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## Healthy From An Early Age : Lecturers And Students Woking Together Through Campus And Family Synergy To Improve Child Nutrition At Al – Hikmah Sukaraya Islamic Early Childhood Education Center

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### Abstract

Community service is the implementation of the Tri Dharma Perguruan Tinggi (Three Pillars of Higher Education) which aims to make a real contribution to improving the quality of life of the community. This community service activity was carried out by lecturers and students as a form of synergy between the campus and families in an effort to improve the nutrition of early childhood. The location of the activity was at the Al-Hikmah Sukaraya Islamic Early Childhood Education Center with the main targets being the parents of students and early childhood educators. Nutrition problems in early childhood are still commonly found, including unbalanced diets, habits of consuming instant foods, and a lack of understanding among parents regarding their children's nutritional needs. Through this activity, lecturers and students conducted nutrition education, interactive discussions, and assistance in preparing healthy menus that are in accordance with the needs of early childhood and Islamic values. The results of the community service showed an increase in parents' and educators' understanding of the importance of balanced nutrition and an increase in families' awareness of forming healthy eating habits for children from an early age. This activity is expected to become a model for collaborative community service by lecturers and students that is sustainable and has a direct impact on improving the health of early childhood

**Keywords:** Faculty And Student Community Service, Healthy From An Early Age, Child Nutrition, Islamic Early Childhood Education

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## INTRODUCTION

Early childhood is a golden age of development, during which physical growth and cognitive development occur rapidly. During this period, balanced nutrition is a fundamental factor that determines the quality of a child's future growth and development. Malnutrition and unhealthy eating patterns can lead to low immunity, cognitive development barriers, and decreased readiness to participate in the learning process.

Nutrition issues in early childhood remain an important issue in society. Many parents do not fully understand the concept of balanced nutrition and the nutritional needs of children according to their stage of development. This condition is exacerbated by the increasing consumption of fast food and the lack of variety in healthy foods in the family environment.

Higher education institutions play a strategic role in addressing these issues through community service activities. The involvement of lecturers and students in community service not only benefits the community but also serves as a means of contextual learning for students. Therefore, this community service activity with the theme "Healthy from an Early Age" was carried out as a form of synergy between the campus, families, and early childhood education.

institutions in raising awareness of nutrition for early childhood.

Al-Hikmah Sukaraya Islamic PAUD was chosen as the location for community service because of its commitment to character building and children's health based on Islamic values, particularly the principles of halal and thayyib in food consumption.

Early childhood is a golden age of development, where physical growth and cognitive development occur at a rapid pace ( ). During this period, balanced nutrition is a fundamental factor that determines the quality of a child's future growth and development. Malnutrition and unhealthy eating patterns can lead to low immunity, cognitive development barriers, and decreased readiness to participate in the learning process.

Child nutrition issues in early childhood remain a significant concern in society. Riskesdas (2018) data shows that the prevalence of stunting in toddlers in Indonesia is still at 30.8%, while the rate of malnutrition is at 17.7%. Many parents do not fully understand the concept of balanced nutrition and their children's nutritional needs according to their stage of development. This condition is exacerbated by the increasing consumption of fast food and the lack of variety of healthy foods in the family environment.

Based on a preliminary survey conducted at the Al-Hikmah Sukaraya Islamic Early Childhood Education Center, it was found that 70% of parents still give their children instant foods more than 3 times a week, and 60% of parents admit that they have difficulty preparing healthy menus that their children like. In addition, only 40% of parents understand the concept of "Isi Piringku" (My Plate) as a guide to balanced nutrition.

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PAUD Islam Al-Hikmah Sukaraya was chosen as the location for the community service because it has a commitment to character development and children's health based on Islamic values, particularly the principles of halal and thayyib in food consumption. This institution has 45 students aged 3-6 years and involves 5 early childhood educators.

## RESEARCH METHODS

### *Time and Place of Activity*

Implementation Time:

- Preparation: November 1-15, 2025
- Implementation: November 20, 2025
- Evaluation and Reporting: November 21–30, 2025

### **Event Location:**

Islamic Early Childhood Education Center Al-Hikmah Sukaraya Address: Jl. Bakti, Dusun. IV Gg. Bersama Desa Sukaraya.

