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IMPROVING DENTAL HYGIENE PRACTICES IN KINDERGARTEN CHILDREN: Teacher and Health Professional Involvement Initiative

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ABSTRACT

Children are an age group prone to caries and other dental diseases, requiring help and guidance in maintaining oral and dental hygiene. Caries prevention activities are carried out through simple practices, such as brushing teeth, to improve understanding and practice of maintaining dental hygiene. This activity focuses on children in KB/TK PAPB Pedurungan Semarang. Activities involve counseling, demonstrations, and toothbrushing practices, involving family planning / kindergarten children, teachers, dentists, and oral dental therapists. The results of mentoring showed that children successfully applied the principle of brushing their teeth correctly, reflecting their understanding and ability to transfer knowledge to concrete actions. This activity not only provides information, but also builds children's intrinsic motivation in caring for their dental hygiene, with the result that children successfully apply the principle of brushing teeth correctly.

Keywords: brushing teeth; preschool; dental hygiene

Introduction

Oral health problems have a significant impact on general health, especially when teeth are lost and not replaced, which can lead to eating disorders¹. Caries occurs when the metabolic activity of bacteria in plaque damages the hard tissues of the teeth, causing demineralization. Caries is the most common dental disease, a major concern². With this problem, there is a need for regular awareness and preventive measures in caring for oral health to prevent its negative impact on general health.

Data on the prevalence of dental caries in children aged 5-6 years provides an alarming picture. Although the 50% dental caries experience rate of the 50% who are free of dental caries seems to provide hope, the 2018 Basic Health Research (RISKESDAS) results show a different reality. The significant figure of 93% shows that most children aged 5-6 years in Indonesia have dental caries with an average dmft of 8.3³.

Children are an age group that is vulnerable to caries and other dental diseases, because they still need help and guidance from

parents or family in maintaining oral hygiene⁴. Lack of knowledge about oral hygiene is one of the factors causing children to ignore oral health problems.

Efforts to improve oral health in children can be done through regular and proper maintenance of oral health⁵. With good attention and assistance from parents and increasing children's knowledge about the importance of maintaining dental hygiene, it is expected to reduce the risk of caries and other dental health problems during their growth.

The results of the study state that the prevalence of caries in children aged 5 years has a significant relationship with the habit of brushing teeth less than twice a day during preschool, as well as difficulty in performing this action⁶. School is an ideal place to instill behavior to pre-school children through learning activities with teachers⁷. Therefore, health professionals need to provide special attention and assistance to parents to improve and optimize tooth brushing behavior in children during the preschool years.

Health counseling is a form of educational activity that aims to spread messages and instill confidence, so that people not only have awareness, knowledge, and understanding, but are also willing and able to implement health-related recommendations⁸. In this context, health extension and health education are identified as interrelated concepts, both focusing on individual and community behavior change. Through this approach, it is expected that the community has a deep understanding of the importance of health and is willing to adopt healthy behaviors in daily life.

Efforts to prevent dental caries can be done through the most important dental care behavior, namely by performing a simple action, namely brushing teeth⁹. brushing teeth is an effective step to remove plaque and food debris, which are the main causes of dental caries. This action is carried out using a toothbrush and toothpaste.

Plaque and food debris have an important role in the development of dental caries, the formation of oral health maintenance behavior from an early age is a must. Through regular and correct brushing habits from an early age, it is expected to provide maximum protection for

dental health and reduce the risk of caries problems during growth.

Brushing your teeth is a simple act that can remove plaque and food debris by using a toothbrush and toothpaste. Since plaque and food debris are the main causes of dental caries, it is important to form the habit of brushing teeth from an early age. Early childhood does not yet have independence in brushing teeth¹⁰.

Young children who are not independent in brushing their teeth tend to have poorer dental hygiene status compared to those who are independent¹¹. Therefore, special attention needs to be paid to the establishment of independent tooth brushing habits from an early age to ensure optimal dental health in infancy.

Methods

The activity is designed in a coherent manner, involving several complementary stages to achieve a thorough understanding. Counseling is the first step, providing children with a basic knowledge of dental hygiene. Demonstration is the core of the activity, where the use of phantom gear as a visual medium helps in conveying the material more clearly. Children are invited to understand the correct tooth brushing technique through concrete visual guidance.

In addition, dental health animation shows provide a creative touch to create a fun atmosphere. This aims to keep children excited and not feel bored during the activity. Animation is an effective tool to communicate information in an interesting and digestible way.

After completing the counseling and demonstration phase, tooth brushing practice is the next step. The children are directly accompanied during this practice, where the mentor closely monitors whether they apply the understanding that has been given well.

Each child has the opportunity to apply the correct tooth brushing technique, and receive direct feedback and guidance from the mentor. The mentoring process aims to ensure that every step the child takes is in accordance with the principles that have been taught previously.

