



## Analysis of parents' sex education towards ABK children in SLB Lampung province

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### Abstrak

**Background:** This study analyzes the role of parents in providing sex education to children with special needs (CWSN) in Special Schools (SLB) in Lampung Province. The focus is on empowering CWSN with knowledge about personal boundaries and self-protection to prevent sexual abuse. Despite its significance, sex education in Indonesia faces challenges, including limited parental knowledge and societal stigma.

**Aim:** The research aims to explore parental roles, strategies, and challenges in delivering sex education, providing recommendations for effective and inclusive approaches tailored to the needs of CWSN.

**Method:** A qualitative approach with a descriptive design was employed. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, participant observation, and documentation from 15 parents of CWSN aged 6–12 years. Triangulation ensured data validity, and analysis followed Miles and Huberman's model, focusing on data reduction, presentation, and conclusion drawing.

**Results:** Parents typically begin sex education after children reach 10 years, focusing on topics like sexual abuse prevention, physical boundaries, and gender identity. Family discussions were the most common strategy, with visual aids used selectively. Challenges included cultural stigma, resource limitations, and lack of institutional support.

**Conclusion:** To enhance sex education for CWSN, earlier introduction using age-appropriate methods is recommended. Collaboration among parents, educators, and policymakers, along with resources like training programs and educational media, is crucial. These efforts can foster holistic development and protection for CWSN in Indonesia.

## INTRODUCTION

Sex education plays a crucial role in supporting the overall development of children, particularly those with special needs (CWSN) (Laksmi et al., 2024; P.R. & Jose, 2024; Pratiwi et al., 2024). These children face unique challenges in understanding concepts, behaviors, and social interactions, making them more vulnerable to sexual abuse and exploitation (Alaggia et al., 2019; Kendall-Tackett et al., n.d.; Mathews & Collin-Vézina, 2019; Tharinger et al., 1990). Recent data from UNICEF (2020) reports that 1 in 5 children with disabilities globally experience sexual violence before reaching adulthood (UNICEF, 2020). In Indonesia, the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection (2021) noted a 30% increase in sexual violence cases against children over the last five years, with CWSN being among the most affected groups (Carolina et al., 2022). These alarming statistics emphasize the urgent need for effective sex education programs tailored to the developmental needs of CWSN (Kumar & Agrawal, 2019; Mitra et al., 2023; Mondal & Islam, 2023).

Sex education emphasizes guiding individuals to develop a deep understanding of their sexuality and encouraging them to apply this knowledge responsibly throughout their lives (Camelia & Nirmala, 2016; ST Aisyah BM & AB, 2022; Suartana, 2024). This includes equipping children with knowledge about their bodies, personal boundaries, and self-protection (Craig, 2022; Crooks et al., 2024; Rakhmawati et al., 2024). For CWSN, these lessons must address their specific sensory, intellectual, and behavioral needs (Fakhiratunnisa et al., 2022). Unfortunately, despite its importance, sex education often remains underdeveloped in Indonesia. A study revealed that only 15% of special schools (SLBs) in Indonesia integrate sex education into their curricula, leaving parents and educators unprepared to provide essential guidance (Maslahah et al., 2024; Widaningsih, A. et al., n.d.).

Parents play a pivotal role as the primary educators for their children, especially in instilling values and providing an understanding of personal safety (Anisah, 2023; Collins & Coleman, 2008; Kartel et al., 2022). Parents' involvement is crucial in helping children develop the awareness and skills needed to navigate their environments safely (Ebrahim et al., 2021; Roth et al., 2020; Valentine, 1997). However, societal stigma and limited knowledge often hinder parents from effectively addressing sensitive topics like sexuality (Bastien et al., 2011; Lehan Mackin et al., 2016; Mohd. Tohit & Haque, 2024). This gap leaves CWSN vulnerable to misinformation, exploitation, and psychological stress, emphasizing the need for tailored support and training for parents.

Address these challenges, this study focuses on the roles and strategies employed by parents in providing sex education to CWSN in SLBs in Lampung Province. By examining the barriers they face and the methods they adopt, this research seeks to provide practical recommendations for improving the implementation of sex education tailored to the developmental and cultural contexts of CWSN. This study also contributes to filling the gap in existing literature by exploring the intersection of sex education and parental involvement in the Indonesian context. By integrating theoretical perspectives and local data, this research underscores the importance of structured sex education programs that are accessible and effective. The findings aim to enhance parental engagement, reduce the risks faced by CWSN, and promote their holistic development within supportive educational environments.