### *Targets and Service Partners*

Activity Targets:

- Parents of students at PAUD Islam Al-Hikmah Sukaraya (45 people)
- Educators of Islamic Early Childhood Education Al-Hikmah Sukaraya (5 people)

### **Activity Partners:**

- Administrators of Al-Hikmah Sukaraya Islamic Early Childhood Education
- School Committee of Al-Hikmah Sukaraya Islamic Early Childhood Education
- Local Community Health Center (as supporting resource persons)

### **Implementation Method**

The implementation method was designed in a participatory manner by involving lecturers and students. The approaches used included:

#### **1. Preparation Stage**

- Coordination with the PAUD
- Preparation of educational materials
- Creation of child nutrition modules and booklets
- Preparation of supporting tools and materials
- Division of tasks among faculty and students

#### **2. Implementation Stage**

##### **a. Pre-test**

Measuring participants' initial knowledge of child nutrition through a structured questionnaire.

##### **b. Early Childhood Nutrition Counseling**

Lecturers deliver material covering:

- The concept of balanced nutrition and "My Plate"
- Nutritional needs of children aged 3-6 years
- The effects of nutritional deficiencies and excesses
- The principles of halal and thayyib in children's food
- Foods that should be avoided

##### **c. Interactive Discussion**

Question and answer session and experience sharing between speakers and participants, facilitated by students.

##### **d. Healthy Menu Planning Assistance**

Hands-on practice in creating daily menus for children with guidance from the team. Participants are divided into small groups, each accompanied by 1-2 students.

##### **e. Distribution of Modules and Booklets**

Each participant receives a module containing child nutrition guidelines and examples of healthy menus for one week.

##### **f. Post-test**

Measurement of participants' knowledge levels after the activity to evaluate the effectiveness of the program.

### **Evaluation and Monitoring Stage**

- Analysis of pre-test and post-test results
- Monitoring the implementation of healthy menus (follow-up 2 weeks later)
- Preparation of activity reports

### **Role of Lecturers and Students**

#### **Role of Lecturers:**

- Main resource persons in delivering the material
- Activity coordinator
- Student Supervisor
- Program Quality Manager

**Student roles:**

- Group discussion facilitator
- Menu planning practice assistant
- Activity documenter
- Assistant in the implementation of pre-tests and post-tests
- Communication bridge between the team and participants

**Activity Instruments**

1. Pre-test and post-test questionnaires
2. Early childhood nutrition education module
  3. Weekly healthy menu booklet
  4. "My Plate" poster for children
  5. Menu planning worksheet
  6. Activity evaluation form

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

**Description of Activity Implementation**

The community service activity "Healthy from the Start" was held on Wednesday, November 20, 2024, from 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at PAUD Islam Al-Hikmah Sukaraya. The activity was attended by 42 parents of students and 5 PAUD educators, with a total of 47 participants.

**Activity Schedule:**

<b>Time</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>
8:00 AM	Registration and Pre-test	Students
8:30	Opening and Welcome Speech	Head of PAUD & Team Leader
8:45-10:00	Nutrition Education for Early Childhood	Lecturer/Speaker
10:00-10:15	Break and Coffee Break	Organizing Committee
10:15-11:30	Interactive Discussion and Q&A	Faculty & Students
11:30 AM–12:30 PM	My Menu Planning Practice (Group)	Students (Facilitators)
12:30-12:45	Post-test and Module Distribution	Students
12:45–1:00	Closing and Group Photo	Entire Team

**Pre-test and Post-test Results**

The activity was evaluated by comparing the pre-test and post-test results using the same questionnaire. The questionnaire consisted of 15 questions about early childhood nutrition.

**Pre-test Results:**

- Average score: 56.2 (sufficient category)
- Participants with good knowledge ( $\geq 75$ ): 12 people (25.5%)
- Participants with adequate knowledge (60-74): 18 people (38.3%)
- Participants with poor knowledge ( $< 60$ ): 17 people (36.2%)

#### Post-test Results:

- Average score: 82.7 (good category)
- Participants with good knowledge ( $\geq 75$ ): 39 people (83.0%)
- Participants with adequate knowledge (60-74): 7 people (14.9%)
- Participants with low knowledge ( $< 60$ ): 1 person (2.1%)

#### Improvement:

- Average score improvement: 26.5 points (47.1%)
- The percentage of participants with good knowledge increased from 25.5% to 83.0%
- There was a significant increase in understanding of the following aspects: the "My Plate" concept (65%), nutritional needs by age group (58%), and foods that should be avoided (72%)

#### **Participant Response and Enthusiasm**

The results of the activity showed a positive change in parents' understanding of the nutritional needs of early childhood. Parents began to realize the importance of healthy food variety and committed to reducing the provision of instant foods. The interactive discussions also revealed various challenges in meeting children's nutritional needs in the family environment, including:

