

SEXUAL EDUCATION THROUGH DOLLS TO STRENGTHEN PERSONAL SAFETY OF CHILDREN WITH HIV/AIDS AT LENTERA FOUNDATION SURAKARTA

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Abstract

Children with HIV/AIDS are a vulnerable group that needs to strengthen their understanding of *personal safety* from an early age due to limited knowledge and the risk of experiencing unsafe treatment. Situation analysis shows that *personal safety education* that is appropriate to the child's age and condition is still limited, so that children do not fully understand the limits of their personal body and how to protect themselves. These problems are the basis for the implementation of community service activities that aim to increase the understanding of *personal safety* of children with HIV/AIDS through education using puppet props. The activity was carried out at the Surakarta Lentera Foundation involving 15 children aged 6-12 years. The activity method includes *pre-test*, interactive education about personal body parts, safe and unsafe touch, and direct practice using puppet props, then ending with a *post-test*. The results of the activity showed an increase in the average score of children's understanding from 66.1% before the activity to 95.2% after the activity. In addition, children show the courage to tell stories and ask for help when they are in uncomfortable situations. This activity is complemented by the implementation of *training of trainers* for caregivers and the submission of educational manuals as an effort to sustain the program. It can be concluded that *personal safety* education based on doll props is effective, easy to accept, and feasible to apply to community service activities for other vulnerable children.

Keywords: Sexual Education, Doll Props, Personal Safety, Children, HIV/AIDS

INTRODUCTION

Early childhood is a group that is vulnerable to various forms of violence, one of which is sexual abuse (Supriani & Ismaniar, 2022). This condition becomes increasingly complex for children with HIV/AIDS who often face negative stigma, discrimination, and limited access to health education (Adyani et al., 2023). This limitation causes these children to lack an understanding of body limits, safe touch, and the right to personal safety, thereby increasing the risk of personal safety violations.

The high rate of violence against children in Indonesia shows that this issue remains a

serious concern that needs to be addressed. Data on cases of violence against children in Indonesia show a significant increase from year to year, especially in terms of sexual violence which is one of the highest categories reported. Information from the Online Information System for the Protection of Women and Children (Ichda Wahyuni et al., 2023) noted that in 2023 there were 15,120 cases of violence against children, with the largest proportion coming from sexual violence among the total reported cases. In addition, until June 2025, there were 13,845 reports of violence against children, with sexual violence as a form of violation reported by the community (Ichda Wahyuni et al., 2023).

The high rate of sexual violence against children indicates an urgent need to develop more effective protection strategies, especially through education, public awareness, and strengthening reporting systems. However, prevention efforts are often hampered by myths and misconceptions that still develop in society about sexual violence against children. (Ferragut et al., 2022) stated that a misunderstanding of this issue can hinder optimal child protection efforts, so fact-based education is a step to prevent sexual violence in children. In line with this, (Cant et al., 2022) emphasized that the prevention of sexual violence against children needs to be carried out through a comprehensive public health approach and focus on early prevention, not just post-violence treatment.

Sexual violence against children includes all forms of sexual activity that are not in accordance with the child's level of development and understanding and constitute a serious violation of children's rights, health, and welfare (WHO, 2022). Children who are targeted by sexual violence are at risk of experiencing short-term and long-term psychological effects, such as anxiety, excessive fear, sleep disturbances, decreased confidence, and post-traumatic stress disorder (Saputra, 2025). (Rini, 2020) revealed that the experience of sexual violence in childhood can have a major impact on children's emotional and behavioral development. One of the psychological consequences that often occurs is traumatic sexualization, which is a change in the child's view of the body, relationships with others, and sexual behavior due to traumatic experiences experienced (Noviana, 2015).

In addition to psychological impacts, sexual violence can also have serious physical impacts. Children who are victims of sexual violence can experience health problems such as insomnia, headaches, decreased appetite, pain or wounds in the genital area, and an increased risk of sexually transmitted diseases (Diningrat et al., 2022). In certain cases, sexual violence can even lead to unwanted pregnancy in the child (Novrianza & Santoso, 2022). These physical and psychological impacts can be interrelated and aggravate children's conditions, especially in children with HIV/AIDS who are medically vulnerable.

