

Socialization for Parents to Implement Emotional Strategies in Facing Children's School Admission Selection

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Articles Information	Abstrak
Received : 08-01-2026	Tujuan pengabdian adalah untuk memberikan orang tua pemahaman tentang keterampilan dalam mendukung anak secara emosional serta membantu anak mengelola perasaan cemas dan meningkatkan kepercayaan diri. Seleksi masuk sekolah seringkali menimbulkan tekanan yang dapat mempengaruhi kesejahteraan emosional anak dan hubungan antara orang tua dan anak. Metode dalam kegiatan ini menggunakan pendekatan partisipatif dan dilakukan dalam tiga tahapan, yaitu tahap persiapan, tahap pelaksanaan dan evaluasi. Peserta sejumlah 25 orang tua di Sidoarjo dan memiliki anak yang akan mengikuti seleksi sekolah dari jenjang SMP dan SMA. Hasil kegiatan menunjukkan bahwa seluruh peserta (29%) mengalami peningkatan pemahaman mengenai pentingnya strategi emosional. Sebanyak 26% peserta menunjukkan perubahan sikap menjadi lebih tenang dan supportif, dan 24% mulai menerapkan strategi emosional di rumah. Selain itu 21% melaporkan dampak positif pada kesiapan emosional anak. Temuan dari kegiatan ini yaitu sosialisasi strategi emosional efektif meningkatkan kesadaran dan keterampilan orang tua dalam mendampingi anak secara psikologis sehingga membantu menciptakan kondisi emosional anak yang lebih stabil dan siap dalam menghadapi seleksi masuk sekolah
Revised : 13-01-2026	
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	Kata Kunci: Anak; Orang Tua; Strategi Emosional; Seleksi Masuk Sekolah
Abstract	
The purpose of the community service is to provide parents with skills to support their children emotionally and help them manage feelings of anxiety and increase their self-confidence. School entrance exams often create stress that can affect children's emotional well-being and the parent-child relationship. This activity uses a participatory approach and is conducted in three stages: preparation, implementation, and evaluation. Participants were 25 parents in Sidoarjo who have children who will take part in school entrance exams at the junior high and high school levels. The results showed that all participants (29%) experienced an increased understanding of the importance of emotional strategies. Twenty-six percent of participants showed a change in attitude to become calmer and more supportive, and 24% began implementing emotional strategies at home. Furthermore, 21% reported a positive impact on their children's emotional readiness. The findings from this activity indicate that the socialization of emotional strategies effectively increases parents' awareness and skills in supporting their children psychologically, thus helping to create a more stable emotional state and prepare them for school entrance exams.	
Keywords: Children; Parents; Emotional Strategy; School Entrance Selection.	



1. INTRODUCTION

School entrance exams are a crucial time for children and their families. While the process aims to select students who meet academic and non-academic criteria to continue their education, they often cause significant anxiety for both children and parents. According to data from the Directorate General of Higher Education of the Ministry of Education and Culture (2020), nearly 40% of parents reported feeling anxious about the selection results, while 35% of children experienced stress related to exams or tests. This suggests that school entrance exams are more than just academic tests; they also pose emotional challenges that impact the psychological well-being of both children and parents. High levels of anxiety during the exam can impact a child's social and emotional development, which in turn impacts their self-confidence and future academic achievement (Harnawati, 2023).

A major issue faced by assisted communities is parents' lack of understanding of the psychological impact of the selection process on their children. The stress experienced by children often goes unaddressed, while parents also feel pressured by high social and academic expectations (Octaviani et al., 2018). This adds to the psychological burden for both parents and children and worsens the quality of parent-child relationships. Furthermore, children are often not trained to manage their anxiety effectively, making them more vulnerable to stress and emotional tension (Purwanto et al., 2022).

