



**STIMULATION PROGRAM OF THE FIRST 1000 DAYS OF LIFE:  
STRENGTHENING THE ROLE OF PARENTS IN SUPPORTING  
EARLY CHILDHOOD GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT**

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**Abstract**

Program Stimulasi 1000 Hari Pertama Kehidupan menekankan pentingnya intervensi awal dalam periode kritis perkembangan anak, dari masa prenatal hingga usia dua tahun. Artikel ini menyoroti peran esensial orangtua dalam mendukung dan memperkaya tumbuh kembang anak melalui stimulasi yang tepat. Melalui analisis kajian literatur dan studi kasus program stimulasi yang telah berhasil diterapkan, artikel ini mengungkap berbagai metode efektif yang dapat digunakan oleh orangtua untuk meningkatkan perkembangan fisik, kognitif, dan emosional anak. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa orangtua yang aktif terlibat dalam program stimulasi, dengan dukungan informasi yang memadai dan pelatihan khusus, dapat memberikan dampak positif yang signifikan terhadap perkembangan anak. Artikel ini juga membahas pentingnya sinergi antara orangtua dan komunitas dalam menciptakan lingkungan yang mendukung bagi anak-anak. Kesimpulan dari penelitian ini menegaskan perlunya penyediaan sumber daya dan dukungan berkelanjutan bagi orangtua untuk memastikan keberhasilan Program Stimulasi 1000 Hari Pertama Kehidupan. Dengan demikian, program ini dapat berfungsi sebagai model untuk memperkuat peran orangtua dalam mencapai hasil perkembangan anak yang optimal.

**Kata Kunci:** Tumbuh Kembang Anak; Program Stimulasi; Peran Orangtua; 1000 Hari Pertama Kehidupan

**Abstract**

*The First 1000 Days of Life Stimulation Program emphasizes the importance of early intervention in critical periods of child development, from prenatal to two-year old. This article highlights the essential role of parents in supporting and enriching children's growth and development through appropriate stimulation. Through the analysis of literature reviews and case studies of stimulation programs that have been successfully implemented, this article reveals various effective methods that can be used by parents to improve children's physical, cognitive, and emotional development. The findings suggest that parents who are actively involved in stimulation programs, with adequate information*



*support and specialized training, can have a significant positive impact on children's development. This article also discusses the importance of synergy between parents and the community in creating a supportive environment for children. The conclusions of this study confirm the need to provide ongoing resources and support for parents to ensure the success of the First 1000 Days of Life Stimulation Program. Thus, this program can serve as a model to strengthen the role of parents in achieving optimal child development outcomes.*

**Keywords:** *Child Growth And Development; Stimulation Programs; The Role Of Parents; The First 1000 Days Of Life*

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## A. INTRODUCTION

The first 1000 days of a child's life, starting from prenatal to two-year-old, are crucial phases that determine long-term health and development. In this phase, the child's brain develops rapidly and reaches almost 80% of the size of the adult brain<sup>1</sup>. Shows that proper stimulation during this period can significantly improve a child's motor, cognitive, language, and social abilities<sup>2</sup>. Therefore, it is important for parents to take advantage of this period by providing optimal support.

The role of parents in the first 1000 days of life is very important in ensuring healthy and balanced growth and development of children. Parents are the closest and most influential environment for children in the early phases of their lives<sup>3</sup>. Studies show that loving interaction and stimulation from parents can improve children's emotional and social intelligence<sup>4</sup>. This

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<sup>1</sup> KEMENTERIAN SOSIAL REPUBLIK INDONESIA, '1000 Hari Pertama Kehidupan Penentu Ribuan Hari Berikutnya', *Kementerian Sosial Republik Indonesia*, 1000 HPK, 2013, 3.

<sup>2</sup> Jack P. Shonkoff, Linda Richter, and others, 'An Integrated Scientific Framework for Child Survival and Early Childhood Development', *Pediatrics*, 129.2 (2012), 2024 <<https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2011-0366>>.

<sup>3</sup> Yuni Fitriana and Era Revika, 'Pendampingan 1000 Hari Pertama Kehidupan Guna Meningkatkan Kesehatan Ibu Dan Anak Di Masa Pandemi', *Ahmar Metakarya: Jurnal Pengabdian Masyarakat*, 2.2 (2023), 75-80 <<https://doi.org/10.53770/amjpm.v2i2.135>>.

