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Assignment title: fppti jatim
Submission title: Balanced Nutrition Services to Early Childhood
File name: Balanced_Nutrition_Services_to_Early_Chilhood.pdf
File size: 235.03K
Page count: 6
Word count: 2,718
Character count: 17,047
Submission date: 02-Nov-2021 02:31PM (UTC+0700)
Submission ID: 1690853333

DOI Number: 10.5958/0976-5506.2019.02081.3

Balanced Nutrition Services to Early Childhood Improving Children's Nutritional Status

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Abstract

Chronic malnutrition is caused by poverty, improper care, and parents' ignorance of the nutritional needs of children. Providing a balanced menu is a kind of solution that can be applied to overcome nutritional problems in children. Balanced nutrition services are carried out in early childhood to improve children's nutritional status. This research was conducted in Bangli District, Gianyar Regency, and Denpasar City, using a randomized pre and posttest control group design with a total sample of 88 children (38 controls and 50 intervention groups). Nutritional status was assessed by comparing weight with age using anthropometric standards based on Z-Score. The results of this study indicate that the intervention group experienced a decrease in the number of children with less weight (25.00%) and an increase in the number of children with good nutritional status (2.22%), while in the control group there was no change in nutritional status. The results of the independent sample t test showed that there were significant differences in the pre-data in the control group and intervention (p < 0.05) while the post-data showed no significant differences (p > 0.05). Analysis of differences in body weight in the control and intervention groups showed that there were significant differences (p < 0.05). Balanced nutrition services in early childhood can significantly improve their nutritional status.

Keywords: balanced nutrition services, early childhood, nutritional status

Introduction

Preschool age is a golden period because the physical and psychological development is hurried that its nutritional needs must be fulfilled and balanced. Nutritional problems occur in toddlers, especially malnutrition, are the effects of maternal conditions during pregnancy, fetal period, infancy, including diseases suffered during infancy. This situation can hamper children's development with negative impacts that will take place in subsequent lives such as intellectual decline, susceptibility to disease, decreased productivity to cause poverty and the risk of giving birth to babies with low birth weight. Every parent certainly wants a balance between physical growth and optimal mental development in their children.

Data from WHO showed that underweight cases in preschoolers in the world were 15.7% and overweight 6.6%¹. Nationally, the prevalence of malnutrition in 2013 was 5.7% and malnutrition was 13.9%². The results of Riskesdas from 2007 to 2013 showed that underweight cases in Indonesia increased from 18.4% to 19.6%, Riskesdas 2010 and 2013 showed that births with Low Birth Weight (LBW) <2500 grams decreased from 11.1% to 10.2%³. The trend of nutritional problems in Bali in 2015-2017 showed a case of malnutrition decreased from 9.0% in 2015 to 8.6% in 2017, with the highest prevalence in Buleleng Regency 14.4%⁴.

Chronic malnutrition is caused by poverty, inappropriate parenting, and ignorance of parents regarding children's nutritional needs. The results shown that children's cognitive abilities were not developing optimally, children easily get sick and have low

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