children with neurological developmental disorders, one of which is to improve children's communication skills and functional-emotional capacity in everyday life.

Emotional Development

Emotion Recognition

The introduction of emotions in the DIR method for children with autism is done in an interactive and fun way. The main goal of this approach is to help children recognize and understand various emotions, both in themselves and others. The method uses pictures, Pictures are used to show different facial expressions, so that the child can learn to identify emotions such as happy, sad, angry, and scared. This helps them

understand how these emotions look visually. Through stories, children can see situations that involve a range of emotions. These stories often include characters experiencing a range of feelings, which allows the child to empathize and understand the emotional context. Specially designed games can increase child engagement. For example, picture card games that show various facial expressions can help children recognize and express their own emotions. Benefits of this approach By using visual and interactive methods, children not only learn about emotions but also develop important social skills. They learn to interact with peers and understand the feelings of others, which is an important part of their emotional development. This approach is expected to have a positive impact in helping autistic children adapt and function better in their social environment.

Emotion Regulation

At Bina Anggita School Yogyakarta, the main goal of the emotion regulation program is to teach autistic children how to manage their emotions, such as anger, anxiety, or happiness. This approach is essential to help children deal with various emotionally challenging situations. The school implements relaxation techniques, such as deep breathing and meditation. These techniques help children to calm down and reduce the level of anxiety or anger they may feel. In addition to relaxation techniques, coping strategies are also taught to help children deal with challenging situations. These include ways to distract themselves, talk about their feelings, or use visual aids to understand their emotions. Benefits of This Approach By teaching children how to manage their emotions, it is hoped that they can interact better with their peers and surroundings. Good emotion regulation also contributes to positive social and emotional development, so children can feel more comfortable and confident in various situations.

Individual Interaction

Personalized Approach

At Bina Anggita School Yogyakarta, a personalized approach in interactions with autistic children is essential to understand each child's unique needs and preferences in an emotional and social context. The main goal of this approach is to understand and appreciate the uniqueness of each child by understanding their emotional and social needs, educators can create a more supportive and inclusive environment. Customized Approach Method: The method used involves customizing learning activities based on each child's interests and strengths. This means that each child will get a learning experience that is relevant and interesting to them by customizing the learning approach, children feel more engaged and motivated. This helps them to be more active in the learning process and interact with their peers and teachers. Benefits of this Approach This personalized approach not only helps children in learning, but also in developing important social and emotional skills by understanding and appreciating the uniqueness of each child, it is expected that they can feel more comfortable and confident in interacting with the surrounding environment.

Social Relationships

At Bina Anggita School Yogyakarta, the main goal of the program is to build healthy and positive relationships between autistic children and their peers and adults. This is very important for their social and emotional development. The school creates various opportunities for structured social interaction. For example, activities such as group practice learning to make salted eggs and washing motorcycle tours outside the school. These activities are designed to give children the opportunity to practice social skills in a safe and supportive environment. In these activities, children can practice communicating, cooperating and building relationships with their friends. This

helps them to feel more comfortable in interacting with others and improve their social skills. The benefit of this approach is that children can develop positive and supportive relationships. Good social relationships not only improve their quality of life, but also help them in adapting to the wider social environment.

Communication Skills

Verbal Communication

Improve children's ability to use spoken language to express their feelings and needs. Children are invited to join extracurricular activities according to their interests. These activities are not, It is not only fun but also provides an opportunity for children to practice speaking and interacting with friends. In addition, teaching about emotions is also done to help children express themselves better. By understanding emotions, children can more easily express what they feel.

Non-Verbal Communication

Teaches the child to understand and use non-verbal cues, such as facial expressions and body language. Emotion recognition is done using face picture cards that show various emotional expressions. This helps children to recognize and understand the emotions shown by others. Mirror games are also used, where children can mimic gestures and expressions. This is not only fun but also provides feedback on the appropriate use of non-verbal communication in social interactions. This approach is expected to enable children to develop better communication skills, both verbally and non-verbally. This is very important to help them interact with social environments and express themselves more effectively.

Environmental Support

Structured Environment

Creating a supportive and orderly environment that minimizes stress and confusion

for the child. Providing clear routines at school and at home with the involvement of teachers and parents. These routines help children understand what is expected of them each day. Using visuals that help children understand their activities and schedules. For example, using pictures that show the steps in daily activities. Creating a safe space for learning and playing, where children feel comfortable and protected. This space should be designed to support structured activities and positive social interactions.

Emotional Support

Provide consistent emotional support from parents, educators and peers. Engaging teachers and parents in learning processes that demonstrate empathy and understanding. This includes open communication and support in dealing with emotional challenges. Creating strong and supportive relationships between children, teachers and parents. These relationships are important to provide a sense of security and increase children's confidence in interacting with others. With this approach, it is expected that children can develop in a structured environment and get.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of research results in the field which were then analyzed using theories. The development of emotional intelligence of autistic children at the Bina Anggita Yogyakarta Special School for Autism is carried out through various programs and methods specifically designed to meet the needs of these children. Emotional intelligence is very important for autistic children to help them understand and manage their own emotions and interact with others. Bina Anggita School realizes that developing this aspect can improve the quality of life and social skills of children. Innovative Learning Methods: This school uses various visual learning media and interactive methods to help children understand

emotions. For example, the use of number cards and pictures to improve their understanding of emotions. These activities are not only fun but also help children express themselves. Every child has different needs, so an individual approach is very important. This school strives to adjust teaching methods to the characteristics and needs of each child. With these efforts, Bina Anggita Yogyakarta Special School for Autism is committed to creating an environment that supports the development of emotional intelligence in autistic children, so that they can function better in society. The implementation of the DIR method has proven effective in developing emotional intelligence in children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) at Bina Anggita Yogyakarta. There is an increase in functional-emotional development in children in the school environment and outside of school. Therefore, it can be concluded that after being given DIR intervention, children's two-way communication skills increased. These findings are in line with several previous studies showing that the DIR method/ is able to improve two-way communication skills in children with neurodevelopmental problems, especially Autism Spectrum. In general, children are seen to have increased in their verbal and nonverbal interaction skills after being given intervention. Children are seen to have described more of what they see and the activities they are doing. In addition, children's ability to do joint engagement is also developing well. The development of these abilities is supported by the abilities of teachers and parents with children's activities continuously.

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