After engaging the child in tooth brushing practices, the dental examination stage is carefully carried out. The condition of the teeth is evaluated to detect potential problems, such as

cavities, persistence, lesions, or other diseases. This examination is an important step to provide more information about the child's dental health.

The targets of this activity are children at KB/TK PABP Pedurungan Semarang City. The relationship in this community service involves 1) The head of KB / TK PABP who gave permission to carry out community service activities, 2) Teachers who help mobilize cadres and help carry out activities, 3) Dentists and young dentists and dental and oral therapists who help implement activities. Teachers who help mobilize cadres and help carry out activities, 3) Dentists and young dentists and dental and oral therapists who help carry out activities. The schedule for this activity will be carried out in October 2023.

Results and Discussion

This activity was designed as a concrete step in motivating children to maintain their dental hygiene. Counseling becomes the starting point, where a question-and-answer atmosphere creates space for children to share their experiences about their dental care at home.



Figure 1 Counseling

Through this activity, children are given an in-depth understanding of dental hygiene and why it is important. The next step is to practice the knowledge they have gained in brushing their teeth together. This activity is geared towards children not only being able to apply the correct technique, but also internalizing positive habits in taking care of their teeth.



Figure 2 Questions and answers

A practical demonstration of proper tooth brushing technique was conducted using an interactive method, which involved the use of a tooth model as a visual guide. This educational process not only focuses on brushing techniques, but also provides important information on the right time to brush teeth and the impact of a cariogenic diet on dental health.



Figure 3 Toothbrushing demonstration

The tooth brushing demonstration was the highlight after the children were introduced to the knowledge of maintaining dental hygiene. In an atmosphere of excitement, phantom teeth become a tool that helps children understand the correct movements when brushing their teeth. As a visual guide, phantom teeth provide a clear and concrete picture of the required technique.



Figure 4 Toothbrushing practice

After the demonstration, the next stage involves the active participation of the children. A representative is chosen to model the movements they have learned to peers. This process not only improves individual skills but also builds cooperation among children. Each brushing motion demonstrated by the representative becomes a small step towards a collective understanding of dental hygiene.

Through this activity, there is not only a transfer of skills, but also the formation of social bonds among the children. They not only learn from the instructor or mentor, but also support and inspire each other in a joint effort towards optimal dental hygiene.

Children are given examples to master the skill of brushing their teeth the right way. Afterward, they engage in a tooth-brushing practice session together, with careful assistance. This process aims to ensure that every step the child takes is in accordance with the technique taught earlier.



Figure 5 Watching animated

While the children waited for their turn, they were presented with a dental health animation video. The purpose of this activity is not only to provide entertainment, but also to create a fun atmosphere. With the element of entertainment, it is hoped that children will remain excited and not feel bored during activities. Animated videos are a creative means of conveying information about dental health in a way that is interesting and easily understood by children.



Figure 6 Dental condition check

During the practice of brushing teeth together, children feel the full support of their caregivers. The process is not only about mastering physical skills, but also building the child's confidence in taking care of his or her own teeth. The whole experience is designed to be interactive, educational, and of course, fun for every child involved.

Once the children are done brushing their teeth, they undergo a careful dental condition check. Each tooth is examined to ensure there are no signs of cavities, persistence, lesions, or other diseases. This examination is done with great care, creating awareness about the

importance of early detection of dental health issues.



Figure 7 Photo together

Children who had undergone the examination were given important messages related to dental health and hygiene. They were reminded to maintain regular dental hygiene, including good and correct tooth brushing practices. This message aims not only to take care of the teeth, but also to form positive habits in daily self-care. In addition, children are told that if they find cavities or experience pain, they should see a dentist immediately. This message emphasizes the importance of parent or guardian involvement in maintaining children's dental health, so that any problems can be addressed in a timely manner. By providing these messages, it is hoped that children can bring this understanding and concern for their dental health into their daily lives.

Through the assistance that has been done, it can be concluded that children have successfully applied the principles of brushing their teeth correctly. This success is reflected in their ability to give the right answers regarding the time and steps of brushing teeth properly and correctly. In addition, the children successfully applied these principles in the practice of brushing their teeth, according to the directions that had been given. This success shows good understanding and the ability of children to transfer knowledge into real action.

The whole set of activities is designed with the aim of not only providing information, but also building children's intrinsic motivation to actively engage in the maintenance of their dental hygiene.

Conclusion

This activity is an effort to increase understanding and practice of maintaining dental hygiene through brushing teeth together.

Through the assistance that has been done, it can be concluded that children have successfully applied the principles of brushing their teeth correctly. The author hopes that this activity can become a routine agenda, so that it is integrated in everyday life. The author is optimistic that instilling positive behavior in children will continue to develop and have a positive impact in the long run.

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