



Accepted	: June 28, 2025
Revised	: July 11, 2025
Approved	: August 13, 2025
Published	: August 13, 2025

The Role of Schools in Family-Resource Interventions to Improve *Family Quality of Life* in Children with Intellectual Disabilities

Citra Ashri Maulidina ^{1*}, Indra Jaya ², Leliana Lianty ³, Mohammad Arif Taboer ⁴, Irah Kasirah ⁵, Rahmat Rizki⁶

^{1,2,3,4,5}, Bachelor of Special Education Study Program, Faculty of Education, Universitas Negeri Jakarta, Rawamangun Muka Street, East Jakarta 13220, Indonesia

⁶ SLB Negeri 11 Jakarta, Kelinkit Street No. 34, South Jakarta 12870, Indonesia

*Corresponding Author. E-mail: citraashri@unj.ac.id

Abstract: The family has an important role and has a responsibility in the development of the child. The school is an important part of improving individual quality. The school has a role in the development of the child. Family and School are part of the microsystem environment. Unfortunately, families with children who have intellectual disabilities often face challenges that are different from those of other families. Parents who have a child with an intellectual disability often feel stressed, angry, rejected, deeply guilty, and lack self-confidence. Family Quality of Life is a concept about how well the needs and well-being of a family are met based on five domains, including: family interaction, parenting, physical well-being, emotional well-being, and disability-related services. If families do not receive support in the form of family resource-based intervention programs, it will negatively impact the quality of families with children with special needs. The purpose of this research is to strengthen the role of schools in supporting families so that they receive assistance, information, strength, skills, and meet the needs of their children with intellectual disabilities, thereby creating a positive family quality as parents receive the best support to foster closeness and support with their children. The research method uses design and development research (D&DR). This research is conducted at one of the Special Schools in Jakarta. The research results show that the school provides full support and teachers build positive collaboration with parents, so that parents have a support system from their immediate environment and can improve family quality.

Keywords: Children with Intellectual Disabilities, Family, Family Quality of Life, Intervention, School.

INTRODUCTION

Family and School are the closest environments to children. In this case, the family takes over the main role in building closeness with the child. According to Brofenberner theory, the family is part of a microsystem. The microsystem itself is the environment that is most related to children and affects children's growth and development. Schools and families have an equal role in supporting children's development.

A strong and positive relationship between teachers and parents plays a crucial role in children's development. Both are the most influential parties in a child's life, and a good collaboration between them will have a great positive impact for the child. Many studies have shown that the importance of collaboration between teachers and parents, support from teachers can affect parental confidence and in many other ways have a significant impact on children's development (Adams et al., 2019).

Research also shows that anxiety, mental health, and negative emotions affect the quality of parents who have children with intellectual disability, so that if they are not provided support and intervention it will have a negative impact on children's development (Adams et al., 2018). Families with children with disabilities have a higher risk of experiencing guilt, as well as emotional difficulties and in family relationships. As a result, parents are sometimes overprotective of their children with disabilities. If parents are too protective of their children, this will make the child's development tend to be slower (Al-Krenawi et al., 2011).

Often parents feel that they cannot accept the condition of their child with a complete intellectual disability, so this affects the development of their child. High levels of parenting stress will lead to a lack of involvement in

parenting (Wang et al., 2020). Family quality is a condition in which the family's needs are met, and family members enjoy living together as a family and have the opportunity to do what they need to do (Hsiao et al., 2017). The perception of family relationships is an important factor for families with children with disabilities (Zeng et al., 2021).

