

# An Overview of Father Involvement in Parenting Children with Dyslexia

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## Abstract

Father involvement in child care is very important for child development. Based on several studies, father involvement can affect child development. The purpose of this study is to provide an overview of how the involvement of working fathers in providing care for children who have dyslexia. The method used is qualitative with a phenomenological approach. The research participants were three fathers. Data obtained through interviews with open-ended questions via zoom. The result showed that the three participants still took their time to be involved in parenting, then on the other hand, it was also found that the difficulties experiences by fathers in caring for dyslexic children were due to limited interaction communication skills and behavioral issues of dyslexic children

**Keywords:** Father involvement, parenting, dyslexic child

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## INTRODUCTION

Dyslexia is a specific learning difficulty with a series of behaviors or descriptive symptoms that can be observed (inaccurate/slow reading of words, difficulty understanding the meaning of what is read, difficulty with spelling, difficulty with written expression, difficulty mastering the meaning of numbers and mathematical reasoning difficulties) (Association, 2022) Children with dyslexia not only have difficulty learning but they also suffer because they often get misunderstandings from their parents, teachers and peers (Huang et al., 2020)

Raising and educating children with dyslexia is a challenging task for parents (Multhauf et al., 2016). Parents need to be aware of their children's condition as early as possible so they can make the right intervention (Abd Rauf et al., 2018). The sooner dyslexic children are identified and diagnosed, the higher the possibility of establishing appropriate treatment methods including special learning and education (Hamid et al., 2015). Besides that, parenting a child with dyslexia can be traumatic (Samudra, 2021). Parents experience stress in dealing with their child's poor academic progress (Karande &

Kuril, 2011). Parents tend to experience anxiety and low self-esteem regarding their children's future life and academic achievement (Earey, 2013). Research has shown that mothers of dyslexic children are found to have more stress than fathers, because they assume disproportionate responsibilities in raising children (Shyam & Govil, 2014). Other findings also show that mothers of dyslexic children need support and assistance to overcome their challenges and improve their coping strategies to protect and care for dyslexic children (Samudra, 2021). To make it easier to deal with the parenting challenges felt by the mother, it requires the involvement of the father and the mother to apply a uniform parenting approach (Nomaguchi et al., 2017).

Father involvement is a multidimensional form in which there are affection, cognition and ethical components, as well as observable components, which are directly a form of involvement (such as provision of needs, motivation for mother-like affection) and so on. (Hawkins et al., 2002). Father involvement is often described by the amount of time fathers spend with their children or direct interactions between fathers and children. However, time is not the only important dimension in father involvement (Palkovitz, 1997). The dimensions of father involvement according to Hawkins et al., (2002) consists of nine dimensions, including discipline and teaching responsibility, school encouragement, mother support, providing, time and taking together, praise and affection, developing talents and future concerns, reading and homework support and attentiveness.

There are many benefits of father involvement in a child's life, such as positively influencing the child's life prospects, academic achievement, physical health and emotional development (Karisa, 2020). In terms of academic ability, it is proven by research that reports that fathers' involvement in children's education positively improves children's reading and math skills at an early age (Rollè et al., 2019). Then the interactions between children and fathers can also provide opportunities for children to learn social skills, as well as additional sources of emotional support (Leidy et al., 2013). Father involvement also influences children's self-esteem (Amato, 1986). This is in line with the needs of dyslexic children with their characteristics of having low self-esteem due to lack of achievement, especially in the academic field (Hamid et al., 2015).

Due to the limited research on the role of working fathers in parenting dyslexic children, researchers are interested in getting an overview of how working fathers are involved in parenting dyslexic children. The results of this study describing the involvement of working fathers in parenting can also be used as a reference or further intervention related to dyslexic children and for parents with dyslexic children

## **METHOD**

There were three participants in this study and were selected using a purposive sampling technique, namely a sampling technique with certain considerations (Sugiyono, 2016). The criteria for participants in this study were (1) working fathers; (2) have children with dyslexia; (3) the father lives with his son; (4) the child has received a diagnosis of dyslexia from a pediatrician/clinical child psychologist.

