



The Application of Spiritual Parenting as an Effort to Cultivate Moral Values In Early Childhood

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Abstract

The moral development of a child is mostly influenced by the environment. Children gain the moral values of the environment, especially from their parents. The child learns to recognize the values and behave in accordance with these values. In developing moral values in children, the role of parents is very important, especially during early childhood.

Government gives an increasingly attentive focus on early childhood education. On the one hand, this is very encouraging. However, on the other hand, often parents still have the wrong view, when their children go to school, their main focus is still on the academic activities such as reading, writing, and mathematics. With this spiritual parenting activities, parents are aware of the importance of character building in early childhood, by cultivating moral values, aiming at the growth of faith, noble character, as well as physical and mental health as a preparation to live in among the society.

Keywords: *spiritual parenting, moral values, early childhood*

INTRODUCTION

Lately there is a trend where parents give more attention and have more awareness to send their children to pre-school. We can observe that parents are now increasingly concerned about their children's education. The tendency of increasing parental concern is not just happening in the big cities but also in villages; this phenomenon does not only occur among the rich and wealthy upper class family, but also among middle class parents.

The above tendency is very encouraging and triggers the spirit to organize educational programs for early childhood. In short both society and government today showed greater attention to the education of children from an early age.

The greater challenges in society must be balanced with the model of assistance to children in line with their development. One that can be offered is the spiritual parenting approach. Most married couple dream of having a child in



their lives. Children are expected to become the next generation of the family.

The current condition shows the absence of appropriate moral teachings in early childhood, not to mention the negative exposure of films, television programs, internet, and the less supportive environment. In this globalization era, it is not uncommon that the presence of a child becomes a problem in the family. Various media, both printed and electronic media often report various cases of criminal offenses committed by children such as drugs, theft, and other crimes.

Immoral acts committed by these children are basically the result of parental attention absence to children's development in every age level. Parents who are too busy tend to have the type of children who act freely to express their will and curiosity. In fact, most parents still feel that they are actually providing the best for their children, such as by providing everything they want and meet all their needs regardless of what is actually desired by the children.

Parents are now concerned on how to cultivate the moral values in their children and searching for ideals and motivation that will help them in the future, not only knowing what is right and what is wrong, but also to make decisions correctly and responsibly.

Parents sometimes still have a less precise view of the education concept. Education or learning is often viewed as narrow and limited to academic activities only. Many teachers and parents want their children to quickly achieve results that are mainly cognitive, so that the personal development aspect of child is neglected.

Facilities and infrastructure are very helpful for the children development. On the other hand guidance between parents and children is very important, so that children develop optimally. However, in fact, most parents would only assume that possessions are the best to the exclusion of guidance and appropriate parenting.



Literature Review

The Nature of Spiritual Parenting

Elissiti J. (2004: 5) explains that the concern would be to neglect the spirituality of children to bring back a new educational concept called "Spiritual Parenting" in line with the development of the New Age. It says "bring back", because in fact this concept has long been known by other names such as "teaching manners" or "moral education". But if the lessons of character give more emphasis on theory, spiritual parenting is more concrete because it is a passive training (prayer, meditation, dzikr, etc.) and applicable for daily implementation (through the application of spiritual concepts in all sectors of life).

Parenting with spirituality is very beautiful and does not require any special knowledge. This task is a natural, comfortable, and can be applied in every family. If parents are understanding and loving on their kids, that is the whole "capital" that one needs to be spiritually minded parent/s. Through caring for the vision, experience, sensation and

dreams of a child's natural spirituality means it helps them grow and develop.

According to Marsha Walch in the book entitled *Spiritual Parenting* (2004: 6) Parenting from this perspective is not a life choice that is difficult or radical, but is rather an easy and natural way to interact with children. Spirituality that is present regularly in the daily life of a family can make everyday events becomes a miracle. The conversation at dinner, doing daily chores, bedtime storytelling, has the potential to become "sacred" moments. Imagine a child's mind that records every event in her life, soak up the atmosphere of the environment. This experience stored in the subconscious mind and soul. The memory of the children who is nurtured with parenting patterns will create a meaningful spiritual life and soul.

Parents are expected to always use the good words and provide encouragement and positive beliefs to children. This positive attitude is hopefully will be mirrored positively in their children. Parents



are expected to create magic out of things that are unusual, creating rituals, celebrations, family ceremonies, and family traditions of their own.

The application of spiritual parenting does not guarantee that children will never fight or be a good boy. But with the spiritual application of parenting, it can provide information to parents to provide the best for their children from early childhood

The Development of Moral Values

Moral is derived from the word "mos" or "mores" means decency. According to Akhmadi (Darusman, 2000) morality is a matter that relates to the morality or ethics. Moral concerns kindness, simple moral sense can be equated with kindness, or human kindness.

Indonesian National Encyclopedia (1991) defines morality as a person's behavioral traits associated with the size and standards of society, particularly good or bad. Morality is not something that is acquired from

birth, but to grow and thrive in an environment of a person's life.