Sexual violence is defined as any form of behavior that has a sexual element and is carried out unilaterally without the consent of the victim, ranging from verbal abuse to acts of physical sexual violence (Salsabila & Scarvanovi, 2024). (Putu et al., 2021) explained that children and women are the most vulnerable groups to victims of sexual violence because they are often considered weak and helpless. This condition puts children in a very risky position, especially because of their limited ability to recognize, refuse, and report actions that threaten their safety. In line with this, (World Health Organization, 2020) emphasizes that children in vulnerable conditions need special attention through education, strengthening a safe environment, and supporting protection systems. Therefore, efforts to prevent violence against children need to be carried out in a holistic and participatory manner.

Efforts to prevent sexual violence against children can be carried out by providing sexual education that is appropriate, safe, and in accordance with the child's developmental stage (Dihan et al., 2024). In children with HIV/AIDS, sexual education needs a more flexible approach because health conditions and psychosocial aspects can affect their understanding process. Therefore, interesting and child-friendly learning media is needed so that educational materials can be received optimally

The use of doll props is one of the effective media in children's sexual education because it is visual and interactive. This media helps children recognize personal body parts, distinguish between safe and unsafe touch, and understand the concept of personal safety in a fun atmosphere. (Susilowati et al., 2025) states that puppet media is effective in increasing children's understanding of the issue of sexual violence. However, sexual education programs that specifically target children with HIV/AIDS using doll props are still very limited, especially in community assistance institutions. This activity has elements of novelty both in terms of service goals and educational methods applied.

The Surakarta Lentera Foundation as an institution that assists children with HIV/AIDS and plays a role in efforts to protect and empower its fostered children. Based on this situation, a sexual education program that is designed systematically and continuously is needed to strengthen their personal safety. The purpose of this community service activity is to increase the knowledge and understanding of children with HIV/AIDS regarding body limits, safe and unsafe touch, and strengthening personal safety through sexual education based on doll props.

Therefore, this community service program was held with the title "Sexual Education Based on Doll Props as an Effort to Strengthen the Personal Safety of Children with HIV/AIDS at the Lentera Foundation", which is expected to increase children's awareness of the right to their own body and become an applicable and sustainable educational model.

IMPLEMENTATION METHOD

This community service activity was carried out at the Surakarta Lentera Foundation in the May-November 2025 period. The target of the activity was 15 children with HIV/AIDS aged 6-12 years who were fostered children by the foundation. This activity uses a descriptive evaluation approach through the measurement of knowledge levels before and after the implementation of education (*pre-test* and *post-test*) to assess changes in understanding of the target after the educational intervention.

The measurement instrument is arranged in the form of a child's body image media that is adjusted according to the stage of developmental age. Children are required to cross the body parts that should not be touched by others, with certain exceptions such as themselves, parents, and health workers under justified conditions. This instrument is used to measure children's understanding of personal body boundaries as well as safe and unsafe touch. The use of interactive visual media is considered effective in increasing children's understanding of sensitive sexual education materials (Savitri et al., 2024).

The implementation of activities is carried out through three stages, namely preparation, implementation, and evaluation and follow-up.

1. Preparation Stage

The preparation stage includes the preparation of activity proposals, the implementation

of field surveys through coordination with the foundation, the preparation of educational media in the form of puppets, the preparation of educational materials adapted to the age and conditions of the target, the socialization of activities, and the preparation of *pre-test* and *post-test instruments*.

2. Implementation Stage

The implementation stage begins with the introduction of the service team and an explanation of the objectives and flow of activities to the targets. Next, a *pre-test* is carried out to measure the child's initial knowledge level. Educational activities are then given using doll media as props to help children understand the limits of the body and the concept of safe and unsafe touch in a concrete and fun way. Education is followed by direct practice by the target to strengthen the understanding of the material, as suggested in the participatory learning approach in early childhood (Lubis Zahra & Ardila, 2023).

3. Evaluation and Follow-up Stage

The evaluation of the activity was carried out using a *post-test* to assess changes in the level of knowledge of the target after the implementation of sexual education based on doll props. The follow-up of activities is in the form of the implementation of *Training of Trainers (ToT)* to the foundation's caregivers and the submission of educational guidebooks that have been registered with Intellectual Property Rights (IPR), as an effort to ensure the sustainability of educational programs within the foundation

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This community service activity aims to increase the understanding of children with HIV/AIDS regarding *personal safety* through sexual education by using props in the form of Ken dolls as boys and Barbie as girls. Then the evaluation of the activity was carried out by comparing *the results of the pre-test* and *post-test* presented in the form of average scores based on the characteristics of the age group.