## **METHOD**

This study employs a qualitative approach with a descriptive design to analyze the role of parents in providing sex education to children with special needs (CWSN) in Special Schools (SLB) in Lampung Province. The study focuses on an in-depth understanding of the experiences and perspectives of parents regarding sex education for their children with special needs. The research was conducted over a six-month period, from January to June 2024, to ensure sufficient time for data collection and analysis.

The data collection process utilized in-depth interviews and participant observation. Semi-structured interviews were conducted using an interview guide designed based on the research objectives. These interviews explored parents' perspectives, experiences, and challenges in providing sex education to children with special needs (CWSN). Interviews were carried out in person at the research site or online when necessary, lasting approximately 45-60 minutes each. The interview guide contained open-ended questions about parents' understanding of sex education, the methods they used, and the challenges they faced. Participant observation focused on examining interactions between parents and children

during the process of sex education, with an emphasis on parental behavior, children's responses, and the learning dynamics. Observations were conducted in home or school settings depending on informants' availability, using checklists and field notes to document activities and interactions.

Informants were selected through purposive sampling, targeting parents with children aged 6-12 years enrolled in Special Schools (SLB) in Lampung Province. Criteria included having experience in providing at least basic sex education and a willingness to participate in interviews and observations. Fifteen parents representing a range of special needs, including autism, ADHD, visual impairment, and hearing impairment, participated in the study. To ensure data validity, triangulation techniques were applied. Source triangulation involved collecting data from interviews with parents, SLB teachers, and observations. Method triangulation combined in-depth interviews, observations, and document analysis. Data reliability was maintained through data verification by reconfirming interview transcripts and observations with informants, peer review to minimize bias, and an audit trail documenting the research process.

Data analysis followed Miles and Huberman's interactive model, comprising three stages (Bradley et al., 2007). Data reduction focused on selecting data relevant to the research objectives. Data presentation organized the findings into descriptive narratives, tables, and diagrams to facilitate interpretation. Finally, conclusions were drawn by identifying patterns and themes emerging from the data.

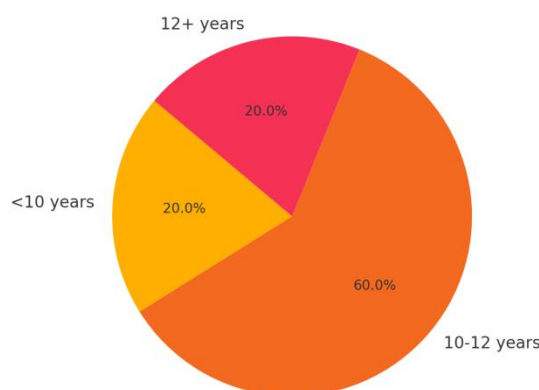
## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### A. Results

This study aimed to understand the role of parents in providing sex education to children with special needs (CWSN) in Special Schools (SLB) in Lampung Province. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation. The findings encompass the age at which sex education begins, the topics covered, the strategies used, and the challenges faced by parents.

#### *Age of Sex Education Implementation*

Most parents begin sex education after their children reach the age of 10. This data is visualized in the following pie chart:

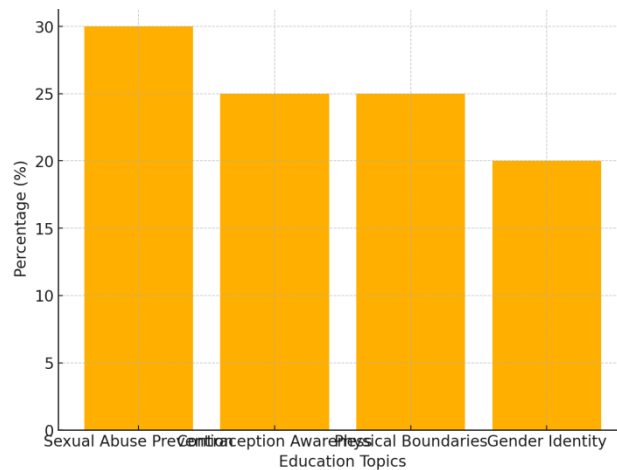


**Figure 1.** Age Distribution for Sex Education Implementation

- **60%** of parents start sex education when their children are aged 10–12 years.
  - **20%** begin before the age of 10.
  - **20%** start after the age of 12
- The delay is often due to the perception that children below 10 years old are not yet mature enough to understand sensitive topics.

