

The Role Of The Special Child Development Institution (Lpka) In Providing Guidance To Children Who Are In Conflict With The Law As An Effort To Prevent The Repetition Of Criminal Acts (Study At Lpka Class I Medan)

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ABSTRACK

The Child Special Development Institution (LPKA) has an important role in providing guidance for children in conflict with the law as an effort to prevent the repetition of criminal acts (recidivism). This study aims to analyze the role of the Child Special Development Institution (LPKA) in conducting guidance for children in conflict with the law and to identify the obstacles faced in the implementation of such guidance at LPKA Class I Medan. This research uses an empirical juridical approach with a qualitative method. Data were obtained through interviews, observations, and literature studies related to the implementation of guidance programs for children at LPKA Class I Medan. The results of this study show that LPKA plays a significant role in the development of children through various programs such as personality development, education, vocational skills training, religious guidance, and social reintegration programs. These programs aim to improve the behavior and mentality of children so that they are able to reintegrate into society and avoid repeating criminal acts. However, in its implementation there are several obstacles, including limited facilities and infrastructure, a shortage of professional human resources, and the diverse backgrounds of the children. Therefore, improvements in facilities, infrastructure, and institutional capacity are necessary to optimize the guidance process.

Keywords: *Child Special Development Institution (LPKA), children in conflict with the law, guidance, recidivism prevention, criminal acts.*

A. Introduction

Children are an important asset of the nation that is entitled to protection and education to grow and develop optimally. In the framework of nation building, children occupy a crucial position as future assets who have fundamental rights to legal protection and access to education to ensure sustainable growth and development.¹ However, this view often clashes with the worrying social realities, characterized by an increase in the number of delinquent and lawbreaking behaviors involving minors. This phenomenon not only leaves trauma for victims

¹ Maidin Gultom, *Legal Protection of Children in the Juvenile Criminal Justice System in Indonesia* (Bandung: Refika Aditama, 2014), p. 15.

and families, but also attaches a heavy social stigma to the perpetrator's children, potentially damaging their future.² Therefore, the approach to children in conflict with the law is no longer simply retaliation-oriented, but is guaranteed by a legal system that prioritizes the restoration of rights, rehabilitation, and reintegration into society, rather than the imposition of criminal sanctions alone.³

In Indonesia, this protection effort is seen in the vital role of the Special Child Development Institute (LPKA). This institution bears a great responsibility for nurturing children who have been convicted, with a comprehensive curriculum that includes formal and non-formal education, as well as the strengthening of character and life skills. The goal is to restore the child's psychosocial condition so that they are ready to return to society.⁴

Philosophically, the handling of children's cases has undergone a significant transformation from a retributive paradigm (punishment) to a rehabilitative and restorative model. In this scheme, education and coaching are positioned as the main instruments to break the chain of repeat crimes by children (recidivism).⁵ This perspective is supported by various international studies that confirm that interventions through education and structured rehabilitation programs have a positive correlation in changing children's behavior as well as facilitating their social reintegration process.⁶

Nevertheless, the phenomenon of recidivism in which children return to commit crimes after coaching remains a complicated social issue. Empirical observations in a number of LPKAs in Indonesia highlight that the effectiveness of coaching is often hampered by external and internal variables, ranging from lack of family concern, low internal motivation of children, to limited supporting infrastructure within the institution.⁷ Furthermore, the gap in quality in education services is also a highlight of limited access to formal education, and the lack of competence of educators at LPKA has implications for the constitutional right of children to an optimal decent education.⁸

Previous literature tends to be stuck in descriptive exposure to coaching routines, but there is still a lack of depth exploring how the dynamics of LPKA interact with the local social context in preventing recidivism.⁹ In fact, the social context in Indonesia presents unique challenges, especially the strong negative stigma against "former child prisoners". These social labels are often a thick wall that hinders their reacceptance in the neighborhood where they live.¹⁰ Without a strong social safety net, this stigma actually triggers alienation that pushes

² Romli Atmasasmita, *Theory and Capita of Criminology* (Bandung: Refika Aditama, 2010), p. 72.

³ Article 2, Law Number 11 of 2012 concerning the Juvenile Criminal Justice System.

⁴ Erni, Y. "The Role of Special Children's Development Institutions in Fostering Children in Facing the Law," *Journal of Educational Sciences* Vol.6 No.1 (2023): pp. 45–60

⁵ Paulus Hadisuprpto, *Restorative Justice: A Model for Solving Children's Cases* (Yogyakarta: Genta Publishing, 2013), p. 64.

⁶ Andrew Day et al., "Rehabilitation and Juvenile Offenders," *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology* Vol.65 No.8 (2021): hlm. 891–910.

⁷ Eric Lambue Tampubolon and Chalid Sahuri, "The Effectiveness of Child Development at LPKA Pekanbaru," *Journal of Educational Sciences* Vol.7 No.1 (2024): pp. 23–38.

⁸ Unma Ejournal, "Fulfillment of Children's Educational Rights in LPKA," *Unma Education Journal* Vol.4 No.2 (2022): pp. 55–70.

⁹ *Child Development at LPKA in a Social Perspective* (Medan: UMA Repository, 2023).