The focus of this community service is to provide emotional strategies that can help parents and children manage the stress and anxiety that arise during the school entrance selection process. These strategies include training parents on how to support their children emotionally, increasing positive communication within the family, and teaching children relaxation techniques to reduce anxiety (Piaget & Barbellnholder, 1966). Furthermore, this community service also emphasizes the importance of creating a supportive environment at home so that children can prepare for the selection process with greater calm and confidence. As part of the community service, parents will be taught how to reduce the stress they feel and how to provide support without burdening their children with unrealistic expectations. Children will also be given skills to recognize their anxiety symptoms and manage these feelings in healthy ways.

The selection of the subjects of this community service, families with children who will be taking school entrance exams, was based on several considerations. First, parents are often the primary factor influencing children's anxiety levels, either through overly high expectations or their anxious behavior about the selection results. Furthermore, many parents are not fully aware of the psychological impact of the selection process on their children and therefore do not always provide the emotional support they need. Second, children who lack the skills to manage their anxiety tend to be more vulnerable to stress, which can interfere with their performance in exams or selection tests. According to a survey conducted by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) (2020), approximately 30% of children reported feeling stressed or anxious about exams or selection tests, demonstrating the importance of emotional interventions to support them.

By providing emotional strategies to parents and children, it is hoped that positive changes will be

created in how they manage the anxiety and stress associated with school selection. The primary goal of this service is to reduce the levels of anxiety and stress experienced by children and parents during the school selection process. Through this intervention, it is hoped that parents and children can develop better emotional skills to face social and academic pressures with more calm and confidence. Furthermore, this service also aims to raise parents' awareness of the importance of providing appropriate emotional support to their children in dealing with stress, as well as the importance of maintaining a balance between academic expectations and children's emotional needs.

The social change expected from this service is the creation of more harmonious families, with better communication between parents and children. Furthermore, children trained to manage stress will be better prepared to face future life challenges, not only academically but also in terms of social and emotional relationships (Salshabila & Fiteriani, 2025). Children with good emotional skills tend to have lower anxiety levels, more self-confidence, and are better able to adapt to various stressful situations (Hasiolan & Sutejo, 2015).

Research conducted by Puspita (2019) shows that good emotional management can support children in facing challenges and reduce psychological risks, such as anxiety and depression, which often arise from academic pressure. Romadhona et al. (2025) also emphasize the importance of social support in reducing the impact of stress on children, which includes parental involvement in managing children's anxiety. In addition, a study by Murray et al., (2009) revealed that children who are not given effective emotional strategies tend to experience increased anxiety which can interfere with their social and academic development.

2. METHOD

This community service activity involves parents and children as the primary subjects of the service. This involvement in the planning process is crucial to ensure that the interventions provided align with the needs and realities faced by the community. This planning stage involves discussions with parent groups and direct observation of children who will be taking part in school selection (middle and high school levels). Through this approach, the assisted community can feel a sense of ownership in the service process and actively participate in identifying relevant problems and solutions.

The target participants for this community service activity were parents of children who would be taking the school entrance exams for junior high school (10 people) and high school (15 people). Participants were selected based on a previously distributed questionnaire regarding parents facing high pressure during the selection process and often lacking emotional strategies to manage the anxiety that arises. Parents and children are the ones most affected by the selection process, and they need support to manage the stress and pressure that arises.

This community service activity took place in the Puri Surya Jaya area of Sidoarjo, specifically at the Talitakum Education Institute. The location of the community service was chosen based on its proximity

to the participating families and ease of access for necessary interaction and supervision. This was because the community service participants were residents of the area.

The involvement of the assisted community in planning is crucial to ensuring that the program is tailored to the actual needs of the students. During this stage, meetings are held with parents and children to discuss issues encountered during school selection. These discussions aim to identify sources of anxiety, stress, and challenges, and to develop effective emotional strategies. Parents are also given the opportunity to share their experiences and challenges related to the selection process, so they can feel more empowered in supporting their children.

The method used in this community service program is a participatory approach, actively involving parents and children at every stage. The process begins with problem identification through group discussions, interviews with parents, and observations of the children. This is followed by training on stress and anxiety management using relaxation and breathing techniques. Parents are also involved in developing more open and positive communication with their children.