The quality of the family is related to the quality of the individual, in this case when the family has a good quality of life, this will have an impact on the individual quality of children with intellectual disabilities to grow and develop well. Parents with children with special needs must have a good quality of family life because it relates to their physical, psychological, and social conditions. Poor family quality of life can lead to negative consequences, such as family conflicts and poor living standards. (Ikhwanisifa, 2024)

Studies of the quality of life of individuals with intellectual disabilities related to how their families support them can be improved through appropriate interventions to stimulate their growth and development.] Family quality according to family interaction, childcare, emotional well-being, physical, and support. (Chiang & Wineman, 2014) (Hu et al., 2012)

Collaboration between teachers and parents can produce a good quality of life for children with intellectual disabilities, unfortunately currently the collaboration between the two has not been established optimally. The relationship between teachers and parents in Special school has a unique and complex dynamic. In general, a strong partnership between teachers and parents is essential for the educational success of students at Special School, although the school has worked to build positive relationships.

Field conditions indicate that parents tend to hand over all matters of their children's development and academics to the school. At home, their children are not stimulated properly, resulting in a discrepancy between what teachers have taught and the stimulation their children receive at home. This affects family outcomes, so intervention programs are expected to improve family outcomes. Intervention programs are collaborations between experts, researchers, and teachers in providing stimulation to parents and their children with intellectual disabilities. Therefore, this program is expected to improve family quality.

However, challenges and areas for improvement still exist such as a large amount of teacher workload, availability of resources, low level of parental involvement, need for cooperation between teachers and parents, in this case the importance of teachers working with parents in determining intervention programs that parents can do to stimulate their children at home, so that teachers and parents both have a role that supports each other in creating a quality of life for children by intellectual disability, so as to create family quality.

Support from the environment can increase confidence, minimize stigma, and minimize negative stigma. With continuous efforts, it is hoped that (Recio et al., 2020). This relationship will be even better in the future, so that it can provide maximum benefits for student development.

Therefore, it is important for this to be researched so that schools have a role in building *Quality of Life* for parents who have children with intellectual barriers, so that it is hoped that schools and families can become one unit in providing support to children with intellectual barriers.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Researchers employ design and development research (D&DR) as a strategic framework to create family-oriented early intervention programs. Design and development research (D&DR) is the methodical examination of the processes involved in design, development, and assessment, aimed at establishing an empirical basis for the creation of instructional and non-instructional products. Design and development research (D&DR) emphasizes analysis, planning, production, and evaluation. It is frequently described as a means of developing methods, strategies, and phases grounded in systematic analysis of a particular case.

Participants in this study were class teachers with five parents who have children with intellectual disabilities who are in the second grade of elementary school. Data collection methods include Observation, Interview, and Documentation. The phases of this research encompass a) constructing a conceptual framework; b) formulating program architecture and conducting literature reviews; c) analyzing and designing programs; d) executing the program; e) evaluating the program. (J. Ellis & Levy, 2010) In the second year, this article examines the stage of program design and implementation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

This study involved parents who have children with special needs and teachers in one setting of grade 2 in one of Special School, in Jakarta. In this case, teachers play the role of facilitators who play a role in providing strengthening, socialization, and education to parents who carry out the Family Resource Intervention program so that it can be carried out optimally and can improve family outcomes that can help to improve positive relationships between parents with children with special needs with intellectual disabilities and their children at home.

In the first stage, the researcher conducted identification and assessment. Based on the results of the study, it was found that the quality of families in families with children with intellectual disabilities in grade 2 need support, education, and stimulation. Not a few families are also confused about how they should stimulate their children at home. Anxiety, mental health, and negative emotions affect the quality level of parents so that if they are not given support and intervention, it will have a bad impact on their child's development. Based on the results of the assessment in the field, parents still experience confusion in educating their children at home and parents only focus on relying on teachers in their children's development, so this affects their children's development at home.

Based on the results of the Family Quality study, it shows that family interactions, childcare, emotional, welfare, physical, and support received by parents are still not running optimally. This is influenced by several factors including: 1) lack of knowledge and understanding, in this case lack of education, stimulation, and difficulty in understanding their children, 2) emotional and psychological burdens including stress and confusion, feeling incapable, 3) limited resources, in this case time and finance are the main factors, 4) social and environmental factors, in this case lack of social support, stigma, and negative perspectives, 5) Different family focus Where families only focus on shortcomings and lack understanding of their child's potential.