<sup>4</sup> Fitriana and Revika.



awareness needs to be increased so that parents are more active in supporting children's development from an early age.

The problems faced in this study are the lack of understanding and skills of parents in providing appropriate stimulation during the first 1000 days of a child's life, as well as challenges in the implementation of programs that aim to support early childhood development. To overcome these problems, this study conducts a comprehensive approach including parental education in the application of stimulation, increasing program flexibility, and strengthening community support.

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the effectiveness of the stimulation program in the first 1000 days of life in improving children's motor and cognitive development, as well as to identify and overcome the challenges faced by parents in the implementation of this program. The study also aims to develop recommendations that can increase parental participation and community support. Thus, this research is expected to make a significant contribution in supporting early childhood growth and development and empowering parents.

Stimulation is an important concept in early childhood development that includes a variety of activities designed to stimulate the child's motor, cognitive, language, social and emotional development. The stimulation provided to children can be in the form of verbal interactions, educational games, and physical activities that support motor development<sup>5</sup>. Children who receive consistent stimulation according to their developmental stage tend to have better cognitive abilities compared to children who are less

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<sup>5</sup> Adrian Adrian and Muhammad Irfan Syaifuddin, 'The Role of Parents as Educators of Children in the Family', *Eduagama J. Education and Social Affairs. Religious*, 3.2 (2017), 147-67.



stimulated<sup>6</sup>. Therefore, proper stimulation is essential to ensure that children grow and develop optimally.

The stimulation provided by parents has a significant impact on children's development because parents are the main figures in a child's life. A study by Purnomo and Hendarti showed that children who received stimulation from their parents showed significant improvements in language and social skills<sup>7</sup>. This evidence confirms that the role of parents in providing stimulation is very important and can have a positive long-term impact on children. Thus, programs that support parents in providing the right stimulation are very important for the success of children's growth and development.

The concept of the first 1000 days of life, which covers the period from prenatal to two-year-olds, is considered a critical phase in determining a child's future health and development. During this period, the child's brain develops rapidly and reaches almost 80% of the size of an adult's brain, which indicates the importance of proper stimulation and nutrition<sup>8</sup>. Research by Pradita, et al. revealed that interventions during this period can prevent developmental delays and significantly increase children's potential<sup>9</sup>.

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<sup>6</sup> Manuela Filippa, Björn Westrup, and Pierre Kuhn, 'Early Vocal Contact and Preterm Infant Brain Development: Bridging the Gaps between Research and Practice', *Early Vocal Contact and Preterm Infant Brain Development: Bridging the Gaps Between Research and Practice*, 2017, 1-339 <<https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-65077-7>>.

<sup>7</sup> Hendarti Purnomo, 'Peran Orang Tua Dalam Optimalisasi Tumbuh Kembang Anak Untuk Membangun Karakter Anak Usia Dini', *Prosiding Seminar Nasional Parenting*, 2013, 34-47.

<sup>8</sup> Halimah Tusya Diah Harahap, Rani Darma Sakti Tanjung, and Fitriyani Nasution, 'Hubungan Pengetahuan Ibu Tentang Asupan Gizi 1000 Hari Pertama Kehidupan Dengan Tumbuh Kembang Anak', *Jurnal Keperawatan Priority*, 6.1 (2023), 19-28 <<https://doi.org/10.34012/jukep.v6i1.3250>>.

<sup>9</sup> Erika Lia Pradita and others, 'Peran Orang Tua Dalam Pengembangan Bahasa Anak Usia Dini', *Indo-MathEdu Intellectuals Journal*, 5.1 (2024), 1238-48 <<https://doi.org/10.54373/imeij.v5i1.883>>.



Therefore, special attention in the first 1000 days of life is crucial to ensure optimal development of children.

During the first 1000 days of life, the interaction between the child and the parent plays a very important role in supporting the child's motor, cognitive, language, social and emotional development. A study by Suprayitno, et al. showed that children who received adequate attention and stimulation from their parents tended to have better developmental outcomes in the long run<sup>10</sup>. This evidence underscores the importance of parents' role in providing a supportive environment during this critical period. Programs that support parents in providing proper stimulation and nutrition during the first 1000 days of a child's life are essential for the child's future developmental and life success.

