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Education for Hygiene and Health for Early Childhood in Bukit Ase Community

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ABSTRACT

This community service activity aims to improve the knowledge of young children in the Bukit ASE Community about physical health, dental and oral hygiene, environmental hygiene, and the importance of nutritious food. The method used is BCM (Play, Storytelling, and Singing) to make the learning process enjoyable and effective. The activity involved 30 children divided into three themes: "My Plate," "Body and Environmental Hygiene," and "Oral Health." The results showed an improvement in children's understanding of the importance of handwashing, brushing their teeth, sorting waste, and consuming a balanced diet. Evaluations through games and question-and-answer sessions demonstrated the effectiveness of the BCM method in enhancing their knowledge and behavior. This activity recommends the development of similar programs in other communities to expand their impact. Continuous education for parents is also necessary to ensure that healthy habits can be consistently applied at home. Collaboration with health workers and educational institutions is expected to strengthen these efforts, enabling children to grow into a smart and healthy generation.

Keywords: balanced nutrition, BCM method, early childhood, health

INTRODUCTION

Medicines Indonesian development policy prioritizes education as an investment in the national future in order to produce a superior generation (Rasyid, 2015). Education is an important human need because it has the task of preparing human resources for national and state development (Hidayat et al., 2019). Educational efforts should begin at an early age, including education about the environment and health. One of the objectives of environmental education for young children is to foster a caring attitude and appreciation for the environment. If the development of attitudes and character begins at an early age, then as they grow older, they will become accustomed to caring for and valuing the environment (Safira, 2020). In addition to environmental health, education for children should also build awareness of the importance of physical health, including oral and dental health. Oral and dental health is closely related to overall physical health. Poor oral and dental hygiene can lead to various problems and discomfort (Pratiwi et al., 2020).

Not only environmental health, but a healthy body is also important. Children also need to be equipped with knowledge about the importance of eating healthy and nutritious

food. A balanced diet tailored to a child's needs can enhance their immune system against various diseases (Padmiari et al., 2021). With a healthy body, balanced nutrition, and a healthy environment, a smart and strong generation will emerge.

Based on field research, it was found that there was initially no school for young children in the Bukit ASE area. The concerns of parents in Bukit ASE, who wanted education for their children but found the costs too high, were heard by Bukit ASE founder Yusrizal Kw and Bukit ASE leader Pak Suardi. In 2019, a free early childhood education program was established for the Bukit ASE community. The management of Bukit ASE is in line with the concept of social entrepreneurship. Therefore, the service team consisting of lecturers teaching Social Entrepreneurship at the Department of Agricultural Social Economics chose one community, namely the Bukit ASE community, as a place to apply the knowledge learned with early childhood education at the Bukit ASE Community as well as to conclude the field practicum.

The objectives of this community service activity are: a. to provide early childhood education on the importance of maintaining dental and oral health, b. to provide early childhood education on the importance of maintaining personal and environmental hygiene, c. to provide early childhood education on the importance of healthy eating (*My Plate/Four Healthy Five Perfect*). The benefits of this community service activity are: a. to enhance young children's knowledge about maintaining oral and dental health within the Bukit ASE community, b. to enhance young children's knowledge about the importance of maintaining personal hygiene and environmental cleanliness within the Bukit ASE community, c. to enhance young children's knowledge about the importance of healthy eating (*My Plate/Four Healthy, Five Perfect*) within the Bukit ASE community.

METHOD

This This community service activity was conducted in the Bukit ASE community located in Macang Gadang, Gunung Sariak Village, Kuranji District, Padang City. The activity was carried out in June 2024. The participants of this community service activity were young children from the Bukit ASE community. The activity was carried out by a community service team consisting of permanent faculty members from the Department of Social Economics, Faculty of Agriculture, University of Andalas, who are part of the teaching team for the Social Entrepreneurship course, assisted by several student representatives from various Social Entrepreneurship classes. The community service activity was conducted in three stages:

1. Preparation Stage, including: administrative preparation and coordination with the Bukit ASE management, developing the activity plan (determining location, participants, activity materials, etc.), and identifying the equipment and materials for the community service activity.
2. Implementation Stage, including: conducting educational activities for young children on health and environmental hygiene using play-based methods, storytelling, and singing (BMC).
3. Evaluation Stage, assessment of how well young children understand the importance of maintaining health and environmental hygiene. This activity was conducted through a game. Children who could answer and complete the game well were given rewards.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This The world of children is synonymous with the world of play, so the BMC (Play, Story, Singing) method is very suitable for implementing this activity. Through the BCM method, children not only gain new knowledge but also make learning an enjoyable activity. According to Mulyati & Amita, (2013) the BCM method can develop children's social-emotional intelligence, enhance self-motivation skills, and improve their ability to build social relationships.

