

Protection of Children's Rights Through Public Policy: A Review of the Implementation of Child Protection Programs in Elementary Schools

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Abstract

The welfare and protection of children's rights are crucial elements in sustainable community development. In this context, public policy plays a key role in ensuring that children receive adequate protection and opportunities to grow and develop properly. This paper investigates the implementation of child protection programs in primary schools as one of the concrete efforts to ensure that children's rights are safeguarded. By focusing on the policies, implementation process, and impacts of these programs in several elementary schools, this study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the effectiveness of such initiatives. Using a qualitative research method, data was collected through interviews, observations, and document analysis to examine how these programs are integrated into the school system and their outcomes on children's well-being. The findings reveal that while there are significant efforts and resources allocated towards child protection, there are also challenges and gaps that need to be addressed to enhance the effectiveness of these programs. The study concludes with recommendations for policymakers, educators, and community stakeholders to improve the implementation and impact of child protection initiatives, ensuring that every child enjoys a safe and supportive environment conducive to their holistic development.

Keywords: Child Protection, Protection of Children's Rights, Protection of Children in Elementary Schools.

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Introduction

The protection of children's rights is one of the key aspects in sustainable community development. Children are the most vulnerable part of society, vulnerable to various forms of violence, exploitation, and discrimination. Therefore, the protection of children's rights is a shared responsibility for the government, educational institutions, families, and society as a whole. In this context, public policy plays an important role in ensuring that children get adequate protection and opportunities to grow and develop properly. One of the real efforts in realizing this is through the implementation of child protection programs in elementary schools. Primary schools become a strategic environment to strengthen the protection of children's rights, because this is where children spend most of their time during the learning period. (Belieu & Fina, 2021).

In this article, we will explore various aspects of the implementation of child protection programs in elementary schools. We will present an in-depth analysis of how public policy is implemented in the context of primary education, as well as highlight the challenges, opportunities, and impacts of these efforts. It is hoped that this discussion will provide valuable insights for policymakers, education practitioners, and the community at large in their joint efforts to protect children's rights and create a safe and supportive environment for them. The protection of children's rights has been a top priority on the political policy agenda in many countries around the world. Support for child protection covers a wide range of aspects, including the right to education, health, protection from violence, exploitation, and discrimination. In the context of education, primary schools play an important role in securing and promoting children's rights.

A study by UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund) has highlighted the importance of education in ensuring children's rights. Education is not only about facilitating children's access to school, but also about creating an environment that supports safe and enjoyable learning. Child protection programs in primary schools are an integral part of this approach, as schools are places where children spend most of their time during the learning period. Research by Save the Children and other children's rights organizations has revealed the challenges faced by children in schools, including violence by fellow students, teachers, or even by adults in school settings. This shows the need for concrete efforts to strengthen child protection in primary schools. Recent studies have also highlighted the importance of the role of teachers and school staff in promoting a safe and supportive school environment. Training for teachers on the identification and handling of cases of violence or harassment is key in this effort. (More & Kurniawati, 2022).

In addition, research on the effectiveness of child protection programs in primary schools has yielded various findings. Program evaluation strengthens understanding of the factors that affect program implementation, as well as the impact of child protection efforts on children's lives as a whole. Thus, this literature review shows the complexity of child protection issues in primary schools, as well as the importance of the role of public policy and best practices in ensuring that children's rights are well protected in the future. The formulation of the problem is as follows:

- a) What are the factors that affect the success or failure in the implementation of child protection programs in primary schools?
- b) What is the level of awareness and understanding of teachers, school staff, parents, and students about the child protection policy?
- c) What is the impact of child protection programs on the welfare and safety of children in elementary schools?

Methodology

The welfare and protection of children's rights are crucial elements in sustainable community development. In this context, public policy plays a key role in ensuring that children receive adequate protection and opportunities to grow and develop properly. This paper investigates the implementation of child protection programs in primary schools as one of the concrete efforts to ensure that children's rights are safeguarded. By focusing on the policies, implementation process, and impacts of these programs in several elementary schools, this study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the effectiveness of such initiatives.

The method used in this study is a qualitative descriptive method. To achieve accurate and objective results, the sampling technique employed is a purposive sample system. Data

collection was carried out using interview techniques, documentation, literature studies, and observations (Bagaskara et al., 2002). The findings reveal that while there are significant efforts and resources allocated towards child protection, there are also challenges and gaps that need to be addressed to enhance the effectiveness of these programs. The study concludes with recommendations for policymakers, educators, and community stakeholders to improve the implementation and impact of child protection initiatives, ensuring that every child enjoys a safe and supportive environment conducive to their holistic development.

Results And Discussion

Child Concept

The Concept of Children in Law No. 23 of 2002 concerning Child Protection, hereinafter referred to as UUPA, means a child is a person 6 who is not yet 18 (eighteen) years old, including children who are still in the womb. The implementation of the fulfillment of children's rights in Indonesia is based on the principles of Pancasila, the 1945 Constitution, and the Basic Principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). Children's rights are part of Human Rights that must be guaranteed, protected and fulfilled by parents, families, communities, governments and states. A child has rights, namely: non-discrimination; the best interests of the child; the right to life, survival and development; and respect for children's opinions (Herlina, et al. 2003).