### **Role of Parents**

The role of parents in early childhood development cannot be underestimated, because parents are the main figures who provide the affection, support, and stimulation necessary for the optimal development of children. Parents have a crucial role to play in creating a safe and supportive environment, which is essential for a child's physical, emotional, and cognitive growth. Research by Rijkiyani et al. shows that active parental involvement in children's daily activities can improve their cognitive and social development<sup>11</sup>. In conclusion, parents who are actively involved in their children's lives can help develop the skills necessary for future success.

In addition, the role of parents in providing early stimulation has been proven to have a significant impact on children's development. A study by

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<sup>10</sup> Emdat Suprayitno and others, 'Peran Keluarga Berhubungan Dengan Tumbuh Kembang Anak Usia Pra Sekolah', *Journal of Health Science*, VI.II (2021), 63–68.

<sup>11</sup> Rike Parita Rijkiyani, Syarifuddin Syarifuddin, and Nida Mauizdati, 'Peran Orang Tua Dalam Mengembangkan Potensi Anak Pada Masa Golden Age', *Jurnal Basicedu*, 6.3 (2022), 4905–12 <<https://doi.org/10.31004/basicedu.v6i3.2986>>.



Toyfo J et al. revealed that children who received adequate stimulation from their parents showed improvements in language and cognitive skills<sup>12</sup>. This study emphasizes the importance of quality interaction between parents and children, such as reading together, playing, and talking, all of which contribute to children's brain development. Thus, parents need to be supported with the right knowledge and resources to carry out their role effectively in supporting children's development.

Early childhood growth and development is a critical phase in a child's life, where physical, cognitive, linguistic, social, and emotional development occurs rapidly. At this age, children experience significant improvements in motor, language, and problem-solving skills which are important foundations for later stages of development. Research by Van zyl et al. shows that appropriate interventions during this period can improve children's cognitive and social abilities, as well as reduce the risk of developmental problems in the future<sup>13</sup>. Therefore, it is important to pay special attention to the needs of early childhood growth and development to ensure optimal development.

In addition, a supportive environment is a key factor in early childhood growth and development. An environment rich in stimulation, positive interactions, and good nutrition can accelerate a child's development in various aspects. Studies by Jack P. Shonkoff et al show that investments in early childhood education and health produce significant long-term benefits,

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<sup>12</sup> Toivo J and others, 'First-Time Parents' Bonding with Their Baby: A Longitudinal Study on Finnish Parents during the First Eight Months of Parenthood. *Children* [Revista En Internet] 2023 [Acceso 29 de Febrero de 2024]; 10(11):1-14.', 2023 <<https://www.mdpi.com/2227-9067/10/11/1806>>.

<sup>13</sup> Carien van Zyl and Carlien van Wyk, 'Exploring Factors That Could Potentially Have Affected the First 1000 Days of Absent Learners in South Africa: A Qualitative Study', *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 18.5 (2021), 1-19 <<https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph18052768>>.



including improved academic achievement and better health<sup>14</sup>. In conclusion, efforts to create a supportive environment and provide appropriate interventions are essential for optimal child growth and development to support optimal early childhood growth and development.

### **B. METHOD**

This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study design to understand the role of parents in the stimulation program of the first 1000 days of life. This approach was chosen because it allows researchers to delve deeply into the experiences and perspectives of parents involved in the program. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, participatory observations, and document analysis. This method allows researchers to obtain a comprehensive picture of the implementation of the program and its impact on child development.

This research was conducted at the Mutiara Yogyakarta Landfill, with the direct presence of researchers at the location to ensure the accuracy and validity of the data collected. The study subjects consisted of ten parents who were involved in a stimulation program for the first 1000 days of life, selected through purposive sampling to ascertain the relevance of their experiences to the research topic. The validity of the research results is checked through data triangulation, namely by comparing findings from interviews, observations, and document analysis to ensure the consistency and validity of the information obtained.