The activity began with an opening and a group prayer. Thirty young children participated in the activity, divided into three groups. Each group was assigned a different theme: 1. the importance of my plate, 2. physical and environmental health, and 3. dental and oral health. The following is a description of the activities for each theme:

1. The Importance of My Plate

The “My Plate” theme was conducted by Group 1, which taught the children through games, songs, and stories about the importance of healthy and nutritious food. First, the children were invited to sing together, related to the theme. Then, the children were encouraged to tell stories while asking questions about types of fruits, vegetables, and staple foods. Children who actively answered were given prizes in the form of stationery.

In this theme, the children also played a game using empty circular cardboard sheets, where they were encouraged to arrange images within the cardboard while identifying the contents of their plate. The images attached include pictures of fruits, vegetables, and staple foods.

The “My Plate” slogan is a visualization of a single meal portion depicted using a plate, whether for breakfast, lunch, or dinner (Dinalar et al., 2020). The “My Plate” meal portion is one of the efforts to achieve balanced nutrition, as optimal nutrition is crucial for children's growth, physical development, and cognitive abilities (Hasriani et al., 2023). The learning activities for this theme were presented engagingly through games, stories, and songs, making the learning process enjoyable for the children in the Bukit ASE community. Below is the documentation of the “My Plate” theme activities:





Figure 1. BCM (Play, Story, Sing) with the theme of the importance of the contents of my plate

As seen in Figure 1, the children were very enthusiastic about participating in activities related to the importance of the contents of their plates through play, singing, and storytelling, which concluded with an evaluation through a game. According to Heryani et al. (2023) and Sinaga et al. (2022), knowledge about the contents of my plate also needs to be provided to mothers as one of the ways to prevent stunting. Therefore, this initiative can also be continued with a different group of participants, namely mothers. Thus, both mothers and children can gain knowledge that paying attention to meal portions (My Plate) with proper nutrition is crucial for children's health and development.

2. Personal and environmental hygiene

In this theme, children are encouraged to recognize the types of materials or tools used to clean their bodies and their environment. Children are encouraged to recognize soap, shampoo, hand sanitizer, hand soap, toothpaste, and toothbrushes. In the initial stage, children are encouraged to first recognize personal hygiene. Children are encouraged to play together by guessing the function of each cleaning material for body parts, for example, what is hand sanitizer used for, namely hand cleaning. Children who can guess correctly receive a reward in the form of stationery.

Then, in the second stage, children are encouraged to recognize the types of organic and inorganic waste through language that children can understand. To make it easier for the children to understand, two different boxes are provided, one containing plastic waste and the other containing organic waste such as leaves. They are also given a waste recognition game. The waste in the two boxes (organic and inorganic) is mixed together, and the children, divided into groups 1 and 2, compete to sort the waste and place it in the appropriate boxes for organic and inorganic waste.

A clean and healthy lifestyle can begin with small things like getting into the habit of washing hands before various activities, especially before eating and after playing, maintaining oral hygiene, and always disposing of waste properly (Harahap et al., 2022). By teaching children, the importance of cleanliness and health from an early age, it is hoped that they will develop the habit of maintaining personal and environmental cleanliness from a young age. This will create a healthy environment and a healthy body. A healthy body houses a brilliant mind. Below is documentation of activities on the theme of the importance of maintaining personal and environmental cleanliness:



Figure 2. BCM with the theme of the importance of maintaining environmental and personal hygiene

As seen in Figure 2 (right), the children are very enthusiastic about learning about personal hygiene products, distinguishing between soap, hand wash, shampoo, and others. In Figure 2 (left), the children are also enthusiastic about distinguishing between organic and inorganic waste.