Furthermore, to measure the effectiveness of the community service program, both qualitative and quantitative approaches were used. Quantitative data was obtained through questionnaires that measured children's anxiety and self-confidence levels before and after the community service program. Meanwhile, qualitative data was obtained through interviews with parents and observations of the children to assess changes in stress management and emotional relationships within the family.

The stages of the Community Service program include:

1. Preparation Phase:

The first stage involves identifying the community service participants, namely families with children who are currently participating. This process involves interviews with parents to delve deeper into the issues they face, particularly the stress and anxiety experienced by their children. Next, a meeting is held with the assisted community to discuss the community service plan and ensure a clear understanding and agreement regarding the goals and steps to be taken in the program.

2. Implementation Phase:

In the implementation phase, the activity began with a training session for parents, aimed at providing an understanding of how to support children in managing stress and anxiety, particularly when facing the ongoing selection process. In addition, children were taught relaxation and breathing techniques to help them calm down when feeling anxious. This activity was followed by a group discussion involving parents and children, discussing various emotional strategies that can be applied to face the challenges of selection and reduce anxiety levels.

3. Evaluation Phase:

After the implementation phase, an evaluation was conducted to gauge the effectiveness of the program. Children's anxiety levels were measured using questionnaires completed before and after the service to assess any changes. Interviews with parents were also conducted to assess changes in communication and emotional support within the family, as well as how they supported their children in managing their anxiety. In addition, direct observations of the children were conducted to assess how they managed their anxiety during selection situations.

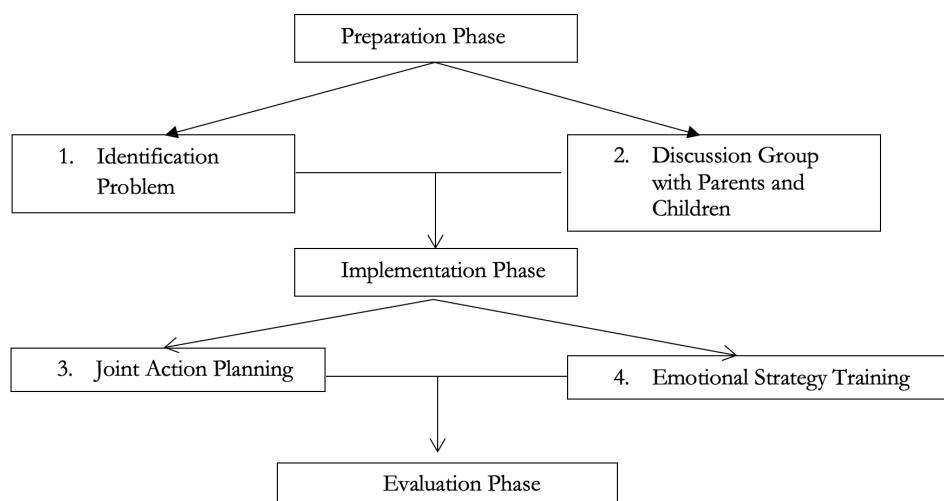


Figure 1. Flowchart of the community planning and organizing process

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The mentoring process in this community service involves various activities focused on managing the stress and anxiety that arise in children and parents during the school entrance selection process. This process begins with problem identification, which involves conducting initial interviews with parents to understand the concerns and pressures they experience during the selection process. Next, observations of the children's behavior are conducted to assess the emotional impact of the selection process on them.

After the problem was identified, outreach was conducted to educate parents about the importance of supporting their children emotionally. Evaluation results showed that all participants (100%) experienced an increased understanding of appropriate emotional strategies for navigating the school entrance selection process. Parents and children then participated in emotional skills training that included various techniques for managing stress and anxiety, including breathing techniques, progressive muscle relaxation, and open and positive communication. The program also included group discussions where parents could share their experiences and provide emotional support to one another. Through this process, 26% of parents demonstrated a change in attitude, becoming calmer and more supportive in supporting their children. These discussions also provided an opportunity to introduce new techniques to support children in dealing with stress, such as how to manage their expectations regarding selection results. Direct observations were conducted to assess changes in children's behavior, particularly in how they managed their anxiety and

interacted with their parents. Results indicated that 24% of parents began consistently applying the emotional strategies learned at home. Parents were provided with feedback on their children's progress and how they could be more supportive in a more emotionally healthy selection process.

