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**GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING FOR CHILDREN WITH LEARNING  
DIFFICULTIES**

**<sup>1</sup>Aqsani Enov Aisyafarah, <sup>2</sup>Evi Winingsih**

<sup>1</sup>State University of Surabaya, Lidah Wetan, Sub-District Lakarsantri, Surabaya, Indonesia,  
[aqsani.22036@mhs.unesa.ac.id](mailto:aqsani.22036@mhs.unesa.ac.id)

<sup>2</sup>State University of Surabaya, Lidah Wetan, Sub-District Lakarsantri, Surabaya, Indonesia,  
[eviwingsih@unesa.ac.id](mailto:eviwingsih@unesa.ac.id)

**ABSTRACT**

*One of the problems frequently encountered in schools is learning difficulties. Learning difficulties is a term used to describe various conditions that affect a child's ability to understand lessons. Many factors can cause a child to experience learning difficulties. This condition is not solely related to intelligence levels, but also related to the child's ability to master learning skills and complete assigned tasks. The purpose of this study is to analyze the concept of Developmental Guidance and Counseling services for children with learning difficulties and provide recommendations for services that are appropriate to the development of students. This research uses a qualitative descriptive study method. Developmental guidance and counseling services play a crucial role in supporting children with learning difficulties. Developmental Guidance and Counseling (BK) has the primary goal of supporting children's overall growth so that they can develop optimally, both academically, socially, and emotionally. The developmental guidance and counseling program refers to four main services: basic services, responsive services, individual planning, and system support.*

**Keywords:** developmental guidance and counseling, learning difficulties, dyslexia, guidance and counseling services

### INTRODUCTION

Everyone has an equal right to education. Education itself is a conscious effort undertaken by humans with the goal of developing their abilities and potential through the learning process. In general, education is not only geared toward academic success, but also toward developing students full potential. This includes social, career, and personal aspects that need to be supported so that each individual can develop according to their respective developmental stages.

One of the problems frequently encountered in schools is learning difficulties. According to Santrock, the learning process generally encompasses three main areas: reading, written language skills, and mathematics. However, in practice in the field, many students still face obstacles in mastering these three academic areas. This condition indirectly impacts low academic achievement (Setiowati, 2015).

Learning disabilities is a term used to describe a variety of conditions that affect a child's ability to comprehend lessons. One of the most common forms is dyslexia, a disorder that makes it difficult for children to read and comprehend text. Children with dyslexia typically have difficulty recognizing letters, connecting letter symbols with their sounds, and understanding the meaning of what they read. Even if their intelligence is normal, these disabilities can interfere with their learning process and lower their self-confidence.

Researchers found dyslexic students at different levels at Buduran 2 Junior High School. SMPN 2 Buduran is located at Jl. Raya Sido Kepung No. 2, Ngepung, Sidokepong, Buduran District, Sidoarjo Regency, East Java. The students are in grades 7 and 8. Each level consists of 8 study groups (rombel).

In grade 7, 6 students with dyslexia were found, spread across 8 study groups. These dyslexic students were in grade 7b (2 students), grade 7c (1 student), grade 7f (1 student), grade 7g (1 student), and grade 8h (1 student). Meanwhile, in grade 8, 4 students with dyslexia were found, spread across 8 study groups. These students came from grade 8a (1 student), grade 8c (1 student), and class 8g (2 students).

Unfortunately, guidance and counseling (BK) services in schools often focus more on resolving existing problems. However, the concept of developmental guidance and counseling is designed to support student growth in accordance with their developmental tasks. Through this service, students with learning difficulties can be helped to identify their potential, develop appropriate learning strategies, and develop self-regulation. Therefore, the implementation of developmental guidance and counseling is crucial to supporting children's learning success and overall development.

This research was based on the real need in schools to provide guidance and counseling services that are more developmental and preventative, rather than simply curative. Without dedicated attention to children experiencing learning difficulties, they are at risk of ongoing academic difficulties, psychosocial issues, and decreased self-confidence. This research is crucial to identify services that meet students needs. Furthermore, the results are expected to provide tangible contributions to guidance and counseling teachers in designing more effective intervention strategies.

