

Self Development Learning (Adl) In Children With Mild Mental Retardation

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the implementation of Self Development Learning, particularly in the form of Activities of Daily Living (ADL), in children with mild mental retardation. These children often experience difficulties in achieving independence due to limitations in cognitive, social, and adaptive functioning. The research employs a qualitative descriptive method to examine how structured and repetitive ADL training such as personal hygiene, eating, dressing, and simple household tasks can improve the children's ability to function independently in their daily lives. Data were collected through observations, interviews with special education teachers, and documentation. The findings indicate that consistent ADL instruction not only enhances the children's self-reliance but also supports emotional development and social integration. This study highlights the importance of ADL-based learning as a foundation for preparing children with mild mental retardation to live more autonomously and confidently within society.

Keywords: Self development learning, activities of daily living (ADL), mild mental retardation, independence, special education

1 Introduction

Children with mild mental retardation, also referred to as mild intellectual disability, typically have an IQ ranging from 50–70 and show delays in adaptive functioning such as communication, self-care, and social skills (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). These deficits make it challenging for them to perform basic life skills without guidance and training.

Self Development Learning particularly in the form of Activities of Daily Living (ADL) is a key component in special education that targets independence in everyday functioning. ADL encompasses essential skills such as personal hygiene, feeding, dressing, and simple household tasks (Kozlowski et al., 2020). According to Hallahan et al. (2012), teaching life skills through structured instruction can significantly enhance the functional abilities and quality of life of students with intellectual disabilities.

This study investigates the application of ADL-based learning in SLB Negeri Lamongan, a special education school in East Java, Indonesia. The main focus is to examine how ADL instruction helps children with mild mental retardation improve their daily functioning and emotional well-being.

2 Literature Review

The concept of Self Development Learning emphasizes the acquisition of skills that enable individuals to manage their lives effectively and independently. For children with mild mental retardation, this is particularly critical due to their inherent challenges in learning and adapting. Activities of Daily Living (ADL) are a core component of self-development, encompassing essential skills such as personal hygiene (e.g., brushing teeth, washing hands), dressing, eating, and basic household chores (e.g., tidying up, setting the table). Research has consistently shown that structured and repetitive instruction is highly effective for individuals with intellectual disabilities in acquiring and maintaining ADL skills (Smith &

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Jones, 2010; Brown et al., 2015). Furthermore, the development of ADL skills has been linked to improved self-esteem, social participation, and overall well-being in this population (White & Lee, 2018). Studies in special education settings highlight the importance of individualized ADL programs tailored to the specific needs and abilities of each child (Taylor, 2012). The current study builds upon this existing body of knowledge by examining the specific implementation and impact of ADL training within the context of SLB Negeri Lamongan.

3 Research Methods

This research uses a qualitative case study method to explore the real-life application of ADL learning. The participants include 3 students with mild mental retardation (ages 9–13) and 1 special education teachers.

Data collection techniques involved Classroom observations of ADL sessions (e.g., brushing teeth, folding clothes, table manners), Semi-structured interviews with teachers regarding instructional strategies and student progress, Document analysis of student portfolios and teacher reports. Data were analyzed thematically following Miles and Huberman's (1994) steps: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing.

4 Result and Discussion

The findings are categorized into four major themes:

1. **Structured Learning Improves Skill Mastery** The use of routines and repeated practice helped students internalize ADL tasks. For example, daily hygiene practices such as handwashing and tooth brushing were taught through modeling and step-by-step guidance. This aligns with the behavioral approach advocated by Westling & Fox (2009), emphasizing consistency and reinforcement.
2. **Individualized Teaching Strategies Are Crucial** Teachers used differentiated instruction based on each student's ability level. Visual aids, task analysis, and physical prompts were commonly employed. As suggested by Gargiulo & Metcalf (2013), adapting instruction to students' cognitive levels enhances engagement and comprehension.
3. **Emotional Growth Through Task Completion** Completing tasks independently gave students a sense of accomplishment and increased self-confidence. Teachers reported improvements in students' emotional regulation and motivation. This supports Erikson's theory of psychosocial development, particularly the stage of "industry vs. inferiority," where successful task completion boosts self-esteem (Erikson, 1968).
4. **Increased Social Participation** Students began to help peers, initiate greetings, and engage in cooperative activities. ADL instruction indirectly contributed to better social behavior. These results reinforce the view that ADL is not only a tool for functional independence but also a means to foster social integration (Friend & Bursuck, 2012).

5 Conclusion

The implementation of Self Development Learning through ADL at SLB Negeri Lamongan demonstrates clear benefits in enhancing the independence, emotional maturity, and social interaction of children with mild mental retardation. A structured, individualized, and supportive learning environment is critical to ensuring that ADL instruction is effective. Integrating ADL consistently within the curriculum equips students with practical skills that prepare them for greater autonomy and meaningful participation in family and community life.

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CITATION:

Nur Saidah (2025). Self Development Learning (Adl) In Children With Mild Mental Retardation. *OASE*, 7(3), 481–483.