The average participant is a father with an age of 33 years. Each participant works as a private employee, BUMN employee and a specialist doctor. All participants received a diagnosis of dyslexia in their child from a pediatrician.

Data collection was carried out in this study through semi-structured interviews via zoom meetings. Researchers first make a framework of discussion or questions that will be asked to participants. The researcher personally contacted the participant to ask for

their willingness to conduct an interview through a zoom meeting and the interview was carried out with the participant's consent by filling out informed consent in the form of a Google form provided by the researcher. Research data were analyzed using IPA (Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis) data analysis techniques. This technique explores and develops in more detail based on the experiences of research participants (Alase, 2017).

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Based on the results of the interviews, the participants openly shared their experiences with how they got involved and their role in raising dyslexic children. Some participants also expressed the importance of being involved in parenting as stated by one of the participants "taking care of children together is important, the role of the father must be there if children who are not close to their parents will be ignorant".

Some participants stated that the involvement or role of the father was very important, so that even though they were busy working the participants still took their time to be able to interact and care for their children. One participant said "On weekdays the interaction is late at night from 8 o'clock until he sleeps, because he prefers to play alone" Another participant also expressed the same thing "When the child wants to sleep I ask what the activities were at school that day".

All participants also revealed that they spent more time playing and learning with their children during holidays. As stated by one of the participants "more often on holidays I take them to play for a long time, sometimes I take them to the night market near my house, there are rides like a Ferris wheel and a trampoline, he really enjoys playing the Ferris wheel when he goes to the night market. Sometimes playing football or playing bicycles in front of the house.

The form of father involvement carried out by the participants apart from interacting and playing with their children is that the participants like to provide support to their children, a form of support for children by giving praise or buying tools that support their hobbies. One participant said, "Because he likes to color, I like to give him pictures of cartoon characters that he just needs to download on the internet to color. I give praise when he takes a quick shower, continues to do his house-sweeping work." Then there were also participants who gave rewards in the form of objects as a form of support or praise for children "if my child draws, the pictures don't look good but I still praise them good, then I also like to give my children toys as a reward"

Based on the results of the interviews and explanations above, it can be said that working fathers spend time interacting with their children after coming home from work, such as asking about activities to do and doing more activities with children on weekends.

In addition to how the interactions were carried out by the participants, they also told how to share parenting with their wives. As one participant said "for learning activities such as reading with his mother, if the activity moves a lot it's like playing with me" then there were also participants who said that leaving everything to his wife, the participant said "if I tend to leave it all to my mother , schools and places of therapy".

Because all participants were involved in parenting, they also experienced difficulties in parenting dyslexic children. The first difficulty felt by the participants was when explaining school academic assignments with their children. The participant explained "if you are taught mathematics it is difficult to understand, it takes a long time"

There were also difficulties in communicating and the behavior shown by their children, as explained by the participants "difficulty when talking with children" and there were also participants who said the difficulties were due to the child's behavior "it is difficult to direct what he just does, then sometimes he gets annoyed"

On the other hand, the participants also revealed their motivation for being involved in parenting dyslexic children, namely because they learned from their past experiences when they were young. One of the participants said, "Because I used to be closed to my students, I wasn't close to my parents, so now I don't want to be like that with my child."

The involvement of working fathers in the care of dyslexic children was explained starting from some of the participants' opinions which stated that it was important to be directly involved in the care of children which could affect the child's attitudes in the future. This statement is in accordance with previous findings which stated that children who have high-quality relationships with their fathers were found to show lower rates of behavioral problems (Bronte-Tinkew et al., 2006).

So that the distribution of parenting roles was carried out by the participant and his wife. For learning activities such as reading and helping with schoolwork, the role is carried out by the mother, while physical activities such as playing, sports and doing hobbies are carried out by the father. This finding is in accordance with the findings of Valotton that fathers are more likely to be involved and direct in physical games than mothers who are more involved in symbolic games (roleplay games).