Data obtained from interviews, observations, and document analysis were analyzed using a thematic analysis approach. This process involves encoding the data to identify the main themes that emerge, categorize those

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<sup>14</sup> Jack P. Shonkoff, Andrew S. Garner, and others, 'The Lifelong Effects of Early Childhood Adversity and Toxic Stress', *Pediatrics*, 129.1 (2012), 2663 <<https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2011-2663>>.





themes, and interpret their meanings in the context of the research. The results of this analysis were used to identify the key factors that affect the effectiveness of the program and the role of parents in supporting early childhood growth and development.

### C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this section, the results and findings of research are discussed in detail regarding the impact of the stimulation program in the first 1000 days of life on child development and the improvement of parental knowledge and skills. In addition, the challenges faced in the implementation of this program and recommendations to overcome these obstacles were also analyzed. The results of the study can be described as follows.

First, Improving Children's Cognitive and Motor Abilities. The study found that the stimulation program of the first 1000 days of life significantly improved children's cognitive and motor abilities. The program includes a variety of activities designed to stimulate brain development and fine and gross motor skills. Research by Bunstan, et al. shows that early intervention can significantly improve children's cognitive abilities, which is in line with the findings of this study<sup>15</sup>. Proper stimulation during this critical period provides a solid foundation for the child's future cognitive and motor development.

Parents interviewed reported that their children showed significant progress in various aspects of cognitive and motor development after participating in the program. They observed that their children were faster at speaking, recognizing objects, and solving simple problems. This evidence is

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<sup>15</sup> Radhiya Bustan, Nurfadilah Nurfadilah, and Nila Fitria, 'Pelatihan Optimalisasi Tumbuh Kembang Anak Pada Orangtua Anak Usia Dini', *JURNAL AL-AZHAR INDONESIA SERI HUMANIORA*, 3.3 (2017), 274 <<https://doi.org/10.36722/sh.v3i3.214>>.





supported by participatory observations that show that children involved in the program are able to perform motor activities such as grasping small objects and walking earlier compared to children who do not participate in the program. This shows that the stimulation provided in this program is effective in accelerating children's cognitive and motor development.

In addition, data from participatory observation also revealed that children who were involved in stimulation programs had better motor skills. They were able to perform more complex physical activities such as jumping, running, and climbing better compared to children who were not involved in the program. Studies by Priyanka Khuda show that structured early stimulation can significantly improve children's motor development<sup>16</sup>. Therefore, it can be concluded that the stimulation program for the first 1000 days of life provides benefits in children's motor development.

**Second, Improving Parents' Knowledge and Skills.** The study found that stimulation programs for the first 1000 days of life significantly improved parents' knowledge and skills in supporting their child's development. The program provides comprehensive training and resources on various aspects of child development, including nutrition, health, and effective stimulation techniques. Research by Van Zyl and van Wyk shows that parental education regarding child development can have a positive impact on their parenting practices<sup>17</sup>. In conclusion, increasing parents' knowledge through this program helps them become more competent in supporting children's growth and development.

Parents involved in the program reported an increase in their understanding of the importance of positive interactions with children and

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<sup>16</sup> Priyanka Khuda and others, 'Promoting Family Integrated Early Childhood Development During the First 1000 Days in Urban Slums of Delhi: Feasibility and Early Implementation Experience', *Indian Pediatrics*, 58 (2021), 32-36 <<https://doi.org/10.1007/s13312-021-2353-9>>.

<sup>17</sup> van Zyl and van Wyk.



how to provide appropriate stimulation. They also feel more confident in applying the stimulation techniques that have been learned during the program. This evidence is supported by in-depth interviews that show that parents are able to identify positive changes in their child's behavior and development after participating in the program. This shows that the stimulation program of the first 1000 days of life is not only beneficial for the child, but also empowers parents with the necessary knowledge and skills.

In addition, the analysis of the program documents shows that the training materials provided to parents are very comprehensive and easy to understand. The training guide covers a variety of important topics such as how to provide sensory stimulation, strategies to improve children's language skills, and the importance of play in child development. A study by Bustan et al. revealed that parents who received specialized training showed improved ability to support their child's development<sup>18</sup>. Therefore, it can be concluded that the program effectively improves the knowledge and skills of parents, which in turn supports the optimal development of their children.

