

# EMPOWERING PARENTS AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

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## ABSTRACT

Parents and community leaders as the school collaborators do not have a large role in education for Children with Special Needs. This is because parents do not have the knowledge and skills about recognizing the special needs of children and providing needed services. The Community Service Program aims to improve the knowledge and skills of parents and community leaders regarding the identification of characteristics, education support services at home and in the environment, and identification of support services for children with special needs.

This program was held in Bambanglipuro District, Bantul Regency. The method used consisted of two stages, namely training and workshops which were attended by parents of students with special needs who attended Elementary School in the cluster 1 of Bambanglipuro Bantul and community leaders from the village apparatus around the school. Evaluation of service activities is carried out by taking into account several indicators, namely the presence of participants, active participation of participants in the activity and comparison of the results of pretest and posttest regarding the participants' knowledge and skills.

The training and workshop activities were carried out well and could meet the predetermined indicators both based on the number of participants and the implementation and results of the activities. This program can achieve the predetermined goals of increasing the knowledge and skills of parents and community leaders regarding the identification of characteristics of children with special needs, their education support services at home and in the environment as well as the role and involvement of parents and community leaders in services for them. However, the evaluation results show that the knowledge aspect of children with special needs gives the lowest score compared to the other two aspects.

Kata Kunci: *parent, community, inclusive education, children with special needs*