

# The Role of Parents in the Growth and Development of Children with Down Syndrome at the Karanganyar State Special School

Rara Ambariyanti, Arsy Anggrelanggi

Universitas Sebelas Maret, Universitas Sebelas Maret  
[raraambariyanti@student.uns.ac.id](mailto:raraambariyanti@student.uns.ac.id)

---

## Article History

accepted 20/12/2024

approved 19/01/2025

published 25/07/2025

---

## ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui peran orang tua terhadap tumbuh kembang anak down syndrome di SLB Negeri Karanganyar. Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian deskriptif kualitatif dengan pendekatan fenomenologi. Sumber data penelitian ini meliputi orang tua yang memiliki anak down syndrome di SLB Negeri Karanganyar. Teknik pengambilan sampel dilakukan dengan purposive sampling. Pengumpulan data dilakukan dengan wawancara mendalam secara langsung. Teknik uji validitas data adalah triangulasi metode. Analisis data dengan menggunakan Teknik analisis Miles and Huberman. Hasil penelitian ini adalah sebagai berikut. Peran orang tua terhadap tumbuh kembang anak down syndrome pada aspek kognitif yaitu dengan menjadwalkan waktu khusus untuk anak belajar di rumah, mendampingi anak belajar di rumah, melatih anak menulis dan mewarnai selama di rumah, dan membantu anak mengerjakan pekerjaan rumah yang diberikan oleh guru. Upaya yang dilakukan orang tua untuk melatih motorik anak selama di rumah dengan memberikan berbagai stimulasi seperti bermain air, pasir, memasukkan mutiara ke dalam benang, bermain plastisin, hingga bermain puzzle. Pada aspek komunikasi, peran yang dilakukan oleh orang tua yaitu dengan mengikutkan anak terapi wicara dan sering mengajak anak berbicara selama di rumah. Sedangkan untuk meningkatkan keterampilan sosial anak, orang tua memberikan dukungan penuh dan mengajak anak bermain peran. Pada aspek kemandirian, peran yang dilakukan oleh orang tua adalah dengan membiasakan anak untuk makan, minum, mandi, dan menggunakan sepatu sendiri untuk melatih kemandirian anak. Berdasarkan hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa orang tua dengan anak down syndrome sudah berperan dalam mendukung tumbuh kembang anak. Meskipun peran yang dilakukan belum komprehensif, tetapi orang tua telah menunjukkan dukungan dan upaya untuk meningkatkan tumbuh kembang anak. Dukungan dan upaya yang dilakukan oleh orang tua menunjukkan dampak positif dalam meningkatkan kemampuan anak, khususnya anak dengan down syndrome. Segala upaya yang dilakukan oleh orang tua dalam meningkatkan tumbuh kembang anaknya merupakan salah satu bentuk sikap penerimaan orang tua terhadap keadaan anak.

**Kata kunci:** Anak down syndrome, tumbuh kembang, orang tua, peran

## ABSTRACT

*This study aims to determine the role of parents in the growth and development of children with Down syndrome at SLB Negeri Karanganyar. This study is a qualitative descriptive study with a phenomenological approach. The data sources for this study include parents who have children with Down syndrome at SLB Negeri Karanganyar. The sampling technique was carried out using purposive sampling. Data collection was carried out through direct in-depth interviews. The data validity test technique was method triangulation. Data analysis using the Miles and Huberman analysis technique. The results of this study are as follows. The role of parents in the growth and*

---



*development of children with Down syndrome in the cognitive aspect is by scheduling special time for children to study at home, accompanying children to study at home, training children to write and color while at home, and helping children with homework given by the teacher. Efforts made by parents to train children's motor skills while at home by providing various stimulations such as playing with water, sand, threading pearls, playing plasticine, and playing puzzles. In the communication aspect, the role played by parents is by including children in speech therapy and often inviting children to talk while at home. Meanwhile, to improve children's social skills, parents provide full support and invite children to play roles. In terms of independence, the role played by parents is to accustom children to eating, drinking, bathing, and using their own shoes to train children's independence. This study concludes that the research subjects as parents of children with Down syndrome have played a role in supporting the growth and development of children. The support and efforts made by parents show a positive impact in improving children's abilities, especially children with Down syndrome. All efforts made by parents in improving their children's growth and development are a form of parental acceptance of their children's condition.*