Implementation of Child Protection Programs in Elementary Schools

The implementation of child protection programs in primary schools is a critical step in efforts to ensure that children get a safe and supportive environment to grow and develop optimally. The following are some important aspects related to the implementation of child protection programs in elementary schools: Child protection policies are based on public policies that have been set by local or national governments. This policy establishes a legal framework and guidelines to protect children from various forms of violence, exploitation, and discrimination in educational settings. One of the key elements of implementation is the existence of a Reporting and Case Handling System with a clear system for reporting and handling cases of violations against children. Primary schools need to have structured procedures and effective mechanisms to identify, report, and handle cases of violence or exploitation that occur in and around the school environment. Teachers and school staff play an important role as security guards and monitors the school environment. Regular training on identifying signs of violence or abuse, as well as how to deal with such cases, is essential to ensure responsiveness and responsiveness to child protection needs.

Integrating Child Protection Materials in the Curriculum, Materials on children's rights, violence, and child protection can be integrated into the curriculum of elementary schools. This helps to increase children's awareness and understanding of their rights and improve their ability to protect themselves. As for Collaboration with Parents and Communities, Cooperation with parents and communities is very important in supporting the implementation of child protection programs in elementary schools. Involving parents in the process of educating children about child protection, as well as building support networks with local communities, can strengthen efforts to create a safe environment for children. Then Evaluation and Monitoring are carried out, regular evaluations of the effectiveness of child protection programs need to be carried out. Continuous monitoring of policy implementation and its impact on child welfare helps in identifying weaknesses and making necessary improvements.

Taking into account all these aspects, the implementation of child protection programs in primary schools is not only a moral obligation, but also an important investment in a safe,

healthy, and quality future generation. These measures help create a supportive learning environment for children to grow into resilient and empowered individuals. (Fahmi, 2021).

Challenges in Program Implementation

The implementation of child protection programs in primary schools faces several challenges that need to be carefully overcome so that the program can run effectively and have a positive impact. Here are some of the key challenges that are often faced:

- a) **Limited Resources**, One of the main challenges is limited resources, both in terms of finance and personnel. Primary schools often face budget constraints that limit their ability to implement comprehensive child protection programs. Lack of funding can affect training for teachers and school staff, the procurement of supporting materials, or the provision of facilities necessary to create a safe environment for children.
- b) **Lack of Understanding and Awareness**: There is still a lack of understanding and awareness about the importance of child protection among several parties, including teachers, school staff, parents, and even students themselves. Lack of understanding can hinder efforts to identify and respond to cases of violence or harassment in a timely manner.
- c) **Cultural and Social Challenges**: Some societies or groups may have norms or values that make it difficult to report or handle cases of violence or exploitation of children. This can include stigma against victims, fear of punishment or repression, or even inaction in taking child protection issues seriously.
- d) **Less than Optimal Coordination**: Poor coordination between the various parties involved, such as teachers, school staff, local authorities, and community organizations, can affect the effectiveness of the program. Without good coordination, the risk of gaps in child protection in various school environments can increase.
- e) **Harassment or Violence Outside of School**, Children are not only vulnerable to harassment or violence in the school environment, but also in the surrounding environment, including at home or in the community. Child protection programs in primary schools often need to consider the impact of the environment outside of school on children's well-being.

Poor Systematic Monitoring and Evaluation: Unsystematic monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of child protection programs can make it difficult to assess the effectiveness of programs and identify areas that need improvement. Inadequate evaluation can also hamper efforts to gather evidence on the positive impact of the program. To address these challenges, it is important to have a strong commitment from all stakeholders, adequate allocation of resources, ongoing training to improve understanding and skills, and build a solid network between schools, families, and communities.

Training for Teachers and School Staff

Training for teachers and school staff is a crucial step in preparing them to identify, prevent, and handle cases of violence or abuse against children in the school environment. There are several aspects that need to be considered in the implementation of the training, namely **Understanding Child Protection**, The training must include a deep understanding of children's rights, including the right to be protected from all forms of violence, exploitation, and discrimination. Teachers and school staff need to understand the definition of violence or abuse, as well as the signs that indicate that a child may be a victim. Then **Procedures for Reporting and Handling Cases**, teachers and school staff need to be trained to know the

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proper procedures in reporting cases of violence or abuse, both to the authorities in the school and to the relevant child protection institutions. They should also be provided with guidance on how to handle these cases with the necessary sensitivity and caution. Identification of Risk and Protective Factors, Training should include learning about the risk factors that can lead to violence or abuse against children, as well as protective factors that can help prevent this. This includes recognizing vulnerable environments and taking steps to improve safety in schools. It is important to train teachers and school staff in effective communication skills, including how to talk to children who may be victims. They need to be trained to listen empathetically, keep information confidential, and ensure that children feel safe and supported.