In this community service activity, various technical measures were implemented to ensure that parents and children acquired practical skills that could be applied in their daily lives. One key measure was stress and anxiety management training, which involved deep breathing techniques and progressive muscle relaxation. The children were taught simple yet effective ways to relieve their physical and mental anxiety, such as regulating their breathing to lower their heart rate and calm their minds. Additionally, mindfulness training was provided to increase self-awareness, helping them focus on the present moment without being burdened by worries about the upcoming selection results.

Positive communication training is also an essential part of this activity. Parents are taught active listening skills and provide empathetic and positive feedback to their children. This aims to create a supportive and safe environment where children feel valued for their efforts, not just based on selection results. Parents are also trained to provide positive reinforcement through constructive praise that emphasizes the child's effort and the process, rather than just the final result.

Furthermore, time management and routines were also a key focus of this service. Parents and children were taught how to create realistic schedules, maintaining a balance between study time and rest. This balanced routine is crucial for reducing stress and ensuring that children do not feel overwhelmed during the selection preparation process. Furthermore, training on accepting selection results was provided, teaching both parents and children to accept selection results with a healthy attitude, without increasing disappointment or further stress. The positive impact of this entire series of activities was reflected in the 21% of participants who reported increased emotional preparedness and confidence in their children facing school entrance selection.

This service not only provides practical skills to the families involved but also brings about significant social change. Parents who previously lacked an understanding of the importance of their role in emotionally supporting their children are now more aware of these needs. They learn to manage their own anxiety to avoid adding stress to their children, and provide positive reinforcement that focuses on effort, not just the end result. Furthermore, there is a growing awareness of children's emotional well-being. Parents who previously focused on academic achievement now recognize the importance of their children's mental health as part of their education. Children who feel emotionally supported tend to have lower anxiety and greater confidence when facing exams or selections.

Another positive outcome was the emergence of local leaders. Some parents, who had gained a better understanding of emotional support, began sharing this knowledge with other families in their communities. They shared the strategies they learned in the support groups they formed, creating agents of change at the local level. The support communities formed during this service became social networks for sharing experiences and strategies. These communities can help other families facing similar challenges,

both in managing their children's anxiety and supporting their emotional development.

More broadly, this activity also fostered a new awareness of the importance of supporting children's mental health within the education system. This is part of a larger social transformation, where children's emotional well-being is considered as important as academic achievement. Society is beginning to view education from a more holistic perspective, incorporating emotional and social well-being as integral parts of learning.

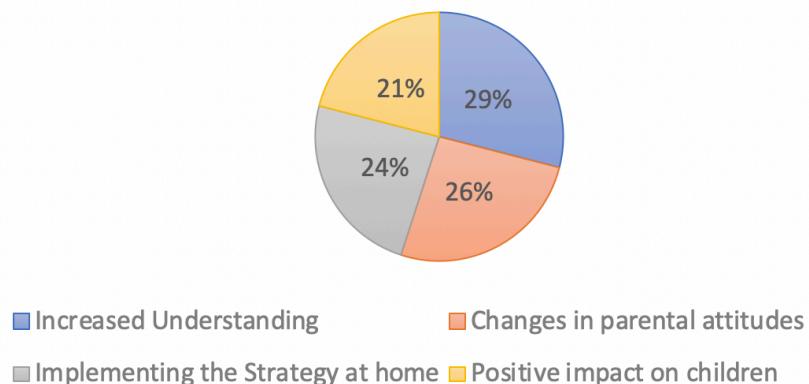


Figure 2. Results of emotional strategy socialization

Community service focused on managing anxiety and stress during school entrance exams has shown positive results for both children and parents. Through the training, parents have become more aware of the importance of emotional support for their children, especially during the selection process. Children, who were previously anxious and stressed, are now better able to manage their anxiety using breathing and relaxation techniques. Furthermore, more open and positive communication between parents and children has been established, leading to improved emotional relationships within the family.