Based on the results of the study, these factors affect the quality of families in parents who have children with intellectual disabilities, so it is necessary to solve problems based on the problems that arise. Therefore, the researcher designed a program that is used to stimulate and educate parents. Collaboration between researchers, teachers, and related experts, as well as parents in the implementation of the program. The program focuses on strengthening Family Quality of Life in families who have children with intellectual barriers, so it is hoped that after families run the program, the quality of families can improve and their children can develop well and get educator services.

In the second stage, the researcher designed an early intervention program with family resources to improve *the Family Quality of Life* in family life. The resulting programs include:

1. Interactive Education Session on the Acceptance of the Condition of Children with Intellectual Disabilities.
2. Effective Strategy Sessions in stimulating children with intellectual barriers that parents can do at home.
3. Positive Behavior Management sessions in this case the importance of addressing challenging behaviors and promoting desired behaviors (e.g., positive reinforcement, routines).
4. The Mental Health and Parental Welfare Session in this case emphasizes stress management and resilience strategies for families.
5. Session Building Support Groups for Parents, in this case the importance of building collaboration among parents who have children with intellectual barriers so that parents can get positive support from the surrounding environment.

This program is run by parents at home in collaboration with teachers as environmental microsystems and with researchers as program formulators. The program is made based on the results of identification and assessment while in the field.

In the third stage, the researcher collaborates with teachers and schools as well as related experts in implementing programs for parents. This activity was held in the form of a focus group discussion for five sessions. In the first session, the teacher gave. Material for parents regarding interactive education about the perspective of children with intellectual barriers. In the second session, the teacher provided material on effective strategies in supporting children's growth and development at home. In the third session, the teacher provided material on positive behavior management. In the fourth session, the teacher provided material on mental health and parental welfare. In the fifth session, teachers collaborated with parents to build support as their support system to strengthen each other and create a positive environment.

Discussion

Parents have an important role in their child's developmental process. Parents are the closest to the child and are a microsystem for their child's development. Understanding the family as a key microsystem has important implications, especially in the context of early intervention for children with special needs or those at risk.

Parents of children with intellectual disabilities face significant emotional distress and challenges to their mental

well-being. They often experience a wide range of intense emotions throughout the parenting journey and encounter major obstacles in maintaining their own mental health. So intervention is needed that can help them. (Gilson et al., 2018)

Family-centered interventions, such as the program we discussed earlier, recognize that strengthening family capacity and well-being will directly have a positive impact on child development, family health and functioning, directly reflecting and influencing the child's maximum developmental potential, so that the family is the primary microsystem for children.

The role of teachers and schools is vital. They are not only providers of educational services, but also key partners for families, forming a strong mesosystem (according to Bronfenbrenner, that is, the relationship between two microsystems, in this case the family and the school). By carrying out these roles synergistically, teachers and schools can create a strong support ecosystem, not only for children with intellectual barriers, but also for all members of their family, there by significantly improving the overall quality of family life.

In this family-resourced intervention program, teachers have several roles, including:

First, the teacher plays the role of a child development expert In which in this case the Master functions as 1) Assessors: Conduct a comprehensive child development assessment to identify the specific strengths and needs of children with intellectual barriers. This is the basis for the preparation of the Individual Education Program (IEP). 2) Program Planner: Designing learning and stimulation programs tailored to the child's developmental level and learning style, taking into account long-term and short-term goals. 3) Direct Intervention Providers: Carry out interventions and stimulation in schools, both individually and in small groups, using appropriate strategies and materials. Second, the teacher plays the role of a facilitator. In this case Teachers play a role in providing education where Educate parents about the characteristics of intellectual barriers, stages of child development, and the importance of consistent early stimulation at home. Practice Skills Where Train parents practically on stimulation strategies and techniques that they can apply in their daily routine at home (e.g., how to communicate effectively, play educationally, practice independence). Modelling Shows parents directly how to perform effective stimulation or interaction with the child. Mentoring Where Teachers and Researchers provide ongoing mentoring, either through in-person meetings, home visits (where possible), or virtual communication, to address the challenges faced by families and provide constructive feedback.