The characteristics of the respondents in this community service activity included the gender and age of the child with HIV/AIDS who were targeted. The presentation of respondent characteristics aims to provide an overview of the profile of participants involved in *personal safety education activities*. The distribution of the characteristics of the respondents is shown in **Table 1**.

Table 1. Respondent Characteristics

Features	N	%
Gender		
- Male	8	53,3%
- Female	7	46,7%
Age They respond		
- 6 Years	5	33,3 %
- 7 Years	1	6,7 %
- 9 Years	7	46,7 %
- 11 Years	1	6,6 %
Total	15	100%

Source: Processed data, 2026

Based on **Table 1**, most of the respondents were male, namely 8 children (53.3%), while female respondents amounted to 7 children (46.7%). Judging from age, the most respondents were at the age of 9 years, as many as 7 children (46.7%), followed by 6 years old as many as 5 children (33.3%). Meanwhile, respondents aged 7 years and 11 years each amounted to 1 child (6.7%).

To illustrate the change in the level of children's understanding after personal *safety education* using doll props, comprehension measurements were carried out before and after the educational activity. The results of these changes in knowledge levels are presented in **Table 2**.

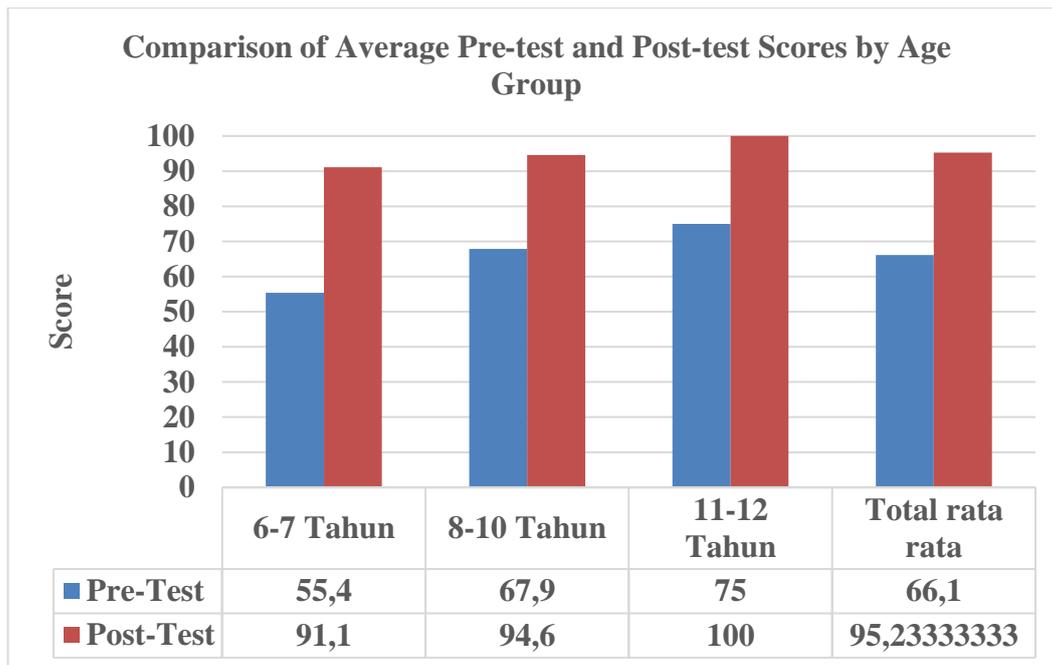
Table 2. Changes in respondents' level of knowledge

Characteristics	N	Increased	Same	Decreased
Respondents' age				
- 6 Years	5	5 (100%)	0	0
- 7 Years	1	1 (100%)	0	0
- 9 Years	7	7 (100%)	0	0
- 11 Years	1	1 (100%)	0	0
Total	15	15 (100%)	0	0

Source: Processed data, 2026

Based on **Table 2**, all respondents in each age group experienced an increase in knowledge after participating in *personal safety* education activities. No respondents were found with a fixed or decreasing level of knowledge. These results show that sex education based on doll props is effective in improving the understanding of *personal safety* in children with HIV/AIDS.