Morals are universal values shared by all class, religion, race and everyone. We agree that moral values should be upheld for the sake of the social tranquility and happiness of each individual. But how expensive a moral value at the time of this modernization. All missed but hard to present, all want to have but difficult to achieve in the development.

Parents becomes dependant on the educational institutions to teach moral education to their children. Early childhood education, play groups, and kindergartens are massively selling their promising programs. But parents can not solely expect from educational institutions because children only have limited time and interaction at school. Transfer of knowledge and skills are often accepted by children in school, there is less emotional and spiritual appreciation to understand the reality of life, therefore parental care and attention are still needed.



Research Methodology

The application of spiritual parenting in early childhood was carried out in Kalisegoro, Gunungpati District, Semarang. This research aimed to help parents to find out their children's development as early as possible. The method that was used to achieve the objectives of this activity is the application of spiritual parenting training in cultivating moral values in early childhood, so that parents can undertake the cultivation of moral values in their children and start early.

Discussion

The Role of Spiritual Parenting to Cultivate Moral Values in Early Childhood

Laying the foundation of success started when the child is born and continues until the first three years. Furthermore, with the provision that is gained during the first three years of his/her life, the child develops itself for the second three years. The first six years is a very critical period in a child's life. What is gained during this period is

the basis for the child in constructing itself in the second and third six years.

A home facilitates a child's first human interaction before knowing the world. This interaction is a human nature. When the child is born, he/she is predominantly influenced by parents, friends, relatives, or the surrounding environment. The role of a home is actually to be able to build a foundation of character and mental toughness of the child.

The smallest unit of society is family, there is a father who takes role as a leader with all his responsibilities, the mother as the first teacher who is wise and always gave examples and becomes the role model, siblings to teach the rights and obligations for mutual cooperation and respect. So it is appropriate for the conditioning and control of children behavior to be able to cultivate moral values.

The current education system is like a double-edged sword. On the one hand, education can help a child to develop his/her intellectual capacity. On the other hand, the



wrong implementation of education can become an obstacle to the child's later life and will be permanently stored in the memory of the child.

Parents are both fun and exhausted in handling little children. They can be so sweet and obedient at certain times, while often times, parents have to repeat the same advice over and over again. For example, 4 years old children like to eat snacks while sightseeing, but they would not put their trash to the dumpster. After several times ignoring their parents' warnings, their parents refused to give a snack or a meal to the children. From this warning, children learn to throw the trash properly. Furthermore, when parents give praise towards their actions, children will be even more excited to continue putting their trash in the dumpster. Children tend to always report to their parents about their activity. Based on the sample, it can be observed that all the actions of the child in relation to littering behavior depend on what was later done by the parents.

In this research, parents are suggested, though not an absolute force, to teach common behaviors

that are based on the consequences of punishment and reward, because children are not fully able yet to understand why some good deeds have to be done.

With increasing levels of comprehension and understanding of the child, he/she will grow a lot of empathy that can be given as well as develop the moral values that can be understood. Indeed, along with their increasing cognitive abilities, egocentrism later will be reduced gradually and replaced by a broad perspectives gained by interaction with other people around. Therefore, the consistency of the consequences application for every action involving the child's moral judgment is also needed to help children cultivate their own moral values. In addition, it is important to provide a social environment that can stimulate the development of children through the moral values and spiritual character. The forms of stimulation are no longer merely indicate whether an act can be categorized as right or wrong, but it also gives examples of how children behave in keeping up with their surroundings.



Parents can be the best teacher for their children. Parents know their children better than anyone else, they can be paying attention and can choose the best time to praise, suggest a solution and deliver constructive criticism. If the child is restless or there is a problem, parents know the best time to discuss the problems they encounter and seek settlement in accordance with the level of development of the child.

Moral capacity can be seen through the observation of the children and by observing their behavior during activities such as guessing games, problem-solving games, or other games even in daily activities. How children are able to follow the rules of the game, do not cheat, control the urge to be selfish, or how the comments given related to moral values in every activity of the child, both facilitated by a parent or games and activities that are independent.

The moral aspect can also be evaluated through a child's behavior when engaging in activities with friends to negotiate against needs. In addition, we also can see how high

the level of responsibility and concern for self and others. Concluding the moral of a story and discuss it with the children and practice it in everyday life. For example regarding honesty, love, peace, responsibility, dare to take risks for his actions and other moral values. Parents can make a record or a table with free format to record the child's moral development. If necessary, give award to the child positive moral behavior, for example by giving a star award, created specifically for children and can be collected by the child as the evidence of his/her good behavior. The star can be made out of colored paper, cut in a star shape, embroidered on cloth or simple be creative with other materials.

In spiritual parenting activities, all parents hope their child will have a successful personal life. Parents expect their children's future to be better than the present conditions. In order for the children to succeed in later life, parents need to look at basic things children need as the foundation of success in life. The basic thing that must be properly



addressed, among others, is moral behavior as building blocks in the development of their children in the future.

Conclusion

Parents in cultivating moral values in early childhood have a very important role to be a role model or ideal figure for their children. Applying spiritual parenting to moral cultivation in early childhood makes parenting becomes easier and helps parents to better understand the simple ways to internalize moral values in their children.

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