Figure 3. Community Service Activities: Parental Involvement and Socialization.

The results of this community service align with findings from Hasiolan & Sutejo (2015), which show

that effective emotional support can help children become more resilient in facing challenges. Parental involvement in managing children's anxiety through good communication and emotional support has been shown to increase children's self-confidence and reduce stress. The deep breathing technique introduced is also consistent with research by Hetherington & Blechman (2014), which shows that relaxation techniques are effective in reducing anxiety levels in individuals experiencing high stress.

The Social Emotional Well-Being Theory states that children's emotional well-being can impact their social development, and if not managed properly, stress can serve as a major barrier to achieving their full potential (Rahama & Izzati, 2021). In this context, this community service program aims to improve children's emotional well-being by providing them with skills to manage stress and anxiety. This process reinforces the idea that emotional management is crucial for children's social and academic development. This approach also aligns with Vygotsky's (1978) theory of learning through deep social interaction. Children learn not only from the material they are taught, but also from how their parents interact with them, including in dealing with stressful situations.

Furthermore, the concept of self-regulation proposed by Boekaert et al. (2020) is relevant in this regard. Self-regulation refers to an individual's ability to regulate their emotions, behavior, and attention to achieve long-term goals (Bayantari et al., 2022). Anxiety management training provided to children allows them to improve their self-regulation skills in the face of exams and school selection, ultimately enhancing their readiness to face various academic and social challenges in the future.

This community service process began with problem identification, namely the anxiety experienced by children and parents during the selection process. Interviews with parents and observations of the children helped reveal the negative impact this anxiety had on academic performance and family relationships. Based on the problem identification, planning was conducted involving parents and children in developing stress management strategies relevant to their situation. Anxiety management techniques such as deep breathing and positive communication began to be implemented in the daily lives of parents and children.

This process continues with ongoing evaluations conducted by measuring children's anxiety levels before and after the training. Findings indicate a significant decrease in children's anxiety levels, reflecting the effectiveness of the intervention. During this process, parents not only learn how to emotionally support their children but also experience changes in the way they communicate with them. They begin to value their children's learning process more, not just the outcome of their selection.

This dynamic leads to desired social changes, such as the formation of a supportive community among parents. Parents involved in the program are now more aware of the importance of their role in supporting their children emotionally. They also begin to share their knowledge and experiences with other families, which in turn creates local leaders within the community. These parents are actively involved in building emotional support networks for other families facing similar challenges.

Further social change is evident in the new awareness of the importance of emotional well-being in a child's education. Previously, parents often focused primarily on their child's academic performance, neglecting the emotional impact. However, after training and mentoring, parents realized that supporting their child's emotional well-being is integral to their child's educational success.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of this community service, it can be concluded that proper emotional management plays a crucial role in supporting children's psychological well-being during the school entrance selection process. Parental guidance focused on emotional support, positive communication, and anxiety management has been shown to improve children's emotional readiness to face the pressures of selection. Changing parental interaction patterns, which no longer emphasize excessive demands but instead reinforce the child's efforts and processes, will contribute to the creation of a more supportive and emotionally secure relationship. These findings indicate that positive social interactions between parents and children play a significant role in reducing children's anxiety levels, increasing self-confidence, and helping children face the selection process with a more stable and adaptive emotional state.

Based on these results, it is recommended that emotional support efforts for children be continuously developed through further training for parents on emotional management skills and empathetic communication. Furthermore, school and community involvement is needed to support children's emotional well-being, both through the integration of stress management programs into educational settings. Broader education about the importance of children's mental health is also needed to foster collective awareness that educational success is determined not only by academic achievement but also by a child's emotional and psychological balance. Furthermore, changes in how parents interact with their children, emphasizing supportive communication and avoiding excessive expectations, indicate that positive social interactions can improve children's emotional well-being.

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