The comparison of the average *pre-test* and *post-test* scores in each age group is presented in the form of a graph. Data presentation in the form of graphs to visualize differences in knowledge achievement before and after education. The comparison of the average *pre-test* and *post-test* scores by age group is presented in **Graph 1**.



Graph 1. Comparison of the average *Pre-test* and *Post-test* scores (below)

Source: Processed data, 2026

Based on the comparison chart of *pre-test* and *post-test* scores, it can be seen that all groups of children with HIV/AIDS experienced an increase in their understanding of *personal safety* after being given education using puppet props with a total average *pre-test* score of 66.1 increasing to 95.23 during *the post-test*.

In the 6–7 age group, the average score increased from 55.4 to 91.1. The 8–10 year old age group showed an increase from 67.9 to 94.6, while the 11–12 year old age group saw an increase from 75 to 100.

These results show that *personal safety education* for children with HIV/AIDS using doll props is effective for all age ranges of children. Although there are differences in early abilities between age groups, the educational methods used have succeeded in significantly improving children's understanding. Doll media makes it easy for children to recognize examples of safe and unsafe touch directly through simple simulations that are appropriate to their developmental stage. Before the activity took place, children's general understanding was in the medium category, then increased to the high category after participating in education, which illustrated the success of the activity in strengthening the respondents' understanding.

These findings are in line with Andayani et al. (2022) who stated that learning media that is easy to understand and interesting for children plays an important role in strengthening *personal safety skills*. Furthermore, the guidelines (UNESCO, 2018) also emphasize that sexual education needs to be adapted to the stage of child development and delivered through participatory and child-friendly methods. *Personal safety education* based on doll props in this activity not only increases children's understanding quantitatively, but also encourages the formation of a brave attitude in maintaining personal body boundaries and reporting unsafe situations (Putri Andayani et al., 2022).

The success of this service activity is inseparable from the stages of implementation that dilakukan secara bertahap dan terencana, mulai dari persiapan materi, pemilihan alat peraga

which is in accordance with the characteristics of the child, to the implementation of education interactively. The child's active involvement during introductory sessions, material delivery, and hands-on practice helps to create a conducive learning atmosphere and supports the comprehension process.



Figure 1. Socialization of the program
Personal documentation



Figure 2. Program Implementation
Personal documentation

Direct practice using puppet props and provides opportunities for children to repeat and re-explain the material that has been presented in order to strengthen children's understanding. In addition, a friendly, communicative, and appropriate approach to the child's characteristics makes sexual education materials acceptable without causing fear or awkwardness. This is an important factor in the success of *personal safety education* for children, especially children with HIV/AIDS who are a vulnerable group.



Figure 3. Direct practice
Personal documentation

As a sustainability effort, this activity does not only stop at providing safe sexual education to children. The service team also carried out *Training of Trainers* activities for all foundation caregivers (ToT). Through this activity, caregivers are equipped with knowledge and skills to continue *personal safety education* independently. In addition, the submission of educational guidebooks that have been registered with Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) is expected to be a guide for caregivers so that the material presented remains the same and is easy to apply in daily mentoring activities within the foundation.

This service activity not only provides short-term benefits in improving children's understanding, but also has the potential to have a long-term impact on strengthening *the personal safety* of children with HIV/AIDS (ADHA). This service activity has several limitations, including the limited number of targets and evaluations that only look at children's understanding in the short term.

This activity has not evaluated changes in children's attitudes and behaviors in the long term. However, the results of the activity show that *personal safety* education using doll props can be an approach that is easy to implement, child-friendly, and has a positive impact on children with HIV/AIDS.



Figure 4. ToT and handbook submission
Source Personal documentation

CONCLUSION

Community service activities through *personal safety education* using puppet props have been proven to be able to increase the knowledge of children with HIV/AIDS at the Surakarta Lentera Foundation. A total of 15 children involved in this activity experienced an increase in knowledge value from 66.1% in the *pre-test* to 95.2% in the *post-test*. Visual and interactive educational methods help children recognize the boundaries of their personal bodies, understand the concepts of safe and unsafe touch, and encourage the courage to tell stories or ask for help when in uncomfortable situations. In addition, the implementation of *Training of Trainers* for caregivers and the provision of educational guidebooks support the sustainability of the program so that this activity has the potential to continue independently even though the service program has been completed.

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