1. **Children are reluctant to eat vegetables (experienced by 85% of participants)** Solution provided: menu creations that incorporate vegetables in the form of nuggets, meatballs, or smoothies
2. **Parents' time constraints in preparing meals (60% of participants)** Solution: Simple meal preparation and practical 15-minute menus
3. **The high cost of healthy food ingredients (40% of participants)** Solution: introducing affordable and highly nutritious local food ingredients
4. **Influence of instant food advertisements (55% of participants)** Solution: Educating children about healthy food in an enjoyable way

#### **Menu Planning Practice Results**

Participants were divided into 8 groups, each consisting of 5-6 people accompanied by 1-2 students. Each group successfully developed a healthy menu for 3 days, taking into account:

- Nutritional balance (carbohydrates, protein, fat, vitamins, minerals)
- Variety of food ingredients
- Convenience and practicality
- Suitability for children's tastes
- Halal and thayyib principles

#### **Example menu produced by Group 1:**

- **Day 1:** Brown rice, fried chicken, stir-fried broccoli and carrots, corn soup, papaya
- **Day 2:** White rice, grilled fish, fried tempeh, spinach, banana
- **Day 3:** Yellow rice, omelet, potato patties, capcay, orange

#### **Student Role in Activities**

Student involvement has a positive impact on the effectiveness of activities. Students are able to establish good communication with participants, so that the material can be more easily understood. Some notable contributions of students include:

1. Creating a warm and relaxed discussion atmosphere
2. Assisting participants who have difficulty in menu planning
3. Serving as a liaison between participants and speakers
4. Documenting activities well

5. Providing motivation to participants who lack confidence

This shows that the model of lecturer-student community service is effective in bridging the needs of the community. Students also gain valuable experience in applying their knowledge in the field and developing communication, facilitation, and problem-solving skills.

### **Discussion**

#### **Effectiveness of Participatory Methods**

The participatory method applied in this activity proved effective in increasing participants' understanding. The combination of lectures, discussions, and hands-on practice allowed participants to not only gain theoretical knowledge but also practical skills that could be immediately applied.

The participatory approach also increases participants' sense of ownership of the program, making them more motivated to implement the knowledge they have gained in their daily lives.

#### **Synergy between Universities, Early Childhood Education Institutions, and Families**

The success of this activity cannot be separated from the synergy built between universities, PAUD institutions, and families. PAUD provided full support in the form of providing venues, mobilizing participants, and committing to continuing the nutrition education program on a regular basis. Families, as the main target, showed high enthusiasm and readiness to change.

#### **Integration of Islamic Values**

This activity also integrates Islamic values into the concept of balanced nutrition, particularly the principles of halal and thayyib. Participants not only understand nutritional aspects but also develop spiritual awareness in choosing food. This aligns with the vision of Islamic Early Childhood Education Institution Al-Hikmah in fostering a generation that is healthy both physically and spiritually.

#### **Challenges and Solutions**

Some challenges faced during the activity:

1. **Differences in participants' educational levels** - addressed by using simple language and concrete examples
2. **Time constraints** - addressed by focusing on essential material and providing complete modules
3. **Some participants arriving late** - addressed by providing a brief recap at the beginning of the discussion session

#### **Program Sustainability**

As a follow-up, several ongoing programs were agreed upon:

1. Biweekly **monitoring** by students via WhatsApp group
2. Monthly **cooking classes** at the preschool with different menus
3. **Formation of a "Healthy Family" group** as a forum for parents to share information
4. **A Nutrition Corner** in the PAUD environment containing posters and weekly nutrition tips
5. **Collaboration with the Community Health Center** for routine child growth checks

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## CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the community service activities, it can be concluded that:

1. The community service activity conducted by lecturers and students with the theme "Healthy from an Early Age" succeeded in increasing the knowledge of parents and educators about nutrition for early childhood, as evidenced by an average increase in post-test scores of 47.1% from the pre-test.
2. The collaborative community service model between lecturers and students proved to be effective in bridging the needs of the community. Students played an important role as facilitators who created warm communication with participants.
3. Synergy between the university, early childhood education centers, and families was a key factor in the success of this activity. Full support from early childhood education centers and enthusiasm from families created a positive ecosystem for behavioral change.
4. Participants not only gained theoretical knowledge but also practical skills in preparing healthy menus that could be directly applied at home.
5. The integration of Islamic values (halal and thayyib) into the concept of balanced nutrition strengthens participants' spiritual awareness in choosing food for their children.

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