**Keywords:** *Down syndrome children, growth and development, parents, roles*

---

## INTRODUCTION

One type of child with special needs (ABK) is a child with mental retardation, commonly known as Down Syndrome. According to Gunarhadi (2005), "Down Syndrome is a collection of symptoms resulting from chromosomal abnormalities that occur on chromosome 21, which cannot separate during development in the womb, resulting in individuals with 47 chromosomes." Down Syndrome (DS) or mongoloid is a condition in which additional genetic material causes developmental delays in children, and sometimes refers to mental retardation (Ubaidillah, 2018). Children with Down Syndrome have an abnormality in chromosome 21, which does not consist of 2 chromosomes as it should, but rather three chromosomes (trisomy 21), causing genetic information to be disrupted. These children also experience physical abnormalities (Sugira et al., 2023). As a result of the extra chromosome in children with Down syndrome, children with DS experience various differences from other children. Children with Down syndrome may experience several obstacles that other children do not experience. The problems experienced by children with Down syndrome also vary, one of which is intellectual/cognitive limitations (Kamil et al., 2023).

Children with Down syndrome usually experience difficulties in motor skills, both fine motor skills (rough fingers, stiffness, weak muscles, unpredictable and uncontrollable emotions, often dependent on others, and often rejecting others) and gross motor skills (running, jumping, and hopping) (Mardiah, 2022). Due to intellectual impairments, children with Down syndrome also experience communication difficulties caused by partial brain damage (Gunarhadi, 2005). These communication difficulties prevent children with Down syndrome from interacting socially with their surroundings, causing them to avoid eye contact and experience difficulties in language development. In addition, the social skills of children with Down syndrome also need to be trained so that they can continue to interact with their environment and learn many things from what they experience and see in the community where they live (Rahmah, 2024).

Common problems experienced by children with Down syndrome are usually related to motor, cognitive, communication, social, and independence skills. A number of students with Down syndrome at the Karanganyar State Special School were found to still experience these obstacles, such as withdrawing from the play environment, lacking confidence, being unable to express what they want, having difficulty performing activities that require fine and gross motor skills, and being unable to follow lessons properly.

The various problems faced by children with Down syndrome require special assistance from their parents. Children with Down syndrome really need special treatment from their parents in order to improve various aspects of their developmental abilities. The role of

parents is very important in achieving independence and academic success for children with Down syndrome. Parents have an obligation to accompany, care for, educate, and be directly involved in caring for their children from early childhood to adulthood, and to prepare their children with the skills they need for life (Yuwono, Hermawan, Martika, and Anggrelanggi, 2020). Parents' understanding of children with special needs also plays a very important role. This includes understanding the attitude that parents should have and the steps that parents must take to help children with special needs become independent.

Puspita (in Rohmadheny, 2016) explains that the role of parents of children with Down syndrome in shaping their children to achieve optimal development and growth is very decisive. The initial action taken by parents who have children with Down syndrome is to carefully observe the various symptoms that appear in their children (Melati et al., 2021). Parents play an important role in supporting the growth and development of children with Down syndrome. Parents have full control over their children's growth and development process so that children can improve their abilities that can still be developed.

### **METHOD**

This study aims to determine the role of parents in the growth and development of children with Down syndrome. This study uses a qualitative approach with a phenomenological research method. The primary data used by the researcher are the results of interviews with informants. The informants selected by the researcher were parents of children with Down syndrome at the Karanganyar State Special School, who were used as informants. Meanwhile, the secondary data used in this study were books, literature, and readings related to the implementation of the study. In addition to using books and literature, the researcher also used the results of interviews with classroom teachers as significant others in this study to be used as secondary data. The data collection technique used by the researcher in this study was structured interviews. The data analysis used by the researcher in this study was the Miles and Huberman data analysis model.

### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

#### **1. The Role of Parents in Cognitive Aspects**

According to the results of the interviews conducted, the research subjects, who were parents of children with Down syndrome, stated that in terms of cognition, their children were not yet able to recognize or write numbers and letters. YI, the first research subject, stated that her child was not yet able to recognize letters and numbers. However, even though they are not yet able to recognize letters and numbers, YI's child is already able to color, even though they cannot yet memorize colors. This statement is also reinforced by HR's statement that academically, YI's child still needs guidance, especially in recognizing and writing numbers and letters. The difficulty of children with Down syndrome in recognizing and remembering the shapes of letters is also supported by Stefanelli, et.al (2021) in their study entitled "Early numerical skills in individuals with Down Syndrome," which shows that children with Down syndrome have difficulties in the numerical field. This causes children with Down syndrome to experience delays in their numerical knowledge, counting, and calculation abilities.

The second research subject, AS, stated the same thing, namely that in terms of cognition, her child is still unable to recognize letters and numbers. This is in accordance with the statement made by HR, the classroom teacher, who stated that AS's child is also unable to remember letters and requires guidance during classroom learning. Meanwhile, the third subject, SR, stated the same thing regarding

academics, that her child was not yet able to recognize letters and numbers. This is in accordance with HR's statement that SR's child still needs guidance in classroom learning and is not yet able to remember and recognize letters and numbers. Furthermore, the parents' statements about their children's academic abilities are in line with Gunarhadi (2005), who states that children with Down syndrome generally lag behind their peers in academic fields. This lag is caused by limited cognitive abilities.

Based on the results of interviews with the research subjects as parents of children with Down syndrome, the three research subjects have made various efforts at home to improve their children's cognitive skills. The efforts made by the research subjects as parents of children with Down syndrome were to encourage their children to learn to write and color at home. In addition, the research subjects also said that learning at home was carried out every day and when the teacher gave their children homework. The parents' efforts to improve their children's cognitive abilities by managing their homework time at home also demonstrate the role of parents in their children's growth and development. Falanga & Gonida (2022) state that parental involvement in helping children with their homework at home proves that parents provide support to their children in improving their cognitive and affective aspects.

The efforts made by the research subjects at home by frequently encouraging their children to do homework, learn to write, and learn to color at home are a tangible form of the role of parents in training and supporting their children's cognitive growth and development. This is in line with Lilawati's (2020) opinion, which states that providing teaching at home, controlling children's learning activities, and paying attention to the effectiveness of children's learning time are forms of parental roles in the field of education.

## 2. Parental Role in Motor Skills

The family plays an important role in nurturing, educating, and improving children's abilities, one of which is motor skills. Motor skills can continue to develop with exercises that involve repetitive physical activities. Fine and gross motor skills will continue to develop if the environment around the child supports and optimizes them to be able to move freely. In this regard, Niswatin, & Mubarak (2022) stated that children's physical motor development plays an important role in improving their intellectual abilities, influencing them to recognize themselves (self-concept), and influencing their personality.

According to the results of the interviews conducted, the research subjects, as parents of children with Down syndrome, have carried out their role as parents by making various efforts to improve their children's motor skills. The various efforts made by the research subjects in developing their children's motor skills included encouraging their children to carry out various physical activities at home that involved fine and gross motor movements. These activities included throwing and catching balls, playing with puzzles, playing with water and sand, scooping pearls or beads, threading pearls onto string, and playing with plasticine. This has been proven to have a significant effect on training children's motor skills. Through these stimulation efforts, children's ability to develop their motor skills can be improved. The role of parents is in line with Nurlaila, et al. (2022), who stated that stimulation can be in the form of activities such as cutting, stringing, writing one's own name, and various activities that involve children's motor skills.