Early intervention programs conducted by teachers in schools, especially those involving a family-based approach, provide many significant benefits for families with children with special needs. These benefits not only impact the child, but also on the well-being and ability of all family members. Based on the results of the study, parents felt helped by the *Focus Group Discussion* and mentoring activities.

The benefits felt by parents after the implementation of the program include: The First benefit is an increase in parental knowledge and understanding: First, parents understand their child's condition after being given material on interactive education. Teachers can provide accurate and easy-to-understand information about a child's diagnosis, the characteristics of their developmental barriers, and how they affect learning and behavior. This helps parents reduce confusion and anxiety. Second, Parents Understand the Stages of Development: Parents learn about the normal stages of development and how their child's development may be different, so they have more realistic expectations and can identify areas that need to be stimulated.

Third, Identify the Child's Strengths: Teachers help parents see and appreciate their child's unique strengths and potential, rather than just focusing on his or her shortcomings.

The second benefit of Improved Parenting and Stimulation Skills at Home, In terms of Practical Strategies: Teachers train parents on concrete and practical ways to perform stimulation at home, transforming daily routines into learning opportunities. This could be a more effective way of communicating, educational play techniques, or practicing daily life skills. In terms of Behavior Management: Parents learn positive strategies to manage challenging behaviors that may arise in children with special needs, such as *tantrums* or difficulty following instructions, so that the home environment becomes more harmonious.

The third benefit includes parents getting emotional and psychological support so that parents can reduce stress, increase parental confidence, and coping strategies Where teachers and schools can help parents develop healthy coping strategies to deal with challenges and stress related to parenting children with special needs.

The fourth benefit is improved quality of interaction and family well-being. Increasing FQOL (Family Quality of Life) with reduced stress, increased skills, and support received, the overall quality of family life will increase.

(Nuri et al., 2020) Parental stress reduction is the most commonly reported outcome associated with family support. Other outcomes related to changes in parental knowledge and skills as well as life satisfaction. With the improvement of the quality of the family, children with intellectual barriers in the family environment can grow and develop well.

CONCLUSION

Family Quality of Life is a concept of how well family needs and well-being are met based on five domains: family interaction, parenting, physical well-being, emotional well-being, and disability-related services. This program is designed to improve the quality of families for families who have children with intellectual disabilities. The five programs include Interactive Education, Effective Strategies in Stimulating, Positive Behavior Management, Mental Health and Parental Welfare, Building Support Groups for Parents. The benefits of the program include: Increasing Parental Knowledge and Understanding, Improving Parenting and Stimulation Skills

at Home, In terms of Practical Strategies, parents get emotional and psychological support, Improving the quality of interaction and family welfare. Researchers hope that in the future this program can be carried out sustainably and beneficial for many families who have children with intellectual disabilities.