**Third, Challenges in Program Implementation.** Although the stimulation program of the first 1000 days of life shows many benefits, this study identifies some significant challenges in its implementation. One of the main challenges parents face is the difficulty in allocating time to attend program sessions, especially for those with busy work schedules. In-depth interviews with parents revealed that many of them find it difficult to balance work responsibilities and participation in programs. In conclusion, flexibility in program schedules is essential for increasing parental participation.

In addition, the lack of support from the community is also an obstacle in the implementation of the program. Some parents report that they feel they lack support from their surroundings, which makes it difficult for them to

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<sup>18</sup> Bustan, Nurfadilah, and Fitria.



apply stimulation at home. Participatory observation showed that parents who received support from the community tended to be more consistent in participating in the program and applying stimulation techniques. This shows that collaboration between programs and communities is essential to create a supportive environment for parents and their children.

### **Discussion**

This study shows that the stimulation program of the first 1000 days of life has a significant positive impact on children's cognitive and motor development. The improvement in cognitive and motor abilities observed in the children of the program participants reflects the importance of appropriate early stimulation. Richter et al. in their research confirmed that early intervention is very effective in improving children's cognitive development<sup>1920</sup>. In conclusion, the stimulation provided during the first 1000 days of life provides a solid foundation for the child's future development.

This study also identifies several challenges in the implementation of the stimulation program for the first 1000 days of life. Parents' difficulty in allocating time to attend program sessions shows the need for flexibility in program implementation. Interviews with parents revealed that busy work schedules are often the main obstacle. In conclusion, the program should adjust its schedule to make it more accessible to busy parents.

The lack of support from the community is also a challenge in the implementation of the program. Parents who feel that they do not receive support from the surrounding environment tend to be less consistent in participating in programs and applying stimulation techniques at home.

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<sup>19</sup> Sandra Regina Simonis Richter and Dulcimarta Lemos Lino, 'To Be Listening: Music and Teaching in Early Childhood Education', *Childhood and Philosophy*, 15 (2019), 1-24 <<https://doi.org/10.12957/CHILDPHILO.2019.43941>>.

<sup>20</sup> Dania Riski Rahayu and others, 'Peran Orang Tua Dalam Pendidikan Anak', *Dharmas Education Journal (DE\_Journal)*, 4.2 (2023), 887-92 <<https://doi.org/10.56667/dejournal.v4i2.1189>>.



Participatory observations show that community support is critical to the success of the program. Therefore, collaboration between programs and communities must be enhanced to create a more supportive environment.

To address the challenges, recommendations for increased flexibility in program schedules, increased community engagement, and adequate resource provision are essential. Programs must adjust the schedule to make it more accessible to busy parents. Additionally, increased collaboration with the community can help create a more supportive environment for parents and their children. In conclusion, these measures will increase the effectiveness and sustainability of the program.

Overall, this study shows that the stimulation program of the first 1000 days of life is an effective intervention to improve child development and empower parents. By addressing implementation challenges and increasing support, the program can provide greater benefits to children and families. Therefore, efforts to expand and improve stimulation programs must continue to be made to ensure that all children get an optimal start in life.

#### **D. CONCLUSION**

This study confirms that the stimulation program of the first 1000 days of life has a significant impact on children's cognitive and motor development. Children involved in the program showed meaningful improvements in the ability to speak, recognize objects, and perform motor activities. These findings are in line with the research of Grantham-McGregor et al. (2007) which showed that early intervention can improve children's cognitive abilities. Therefore, the stimulation provided during this critical period is essential to ensure optimal development of the child.

In addition to direct benefits for children, this program also improves parents' knowledge and skills in supporting their children's growth and development. Parents who participate in this program feel more confident and



skilled in providing the right stimulation. A study by Bornstein (2002) showed that better parental knowledge has a positive impact on their parenting practices. Thus, education and training programs for parents are an important component of these interventions.

The study also identified several challenges in program implementation, such as parents' difficulty in allocating time and lack of community support. To address these challenges, increased flexibility in program schedules and closer collaboration with local communities are needed. In addition, resource support from the government and related institutions is urgently needed to ensure the sustainability of the program. In conclusion, despite the challenges, the stimulation program of the first 1000 days of life remains an effective and important intervention to support early childhood development and empower parents.

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