Furthermore, HR, a teacher of children with Down syndrome, also said that the children's writing skills had reached the stage of scribbling or making random strokes. This proves that the motor skill development exercises carried out by parents at home have a significant impact on children. Not only did they encourage their children to play and engage in physical activities at home, YI and SR, the first and third research subjects, also stated that they enrolled their children in occupational therapy and

baby massage to help improve their motor skills. This is reinforced by Sijabat et al. (2024), who stated that occupational therapy involving various activities can improve motor skills in children.

### 3. The Role of Parents in Communication

According to the interview results, YI, the first research subject, stated that YI's child was still unable to speak. Even though he was already 8 years old, YI's child still had communication delays. Chamidah (2017) also stated that children with Down syndrome always experience speech delays compared to other children. This is also reinforced by the statement of Maryam, et al. (2020), who stated that children with Down syndrome experience obstacles in understanding vocabulary and direct pronunciation. Unlike YI, AS and SR, the second and third subjects in this study, stated that their children had started to speak when they reached the age of 2.

Anggraini (2020) states that parents have a role in helping children develop aspects of growth and development, including language skills. Parents play an important role in training children's communication skills. The efforts made by the research subjects as parents of children with Down syndrome to improve their children's communication skills were to enroll their children in speech therapy and to frequently encourage their children to talk and express their desires at home. This statement is in line with the results of a case study by Maryam, et al. (2020) on "The Role of Parents in Improving the Language Development of Children with Down Syndrome," which states that parents' efforts to improve their children's communication skills through speech therapy, occupational therapy, and providing stimulation by conveying words that are easy for children to understand so that children can respond to their parents' speech can improve communication skills in children with Down syndrome.

The efforts made by the subject have proven to have a significant impact on the development of communication skills in children, although more prominent communication skills are seen in AS children. The efforts made by the research subjects in improving the children's communication skills have shown changes in the children. Alfira and Siregar (2024) state that the role of parents in teaching communication skills and improving language intelligence in children is very important. By providing active support and a supportive environment, parents can create a strong foundation for their children's future language development.

### 4. The Role of Parents in Social Aspects

According to the results of the interviews conducted, the research subjects stated that their three children were able to interact well with their friends at home. However, at school, not all of the research subjects' children had good social skills. This is in line with Estikasari & Siswati (2016), who stated that children with Down syndrome often face rejection from their social environment. This is because children with Down syndrome lack the initiative to blend in with their social environment. This statement is also reinforced by the statement of HR, the class teacher, who stated that YI's social skills were still lacking.

Furthermore, the research subjects, as parents of children with Down syndrome, have made various efforts to improve their children's social skills. At home, the research subjects allow their children to explore the world around them by playing with their friends. Gunarhadi (2005) states that when children begin to recognize other people, they start to show many emotions, such as anger, fear, surprise, sadness, and happiness, which are triggered by the behavior of the people around them. This treatment from others encourages children to continue developing their social relationships with others. Another effort made by parents to improve their children's social skills is to invite them to play role-playing games while at home. This shows that parents have played a role and made various efforts to improve their children's social skills at home.

#### 5. The Role of Parents in Independence

Based on the results of interviews with the three research subjects as parents of children with Down syndrome (YI, AS, and SR), there were differences in the independence of the children. According to the interview results, YI mentioned that her child is already able to eat by himself, take off his pants by himself, and put on his shoes by himself. The second and third research subjects, AS and SR, also stated that their children are already able to eat by themselves, although sometimes they still make a mess. These research results show that the research subjects, as parents of children with Down syndrome, have actively carried out this role. The research subjects not only provided guidance, but also gave their children the opportunity to practice and develop their abilities independently in daily activities.

The efforts made by the three research subjects in training their children to be independent in activities such as eating, bathing, and putting on their own shoes prove that parents try to accustom their children to be independent in their daily activities. This finding is very relevant to Gunarhadi's (2005) statement, which emphasizes that intervention programs are very important for children with Down syndrome in developing their independence, especially in basic activities such as eating, drinking, dressing, and bathing. The role of parents in developing the independence of children with Down syndrome is very necessary.