In this study, the researchers found that the involvement of the fathers by the three participants was seen in several dimensions of father involvement according to Hawkins et al., (2002), namely the dimensions of praise and affection, time and taking together and dimensions of talent and future concerns.

The first dimension is praise and affection, this dimension illustrates that a father's praise with full of affection is something that a child really wants for his father. things like toys. Giving praise can also foster children's learning enthusiasm, giving praise both verbally and non-verbally can increase children's pleasure in receiving lessons and dealing with learning difficulties (Hawkins et al., 2002). This is in line with other research which shows that giving praise from parents to dyslexic children is able to motivate dyslexic children to be excited about going to school (Muin et al., 2020).

The second dimension is time and taking together, this dimension illustrates the need for interaction between the father and the child (Hawkins et al., 2002). In the three participants, they spent an average of time with their children at night after coming home from work and on weekends. All participants also spent more time with their children on weekends on average. This finding is in accordance with the findings of Hook & Wolfe that for most fathers, weekends are time to spend with children and family, fathers spend more time with children and do a greater part of parenting on weekends than on weekdays.

The third dimension is the talents and future concerns dimension which describes the father's motivation and father's permission as the things that enable the child to develop his talents (Hawkins et al., 2002). The participants supported the child's talents and hobbies such as buying equipment to support the child's hobbies. This finding is in accordance with the findings of Lee that fathers are a significant source of motivational support for the development of children's talents.

In addition to the dimensions of father involvement in the involvement of working fathers in parenting, there were findings of difficulties experienced by the participants. One of the difficulties experienced by the participants was when helping dyslexic children do schoolwork at home, especially math assignments. This finding is supported by previous

research which showed that dyslexic children experience math difficulties such as order and confusion of directions and the inability to perform calculations (Chinn & E.Ashcroft, 2016)

Then the next difficulty in aspects of children's behavior that was felt by the participants was that children with dyslexia were difficult to tell, so they often did not want to follow the rules given. This is reinforced by research (Huang et al., 2020) compared to normal children, some dyslexic children tend to be eccentric, withdrawn and troublesome. Such children have a severe lack of a sense of right and wrong when doing things regardless of rules.

The last difficulty that is felt is when interacting with dyslexic children. Dyslexic children have difficulty speaking and speaking (Peterson & Pennington, 2015) so that it is difficult for fathers to understand the words spoken by children with dyslexia. people with dyslexia have problems communicating in language, even though they have received the best language guidance at school, they think that it is difficult to communicate clearly or to fully understand what other people say when they speak (Anuradha, 2022).

In this study it was also found that the main motivation for participants to participate directly in parenting was the impact of their childhood not being close to their parents. This is also the same as in the study of Cabrera et al. the characteristics of fathers in parenting reflect their biological, cultural and upbringing history.

Thus this research has succeeded in telling how father involvement works in parenting dyslexic children. Activities that fathers do with children are referred to as three dimensions of father involvement according to Hawkins et al. (2002) namely time and taking together, praise and affection and talents and future concerns. Even though there are difficulties in parenting dyslexic children, in general fathers feel it is important to be involved in parenting dyslexic children.

## **CONCLUSION**

The participants were generally involved in parenting dyslexic children even though they were busy working. Given the effect of father involvement in parenting which can affect the future of children, some participants feel it is important to be directly involved and share a nurturing role with their wives. Then the description of the participants' involvement in raising dyslexic children can be seen from a number of activities carried out such as interacting before the child goes to bed at night, drawing and playing together on weekends. As a result of the participants being directly involved, they also experienced difficulties related to parenting dyslexic children. For future researchers, it is suggested to deepen the perceived difficulties and relate them to other psychological aspects such as subjective well-being, father's acceptance of the diagnosis of dyslexic children and other psychological aspects

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