Continuous Training, Child protection is a growing issue, therefore training must be sustainable. Teachers and school staff need to be continuously provided with training and workshops to update their knowledge of the latest developments in child protection, as well as to explore case studies and learning from field experiences. As for Collaboration and Support Networks, Training must also promote collaboration between schools and child protection institutions, local governments, and community organizations engaged in child protection. This allows schools to build a strong support network and get help when needed. By implementing comprehensive and ongoing training for teachers and school staff, primary schools can become safer environments for children. It also creates a collective awareness and shared responsibility in protecting children's rights and supporting their development holistically.

Integrating Child Protection Materials in the Curriculum

The integration of child protection materials in the school curriculum aims to increase children's understanding and awareness of their rights and how to maintain personal safety. This is done by inserting materials on child protection into relevant subjects such as health education, moral and religious education, Indonesian, and others. The goal is for children to be able to identify signs of violence, understand how to protect themselves, and understand the importance of reporting suspicious events to trusted adults. This integration helps create a learning environment that supports the holistic development of children and creates a generation that is more aware of their rights and the possible risks they face.

Collaboration with Parents and Community

Collaboration with parents and communities in the implementation of child protection programs in primary schools is the key to success in creating a safe environment for children. Here are some key points about the importance of this collaboration i.e. (Raising awareness) Involving parents in child protection programs helps to increase their awareness of child safety issues. Parents can better understand the signs of violence or abuse their child may be experiencing and ways to protect them. (Participation in Training) Schools can invite parents to take part in training sessions on child protection. This allows parents to acquire the same knowledge and skills as teachers and school staff in detecting and responding to cases affecting children. (Recognizing the Local Context of Communities) often has deep insights into the specific challenges and risks that children in their area face. Collaboration with the community helps schools understand the local context and design more effective and relevant protection strategies. (Support in Policy Implementation) When parents and the community are actively involved, they can provide strong support in implementing child protection policies in schools. This includes supporting the implementation of reporting procedures, advocating for the improvement of the school

environment, and acting as a resource for children in need of assistance. (Support Network Development) Collaboration builds a strong support network between schools, parents, and the community. This not only increases the effectiveness of child protection programs, but also creates a more open and responsive environment to children's needs. As such, good collaboration between schools, parents, and communities is an important element in a joint effort to protect children's rights and create safe, supportive, and inclusive learning environments for all children in primary schools.

Evaluation and Monitoring

Evaluation and monitoring are important processes in the implementation of child protection programs in elementary schools to ensure the effectiveness and sustainability of the program. Here is a brief explanation of evaluation and monitoring:

- a) (Evaluation) The evaluation is carried out to assess the extent to which the child protection program has achieved its objectives. Evaluation can include an assessment of policy implementation, such as the extent to which child protection procedures are well implemented in schools, whether training for teachers and school staff is effective, and whether action plans and policies have been well implemented. Evaluation may also include an assessment of the impact of child protection programs on the well-being and safety of children in schools.
- b) (Monitoring) Monitoring is carried out continuously to monitor the implementation of child protection programs in elementary schools. Monitoring involves regularly collecting data on various aspects of program implementation, such as the number of reported cases of violations, the responses and follow-ups provided on these cases, as well as the level of participation and understanding from various stakeholders such as teachers, school staff, parents, and students.
- c) (Evaluation and Monitoring Objectives) Evaluation and monitoring aims to provide the necessary information to identify the successes and failures of child protection programs. This information can be used to make improvements in program implementation, identify areas that need further attention, and measure the long-term impact of child protection efforts in primary schools.
- d) (Evaluation and Monitoring Methods) The methods used in evaluation and monitoring may vary, including interviews with stakeholders, direct observation in schools, document analysis, and quantitative and qualitative data collection. The use of these methods helps to ensure that evaluation and monitoring are carried out holistically and thoroughly.

By conducting regular and systematic evaluation and monitoring, primary schools can ensure that child protection programs are not only well implemented, but also have a significant positive impact on children's well-being and safety.

The result of the implementation of child protection programs in elementary schools through public policy is Raising Awareness and Understanding. The evaluation showed an increase in awareness and understanding of children's rights and signs of violence or abuse among teachers, school staff, parents, and students. They are better able to recognize potential risks and report suspicious cases. As for More Effective Policy Implementation. The program has successfully implemented child protection policies in a more consistent and structured manner in primary schools. The procedure for reporting and handling cases of child violence has become clearer and more responsive to the needs of children. Then the Reduction of Cases of Violence or Harassment, The results of the evaluation showed a

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decrease in cases of violence or abuse against children in the school environment. The preventive measures implemented help create a safer and more supportive learning environment for children. As for improving children's welfare, the positive impact of the program can be seen in improving children's welfare, such as increased sense of security, active participation in school activities, and increased academic achievement. The last Strengthening Collaboration, Evaluation shows that there is an increase in collaboration between schools, parents, and communities in child protection efforts. This creates a strong support network and helps build a social environment that is responsive to the child's protective needs.

Through these results, child protection programs in primary schools successfully achieve the goal of protecting children's rights and creating a safe, supportive and inclusive educational environment. Continuous evaluation and monitoring is key to maintaining the success of this program and to continuously improve and develop better child protection strategies in the future.

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