### CONCLUSION

#### 1. Conclusion

Based on interviews conducted with parents of children with Down syndrome at the Karanganyar State Special School, it can be seen that 1) In terms of cognition, the subjects' efforts included not only sending their children to school, but also scheduling special time for their children to study at home, accompanying their children while they studied at home, teaching their children to write and color at home, and helping their children with homework assigned by their teachers. 2) In terms of motor skills, the subjects provide various forms of stimulation, such as playing with water and sand, stringing pearls, playing with plasticine, and playing with puzzles. 3) In terms of communication, the subjects enroll their children in speech therapy and often engage them in conversation at home in an effort to improve their communication skills. 4) In terms of social skills, providing full support and teaching children to play roles are efforts made by the subjects to improve their children's interaction with their surroundings. 5) In terms of independence, the research subjects accustomed their children to eat, drink, bathe, and put on their shoes by themselves to train their independence. It can therefore be concluded that parents with children with Down syndrome have played a role in supporting their children's growth and development. Although the role played is not yet comprehensive, parents have shown support and efforts to improve their children's growth and development. The support and efforts made by parents have a positive impact on improving children's abilities, especially children with Down syndrome. All efforts made by parents to improve their child's growth and development are a form of parental acceptance of their child's condition.

#### 2. Suggestions

Parents are expected to continue to increase their efforts to support their child's growth and development process so that they can improve their skills in cognitive, motor, communication, social, and independence aspects. A good role and effort become new motivation for parents who have children with special needs, such as children with Down syndrome. The role of parents will be maximized if they receive support from teachers at school. Teachers are expected to continue to support and accompany the child's growth and development process and become facilitators for

children while at school. In addition, teachers are also expected to provide efforts that are considered good and support the child's skills that can still be improved.

### BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Alfira&Siregar. (2024). Pentingnya Peran Orang Tua dalam Memajukan Keterampilan Berbahasa Anak Usia Dini Melalui Komunikasi. *Jurnal Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini* 1(4), 1-15. <https://edu.pubmedia.id/index.php/paud/article/view/641/689>
- Anggraini, N. (2021). Peranan Orang Tua Dalam Perkembangan Bahasa Anak Usia Dini. *Metafora: Jurnal Pembelajaran Bahasa Dan Sastra*, 7(1), 43–54. <https://jurnalnasional.ump.ac.id/index.php/METAFORA/article/view/9741>
- Chamidah, A. (2017). Intervensi Dini Gangguan Perkembangan Komunikasi Pada Anak Down Syndrome. *Dinamika Pendidikan* 22(01), 27–37.
- Estikasari & Siswati. (2016). Studi Kasus Penerapan Program Beyond Centers And Circles Time (BCCT) untuk Meningkatkan Kompetensi Sosial Anak Down Syndrome Di Paud Tb Semarang. *Jurnal Empati* 5(4) 863-868. <https://ejournal3.undip.ac.id/index.php/empati/article/download/15457/14949>
- Falanga&Gonida. (2022). Parental Involvement In Children's Homework: A Literature Review. *Psychology: The Journal of the Hellenic Psychological Society*, 27(2), 99–122. <https://psycnet.apa.org/record/2024-19512-006>
- Gunarhadi. (2005). *Penanganan Anak Sindroma Down Dalam Lingkungan Keluarga dan Sekolah*. Jakarta: Depdiknas.
- Kamil, Nurhusna. (2023). Memahami Anak Berkebutuhan Khusus: Down Syndrome. *Murhum: Jurnal Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini*, 4(2) 190- 198. <https://murhum.pjpaud.org/index.php/murhum/article/view/179>
- Lilawati, Agustin. (2021). Peran Orang Tua dalam Mendukung Kegiatan Pembelajaran di Rumah pada Masa Pandemi. *Jurnal Obsesi, Jurnal Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini*, 5 (1) 549-558. <https://obsesi.or.id/index.php/obsesi/article/view/630>
- Mardiah, Wiwi. (2022). Intervensi Stimulasi Motorik, Afektif, Dan Kognitif Pada Anak Dengan Down Syndrome: A Narrative Review., 2(3), 983–1002. <https://doi.org/10.53625/jcijurnalcakrawalailmiah.v2i3.4034>
- Maryam, dkk. (2020). Peran Orang Tua dalam Perkembangan Bahasa Anak Down Syndrome. *Inclusive:Journal of Special Education*, 6(2) 131-140. <https://ojs.uninus.ac.id/index.php/Inclusi/article/view/1156>
- Melati. R, dkk. (2021). Peran Orang Tua Single Parent Terhadap Anak Down Syndrome di Bypass Kecamatan Lubuk Begalung (Studi Kasus Pada Ayah yang Memiliki Anak Down Syndrome). *Edu Society: Jurnal Pendidikan, Ilmu Sosial, dan Pengabdian Kepada Masyarakat*, 01(1), 51-59. <https://jurnal.permapendissumut.org/index.php/edusociety/article/view/16>
- Niswatin & Mubarak. (2022). Peran Orang Tua Dalam Mendampingi Pengembangan Motorik Anak Pada Masa Post Covid 19. *Kiddo: Jurnal PendidikanIslam Anak Usia Dini*, 3(2) 101-112. <https://ejournal.iainmadura.ac.id/index.php/kiddo/article/view/6825>
- Nurlaila, dkk. (2022). Stimulasi Orang Tua untuk Mengembangkan Motorik Halus Anak Usia Dini. *Seminal Nasional Sosial Sains, Pendidikan, Humaniora (SENASSDRA)*, 01(1), 787-790. <https://prosiding.unipma.ac.id/index.php/SENASSDRA/article/view/2807/2202>
- Rahmah, H., & Ulfa, M. (2024). Penerapan Kemandirian dan Keterampilan Hidup Pada Anak dengan Down Syndrome. *Al Furqan: Jurnal Agama, Sosial, dan Budaya*, 03(3) 2830-7755. <https://publisherqu.com/index.php/Al-Furqan/article/view/1016>
- Rohmadheny, P. S. (2016). *Studi Kasus Anak Down syndrome Case Study*

- of Down Syndrome Child. *Jurnal CARE (Children Advisory Research and Education)*, 03(3), 67–76.
- Sijabat, dkk. (2024). Pengaruh Terapi Okupasi Menggunting kertas Terhadap Peningkatan Kemampuan Motorik Pada Anak Retardasi Mental: Literatur Review. *Jurnal Elisabeth Health* 9(1), 1-5. <http://ejournal.stikeselisabethmedan.ac.id:85/index.php/EHJ/article/view/602>
- Stefanelli, et.al. (2021). Early numerical skills in individuals with Down Syndrome. In: *Life Span And Disability*, 29-53. <https://iris.unimore.it/handle/11380/1252104>
- Sugira, dkk. (2023). Peningkatan Kemampuan Berpakaian Melalui Model Pembelajaran Langsung Pada Anak Down Syndrome. *Jurnal Orto didaktika*, 1(1) 1-10. <https://eprints.unm.ac.id/32821/>
- Ubaidillah, K. (2018). Penggunaan Terapi Okupasi untuk Pengembangan Motorik Halus Anak Down Syndrome. *Jurnal Studi Islam, Gender, dan Anak*, 13(1). <https://ejournal.uinsaizu.ac.id/index.php/yinyang/article/view/2091>
- Yuwono. J., Hermawan, Martika. T., Anggrellanggi. A. (2020). Parental Competencies In Providing Services For The Development Of Autistic Children. *Jurnal Exponential (Education For Exceptional Children)* 1 (2) 181-193. <https://journal.upy.ac.id/index.php/PLB/index>