Research is based on the implementation of Developmental Guidance and Counseling services for dyslexic children in grades 7 and 8 at SMPN 2 Buduran. The purpose of this research is to analyze the concept of Developmental Guidance and Counseling services for dyslexic children through qualitative descriptive methods, while also providing recommendations for services that are appropriate to their

development students. This study is expected to provide a new perspective that differentiates it from previous studies, namely emphasizing developmental guidance services as a preventive strategy and potential development for dyslexic children at SMPN 2 Buduran.

### METHOD

This study employed a qualitative approach. A qualitative approach is used to explore and understand the symptoms or problems that occur in society (Creswel, 2009). The type of research used was a descriptive qualitative study. The data from this study consisted of descriptive data from observations of subjects, interviews, and processed documentation studies. The research location was at Jl. Raya Sido Kepung No. 2, Ngepung, Sidokepong, Buduran District, Sidoarjo Regency, East Java.

This research was conducted on 7th and 8th grade students with each level consisting of 8 study groups (rombel). The researcher required research subjects with the following criteria: dyslexic children who were still in junior high school aged 13-15 years old, male or female. In addition, the students attended regular or inclusive schools. The parties who served as informants in this research were one dyslexic student in 7th grade, one principal, one guidance counselor, and one first grade teacher.

The researchers used triangulation techniques, including observation, interviews, and documentation studies. The observations were non-active participant observation. Therefore, the researchers entered the classroom but only observed the subjects' behavior. The interviews employed a semi-standardized interview technique, with only a general outline provided as the instrument, and during the interviews, the researchers asked additional questions related to the general outline. Documentation was used to manage, record, and store information in the form of images and recordings.

The data analysis stage consists of two stages: pre-field analysis and in-field analysis. Pre-field analysis is conducted before the researcher enters the field. This analysis is conducted on data from the preliminary study. Meanwhile, in-field analysis is conducted while the researcher is in the field (Sugiyono, 2010).

### RESULT AND DISCUSSION

It's important for teachers to understand the students' conditions in class. Sometimes, teachers will understand the difficulties a student is experiencing and recognize that something is different about them. Research shows that teachers made initial identification through observing students during the learning process. Teachers identified the possibility of dyslexia by observing their characteristics and circumstances. This can be seen in students' reading abilities and behavior during the lesson.

An interview with a guidance counselor who assists a dyslexic child revealed that the school has endeavored to provide special services for the student. These services include reading support or improving student competency and providing learning materials with additional hours outside of class. This is done to ensure the student's comprehension of the material is not delayed compared to their peers.

Parental involvement in supporting their children remains relatively low. Most parents tend to leave the mentoring process entirely to the school. This results in children only receiving assistance or guidance at

school. Meanwhile, at home, children rarely receive the additional training and stimulation that should also be provided regularly.

Based on the interview results, it can be concluded that developmental guidance and counseling services for dyslexic children at the junior high school have begun. Reading support and additional time are key steps to ensure students' understanding of the material remains intact and their competencies are improved. However, parental involvement remains low, resulting in children receiving full support only during school hours. Therefore, a more structured guidance strategy is needed, involving ongoing collaboration between the school and parents.

Classroom observations revealed that students with learning disabilities, particularly dyslexia, primarily struggle with reading and recognizing letters. Students sometimes struggle to distinguish between similar letters, such as "b" and "d." This condition naturally requires students to spend more time comprehending written or reading texts than their peers. This contributes to low student participation in classroom learning related to writing.

Students also show a lack of confidence when asked to read in front of the class, often making mistakes in pronouncing words or sentences. This situation tends to make students remain silent or avoid reading activities, thus reducing their active participation in the learning process. Teachers should provide more intensive support using appropriate methods, such as the use of visual media, disseminating explanations, or other resources to help students practice their letter recognition and improve their reading skills. This, of course, requires support from teachers and peers to foster students confidence in learning.