REFERENCES

- Adams, D., Rose, J., Jackson, N., Karakatsani, E., & Oliver, C. (2018). Coping Strategies in Mothers of Children with Intellectual Disabilities Showing Multiple Forms of Challenging Behaviour: Associations with Maternal Mental Health. *Behavioural and Cognitive Psychotherapy*, 46(3), 257–275. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1352465817000704>
- Adams, D., Young, K., Simpson, K., & Keen, D. (2019). Parent descriptions of the presentation and management of anxiousness in children on the autism spectrum. *Autism*, 23(4), 980–992. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1362361318794031>
- Aktan, O., Orakci, Ş., & Durnali, M. (2020). Investigation of the relationship between burnout, life satisfaction and quality of life in parents of children with disabilities. *European Journal of Special Needs Education*, 35(5), 679–695. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08856257.2020.1748429>
- Al-Krenawi, A., Graham, J. R., & Al Gharaibeh, F. (2011). The impact of intellectual disability, caregiver burden, family functioning, marital quality, and sense of coherence. *Disability and Society*, 26(2), 139–150. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09687599.2011.543861>
- Brotherhood. (2024). *THE ROLE OF FAMILY SUPPORT AND GRATITUDE FOR THE QUALITY OF FAMILY LIFE IN PARENTS WITH CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS*.
- Chiang, H. M., & Wineman, I. (2014). Factors associated with quality of life in individuals with autism spectrum disorders: A review of literature. In *Research in Autism Spectrum Disorders* (Vol. 8, Issue 8, pp. 974–986). Elsevier Ltd. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.rasd.2014.05.003>
- Creswell, John.W. 2014. *Qualitative Research & Research Design*. Yogyakarta: Pustaka.
- Dreyfus, S., & Dowse, L. (2020). Experiences of parents who support a family member with intellectual disability and challenging behaviour: “This is what I deal with every single day.” *Journal of Intellectual and Developmental Disability*, 45(1), 12–22. <https://doi.org/10.3109/13668250.2018.1510117>
- Hsiao, Y. J., Higgins, K., Pierce, T., Whitby, P. J. S., & Tandy, R. D. (2017). Parental stress, family quality of life, and family-teacher partnerships: Families of children with autism spectrum disorder. *Research in Developmental Disabilities*, 70, 152–162. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ridd.2017.08.013>
- Hu, X., Wang, M., & Fei, X. (2012). Family quality of life of Chinese families of children with intellectual disabilities. *Journal of Intellectual Disability Research*, 56(1), 30–44. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-2788.2011.01391.x>
- Melton, K. K., Hodge, C. J., & Duerden, M. D. (2022). Ecology of family experiences: Contextualizing family leisure for human development & family relations. *Journal of Leisure Research*, 53(1), 112–131. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00222216.2020.1802374>
- Recio, P., Molero, F., García-Ael, C., & Pérez-Garín, D. (2020). Perceived discrimination and self-esteem among family caregivers of children with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) and children with intellectual disabilities (ID) in Spain: The mediational role of affiliate stigma and social support. *Research in Developmental Disabilities*, 105. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ridd.2020.103737>
- Richey, R. C. & Klein, J. D. (2007). *Design and Development Research: Methods, Strategies and Issues*. Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers
- Staunton, E., Kehoe, C., & Sharkey, L. (2023). Families under pressure: Stress and quality of life in parents of children with an intellectual disability. *Irish Journal of Psychological Medicine*, 40(2), 192–199. <https://doi.org/10.1017/ipm.2020.4>
- Thomas, E. J., & Rothman, J. (1994). An Integrative Perspective on Intervention Research. in J. Rhotman & E. J. Thomas (eds). *intervention research: design and development for human service*, 3–23.
- Wang, H., Hu, X., & Han, Z. R. (2020). Parental stress, involvement, and family quality of life in mothers and fathers of children with autism spectrum disorder in mainland China: A dyadic analysis. *Research in Developmental Disabilities*, 107. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ridd.2020.103791>
- Wehmeyer, M. L. (2020). The importance of self-determination to the quality of life of people with intellectual disability: A perspective. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 17(19), 1–7. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph17197121>
- Zeng, S., Zhao, H., Hu, X., Lee, J. D., Stone-MacDonald, A. K., & Price, Z. W. (2021). Are we on the Same Page: a Dyadic Analysis of Parental Stress, Support, and Family Quality of Life on Raising Children with Autism Spectrum Disorders. *Journal of Developmental and Physical Disabilities*, 33(4), 599–618. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10882-020-09761-x>