*Topics Covered in Sex Education*

The topics addressed in sex education include preventing sexual abuse, contraception awareness, understanding physical boundaries, and gender identity. The following bar chart represents the distribution of these topics:



**Figure 2.** Percentage of Topics Covered in Sex Education

**Explanation:**

- **30%** of the focus is on preventing sexual abuse.
- **25%** each is allocated to contraception awareness and understanding physical boundaries.
- **20%** is dedicated to gender identity. The primary focus on prevention reflects a protective approach, while topics like gender identity require more attention to foster a holistic understanding.

*Strategies for Delivering Sex Education*

**Table 1.** Strategies for Delivering Sex Education

Strategy	Description
<b>Family Discussions</b>	The primary method used, tailored to the child’s cognitive abilities.
<b>Use of Visual Aids</b>	Books or interactive applications are used by families with better access to resources.
<b>Verbal Approach</b>	Verbal discussions are commonly used by lower-income families.
<b>Technology Monitoring</b>	Children are taught safe use of technology to prevent online exploitation.

### **Explanation:**

Family discussions provide a supportive environment, but the effectiveness varies depending on socioeconomic background and access to resources.

#### *Contextual Information*

##### **Background of Informants**

The informants included 15 parents of children with various special needs, such as:

- **Autism:** Challenges in communication and behavior.
- **ADHD:** Difficulty in maintaining attention and impulse control.
- **Blindness:** Visual impairments.
- **Deafness:** Hearing impairments.

The diversity of needs highlights the importance of tailored strategies for sex education.

##### **Socioeconomic Differences**

Approaches to sex education varied among families with different economic backgrounds:

- **Middle- to Upper-Income Families:** Utilized visual aids such as books and educational applications.
- **Lower-Income Families:** Relied on verbal discussions due to limited access to resources.

## **B. Discussion**

This study reveals various dynamics and challenges in implementing sex education for children with special needs (CWSN) in Lampung Province. The findings provide in-depth insights into the role of parents, the scope of sex education content, the importance of technology, and institutional support in ensuring more effective, inclusive, and relevant sex education programs tailored to children's needs.

Most parents begin providing sex education after their children reach the age of 10. This reflects the influence of cultural norms and social stigma that make discussions on this topic sensitive. However, such delays pose significant risks, as children may lack the knowledge needed to protect themselves at an earlier age. Previous studies have shown that early sex education can enhance children's awareness of their bodies, help them recognize unsafe situations, and build self-confidence (Goldman, 2008; Kenny et al., 2008; Lameiras-Fernández et al., 2021). Children who receive sex education at an earlier age are also better prepared to build healthy social relationships and understand physical boundaries (Messinger et al., 2009; Moreira et al., 2023; Neal & Neal, 2013). Therefore, it is essential to introduce sex education at a younger age using age-appropriate methods. Approaches such as storytelling, interactive games, or simple visual media can help convey sensitive topics in an engaging and non-threatening manner.

The content of sex education provided to CWSN primarily focuses on preventing sexual abuse (30%), raising awareness about contraception (25%), and understanding physical boundaries (25%). However, aspects such as gender identity (20%) receive less attention. Understanding gender identity is crucial to helping children develop self-awareness and build healthy social interactions. Literature supports that education about gender identity enhances children's ability to adapt socially and respect cultural and individual diversity (Auerbach, 1995; Liang et al., 2020; Robinson, 2012). Furthermore, integrating emotional education into the sex education curriculum is essential to help children recognize, understand, and manage their emotions effectively. Social simulations are also effective methods to train children to face real-life situations and develop positive interpersonal skills (Bachen et al., 2012; Ip et al., 2018; Vairamani, 2024).