According to Abin in Makh sun (2023), the steps for learning guidance services refer to the steps (procedures) of guidance services which include:

1. Identifying cases. This is done to identify students who are facing problems.
2. Problem identification. This is to determine the type and characteristics of the problem.
3. Diagnosis. This determines the factors that may be causing a problem.
4. Prognosis. This occurs when researchers estimate how to solve the problem.
5. Problem-solving (therapy) for tutoring implementation was carried out using letter recognition or spelling strategies. The tutoring was provided by researchers in 7 stages using various media such as: pictures of letters, pictures of objects, pictures of family members, word cards and story texts, as well as the use of simple sentences to support the provision of tutoring services.
6. Evaluation. This was conducted to determine the extent to which the guidance provided to students facing problems was effective. Furthermore, the researcher observed how students engaged in class after the tutoring sessions. The researcher stated that the tutoring services were both successful and less successful. Successful tutoring services were seen when children were seen to have memorized the alphabet, were more confident, and more active in class. Less successful services were seen when children were unable to concentrate effectively during learning and lacked accuracy in reading and writing.
7. Follow-up. This is a follow-up guidance activity given to students after therapy is carried out. If the assistance is successful, the next effort is to monitor the progress of the students (clients). However, there are some that are less successful, namely: lack of concentration and perseverance of students.

Things that need to be done next are: suggesting to the class teacher to continue the tutoring that has been carried out by the researcher, suggesting to the class teacher to use interesting learning methods and media so that children can focus and concentrate on following the learning in class, reminding students to concentrate more on the lesson by ignoring the distractions around them, providing motivation and support to students to be more motivated so that they are serious in learning, as well as reminding parents of students to monitor their children's growth and development and providing tutoring at home by getting students used to practicing reading and writing continuously or by conducting further examinations by experts in their fields such as psychologists and psychiatrists.

Collaboration between various parties is crucial to support the development of children with dyslexia. Schools and parents need to consistently collaborate to instill values in students. If either party is less active, service objectives will not be optimally achieved. Lack of parental involvement limits the efforts of teachers and schools, as the home environment does not support the learning process.

Learning methods for dyslexic children are not significantly different from those for students in general. However, a variety of strategies are needed to help them understand the material more easily. Students with dyslexia can be helped through lectures, question-and-answer sessions, discussions, and assignments. These diverse approaches facilitate learning while helping them feel optimally supported.

Based on the results of the observations, improvements in the development of dyslexic children were found. This can be achieved by providing developmental guidance and counseling services in accordance with the steps developed by the researchers. These steps were adapted from the steps above, which were derived from the ideas of Gysbers and Henderson. The components of the developmental guidance and counseling program for dyslexic children are basic services, responsive services, individual services and system support (Setiowati, 2015).

Ginting et al. (2023) explained that providing guidance and counseling for children experiencing learning difficulties can begin with understanding each child's characteristics. Guidance and counseling teachers need to understand the assessment instruments used to identify the type and level of learning difficulties and then communicate these information to the relevant team of experts. After that, coordination is carried out with class teachers, school psychologists, medical personnel, and other therapists who play a role in the child's care. Furthermore, guidance and counseling teachers also need to involve parents through counseling and consultation activities to improve understanding of the child's condition and facilitate optimal child development. School personnel also need to be consulted to gain a better understanding of the child's learning, social, and behavioral issues. At the same time, counseling services for children must be tailored to the unique problems they face.

However, school efforts alone are not enough. Treatment for children with learning difficulties will be more effective if supported by specialized interventions through clinics or other professional service centers. Children with above-average intelligence require specialized programs tailored to their potential, as approaches used for children with average or below-average abilities are not always relevant. Therefore,

tailoring counseling techniques to the child's learning style is crucial, along with intensive parental involvement in the overall guidance program.

### CONCLUSION

Based on the discussion, it can be concluded that developmental guidance and counseling services play a crucial role in supporting children with learning disabilities, such as dyslexia, dysgraphia, and dyscalculia. Learning disabilities are a condition where a child experiences obstacles in the learning process and achieving learning outcomes. Developmental guidance and counseling are services designed to address the needs, potential, weaknesses, interests, and various issues that arise as students develop. The developmental guidance and counseling program encompasses four main services : namely basic services, responsive services, individual planning, and system support able to provide more targeted, comprehensive and tailored services.

Developmental Guidance and Counseling (BK) aims to support children's holistic growth and development, enabling them to develop optimally in academic, social, and emotional aspects. To achieve this, BK teachers need to understand children's characteristics through accurate assessments. This initial step is crucial for accurately identifying each child's specific needs. In addition, cooperation between guidance counselors, class teachers, psychologists, medical personnel, therapists, and parents is key in implementing developmental guidance counseling services so that. Providing services according to the problems that children have and helping to maximize their potential.

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