3. Dental and Oral Health

On the topic of dental and oral health, children are taught the importance of maintaining dental hygiene by brushing their teeth every morning and evening using toothpaste. Children are also encouraged to sing along to songs with lyrics that teach the importance of brushing their teeth and maintaining dental health. Children are also taught about the effects of food particles left on teeth, such as chocolate and candy, which can damage teeth if not cleaned properly. The topic of oral health is presented through stories, games, and songs. Below is documentation of the community service activity focused on oral health:



Figure 3. BCM with the theme of the importance of maintaining dental and oral health

Taking care of teeth and mouth can prevent various diseases, including cavities, gum inflammation, gum infections, thrush, and broken teeth (Muzana et al., 2022). Oral health issues can affect children's overall development, general physical health, and may also harm quality of life (Wijayanti & Rahayu, 2019). Having healthy teeth can help children enjoy the food they eat, whereas tooth pain can hinder this enjoyment (Arumsari, 2017).

4. Evaluation

An evaluation was conducted from the perspective of knowledge. This was evident from the increase in children's knowledge and skills regarding dental and oral health, for example, the importance of brushing teeth at least twice a day. Additionally, children have gained knowledge about physical health and the environment, including the importance of taking morning and evening showers, using soap when bathing, washing hands, and disposing of trash properly. Children have also learned how to sort plastic waste and wet waste, as they should be disposed of in separate bins to facilitate subsequent waste management. According to Heryani et al. (2023), educational interventions have a positive impact on improving target knowledge.

Evaluations were also conducted in the form of games related to their understanding of each topic presented through games, stories, and songs. Below is an illustration of children's ability to answer questions for each theme after the BMC was implemented:

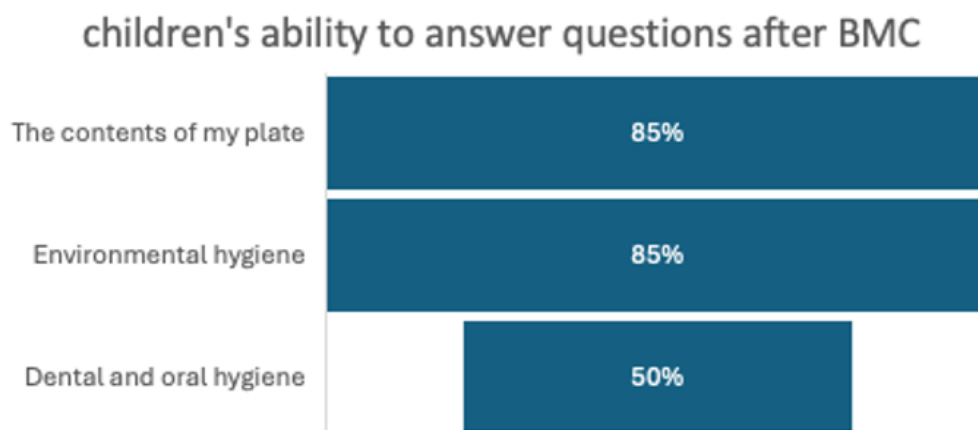


Figure 4. Children's ability to answer questions on each theme after the BMC

Figure 4 shows that children's understanding of the theme of "my plate" and the importance of maintaining environmental hygiene is higher than the importance of maintaining dental and oral health. This is because children's knowledge of dental and oral health is still lacking. Children do not know that sweet foods such as candy and chocolate can damage their teeth. However, children already know that brushing their teeth at least twice a day is important.

Children who could answer the questions were given gifts by the community service team. The gifts consisted of stationery and toothbrushing supplies such as toothpaste and toothbrushes. According to Kanifah et al., (2020), the provision of gifts had an impact on student learning motivation of 64.1%. After the three themes and evaluations were completed, the community service event was officially closed by the head of Bukit ASE, Mr. Suardi. Below is the documentation of the closing ceremony of the community service event:



Figure 5. Closing of community service activities

The management welcomed this community service activity and hoped that similar activities could also be carried out in other communities. With the hope that healthy and clean-living habits can spread to all children. Thus, the environment becomes clean, children grow up healthy, and a smart and healthy generation is born. This also requires cooperation with parents. Several parents were present at this activity. The organizers also urged parents to continue educating their children about health and cleanliness at home.

CONCLUSION

Knowledge enhancement is carried out using the BCM (Play, Story, and Singing) method. This activity is very positive for building awareness of the importance of maintaining cleanliness and health from an early age. With a healthy body and environment, children will grow into smart and healthy individuals who are a valuable asset for the future progress of Indonesia. Based on the community service activities that have been carried out, several recommendations are as follows:

1. Further community service activities should be conducted in other communities to ensure that healthy and clean living habits are adopted by the entire community.
2. Education and collaboration with parents in the community are necessary to ensure that healthy and clean living habits are practiced within families.
3. Further research is needed to better understand the knowledge of young children.

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