In terms of teaching strategies, family discussions are the primary method used by parents to deliver sex education. This strategy provides a safe and comfortable environment for discussing sensitive topics. However, resource limitations, particularly among low-income families, hinder the depth and breadth of the material provided. Open family communication, as highlighted by (Leung et al., 2019; Santa Maria et al., 2015; Walker \*, 2004). , is a key foundation for effective sex education. However, not all families have access to educational resources such as guidebooks, videos, or interactive applications to support their efforts. Technology offers significant potential to bridge this gap. Game-based applications, animated educational videos, and interactive modules can effectively simplify abstract concepts such as reproduction, physical boundaries, and healthy relationships. Technology also provides flexibility for CWSN to learn according to their individual needs, both in terms of pace and learning style(Braeken & Rondinelli, 2012; Janssens et al., 2020; To et al., 2012).

Nonetheless, cultural norms and social stigma in Indonesia remain major challenges to implementing sex education. Parents often fear societal judgment, leading to delays or avoidance of discussing these topics. This issue is further exacerbated by the limited involvement of schools in providing inclusive sex education modules for CWSN. Most of the responsibility is placed on parents, who often feel inadequately equipped or resourced. This study underscores the importance of institutional support, such as proactive school policies, teacher training, and the provision of inclusive educational materials. Previous research highlights that adequate institutional support can significantly enhance the effectiveness of sex education programs (Crabbe & Flood, 2021; Flaspohler et al., 2012; Huaynoca et al., 2014). Providing resources such as visual guides, interactive simulations, and professional assistance can help ensure that sex education meets the unique needs of CWSN.

This study not only reaffirms the importance of sex education as a means of protecting children from sexual violence but also contributes new insights by highlighting the role of technology in its implementation. Unlike previous research that primarily focused on traditional approaches, this study emphasizes the potential of applications and educational videos to address challenges in delivering sex education for CWSN (Arnardóttir, 2011; Breuner et al., 2016). Combining traditional and digital approaches allows for more diverse and engaging content delivery.

Theoretically, this study enriches the literature on sex education for CWSN by providing new perspectives on the integration of technology and the importance of collaboration between parents and schools. Practically, it offers several recommendations, including training programs for parents to improve their communication skills in delivering sex education, the development of game-based educational applications to explain concepts such as gender identity, physical boundaries, and reproduction, as well as the provision of inclusive sex education modules by schools. Moreover, public awareness campaigns to reduce social stigma surrounding sex education are necessary to foster greater acceptance of its importance. This study contributes not only to academic discourse but also to the development of policies and educational practices that are more inclusive and responsive to the needs of children with special needs.

The findings of this study emphasize the importance of equipping parents of children with special needs (CWSN) with adequate knowledge and resources to provide effective sex education (**Implications**). Educational institutions should collaborate with families to design inclusive and culturally sensitive sex education programs that address the unique needs of

CWSN, while policymakers are encouraged to integrate these programs into the curriculum of Special Schools (SLB) to ensure consistent and holistic education. **This research contributes** significantly by highlighting the challenges faced by parents in implementing sex education for CWSN in Indonesia, offering a nuanced understanding of socioeconomic and cultural influences, introducing the potential of technology such as game-based learning, and providing a framework for inclusive practices in SLB. However, the study has **limitations**, including a small sample size, reliance on self-reported data, limited geographic coverage, and exclusion of perspectives from teachers and children, which may affect generalizability. **Future research** could address these limitations by expanding the sample, including diverse stakeholders, assessing the impact of technology-based interventions, and exploring cultural and religious influences, while conducting longitudinal studies to evaluate the long-term effects of sex education programs on the well-being and independence of CWSN.

## CONCLUSION

The conclusion of this study highlights the pivotal role of parents in providing sex education to children with special needs. This education typically begins when the child is older, focusing on preventing sexual abuse and establishing physical boundaries, although topics such as gender identity remain underrepresented. Parents utilize strategies such as family discussions and visual aids but continue to face challenges such as cultural stigma, limited resources, and inadequate support from schools. To address these gaps, it is essential to begin sex education earlier, enhance parents' communication skills through training, integrate inclusive educational resources in schools, and foster collaboration among parents, educators, and policymakers to ensure holistic and effective sex education for children with special needs.

## AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS STATEMENT

R contributed to the conception and design of the study, conducted data collection, and performed the analysis. ABM provided theoretical insights, critical revisions, and contributed to drafting and editing the manuscript. Both authors reviewed and approved the final manuscript for submission.

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