¹⁰ Ulil Albab Institute, *Social Stigma of Children in Conflict with the Law* (Jakarta: Ulil Albab Institute, 2022), p. 28.

children back into the circle of crime.¹¹

The challenges faced by the rehabilitation approach can no longer be partial. Academic evidence suggests the implementation of a holistic strategy that integrates aspects of education, vocational training, psychological mentoring, and post-liberation support as the most effective method of reducing recidivism.¹² The role of the state here is very central to guaranteeing rights

Children facing the law are not just administrative policies, but a constitutional obligation to protect vulnerable groups.¹³

The success of child transformation at LPKA is highly dependent on the substance of the program carried out. Education in this context must be interpreted as more than just the transfer of academic knowledge, but as a crater for character building, instilling discipline, and fostering a sense of social responsibility.

Based on Law Number 11 of 2012 concerning the Juvenile Criminal Justice System, the role of LPKA in Article 1 number 20 states that the Special Child Development Institution, hereinafter abbreviated as LPKA, is an institution or place where children serve their criminal period, while Article 85 shows the process of child development carried out by LPKA, which reads: (1) Children who are sentenced to prison are placed in LPKA; (2) Children in LPKA have the right to receive guidance, guidance, supervision, mentoring, education and training, as well as other rights in accordance with the provisions of laws and regulations; (3) LPKA is obliged to organize educational programs, skills training, coaching, and fulfillment of other rights in accordance with the provisions of laws and regulations.

The following is data on the number of children in 2021 – 2026 at LPKA class I Medan:

YEAR	QUANTITY
2021	132 People
2022	222 People
2023	231 People
2024	228 People
2025	189 People
2026	188 People

Source : Official data of LPKA class I Medan

However, the toughest challenge actually begins when the child steps out of the LPKA gate. The process of social reintegration is often a critical phase in which the child is confronted with environmental rejection due to past negative labels. The psychological pressure due to this social exclusion often closes their access to further education opportunities and the world of work. Therefore, cross-sector synergy that connects LPKA, families, educational institutions, and the wider community is an absolute prerequisite. Isolated coaching within the walls of the LPKA without the support of an inclusive external

¹¹Wagiati Soetodjo, *Child Criminal Law* (Bandung: Refika Aditama, 2010), p. 102.

¹² James McGuire, *Understanding Psychology and Crime* (London: McGraw-Hill, 2004), hlm. 210.

¹³ Waluyadi, *Child Protection Law* (Bandung: Mandar Maju, 2009), p. 19.

ecosystem is impossible to produce sustainable change.

Child development in LPKA must be seen as more than just an abortion of legal obligations. The role of LPKA is a long-term social investment to save the next generation from the snare of repeated crime. By revitalizing the quality of coaching and strengthening reintegration support, LPKA has great potential to transform into a strategic institution that not only reduces recidivism, but also makes a real contribution to building a more civilized future of the nation.¹⁴

B. Research Methods

This research is an empirical research because it examines the role of LPKA in conducting coaching as an effort to prevent the recurrence of criminal acts. To answer the problems in this study, primary data was used, namely the results of an interview with Mr. Andry Petra Bangun as KASUPSI and Skills Training To support primary data, secondary data in the form of laws and regulations such as Law No. 11 of 2012 concerning the Juvenile Criminal Justice System (SPPA) was also used.

Data analysis in this study was carried out using a descriptive analysis method, which is a research procedure that produces descriptive data in the form of an overview of a legal situation or phenomenon.¹⁵ The data obtained in the form of oral and written information is then processed, analyzed, and explained based on the provisions of the applicable laws and regulations, and then draws conclusions inductively adjusted to the objectives and problems of the research to be answered.

C. Results And Discussion

1. The Role of the Special Child Development Institution (LPKA) in Coaching Children Who Face the Law as an Effort to Prevent the Repetition of Criminal Acts at LPKA Class I Medan

The juvenile criminal justice system in Indonesia basically prioritizes the principle of child protection and future. As stated by Wagiati Soetodjo, the main purpose of punishing children who are in conflict with the law is not as a form of retribution, but to provide education and coaching so that children can return be a good member of society¹⁶. This is in line with the function of the Special Children's Development Institution (LPKA) which prioritizes a *welfare approach* and restorative justice. According to Marlina, coaching at LPKA must be focused on psychological recovery and the development of children's potential so that their basic rights are still fulfilled even though they are serving a criminal term.¹⁷

Based on the results of interviews with officers at LPKA Class I Medan, the role of this coaching is still sought to run optimally despite challenges in the form of excess occupancy capacity. The standard capacity at the institution is actually only intended for

¹⁴ Paulus Hadisuprpto, *Restorative Justice: A Future Model of Indonesian Children's Welfare* (Semarang: Diponegoro University Press, 2006). p. 115.

¹⁵ Wiwik Sri Widiarty, *Textbook of Legal Research Methods*, Publika Global Media, 2024, p. 163

¹⁶ Wagiati Soetodjo, *Child Criminal Law* (Bandung: PT Refika Aditama, 2006), p. 56

¹⁷ Marlina, *Juvenile Criminal Justice in Indonesia: The Development of the Concept of Diversion and Restorative Justice* (Bandung: PT Refika Aditama, 2012), p. 45.

96 people, but currently the number of fostered children reaches around 188 people. This condition requires the effectiveness of institutional management, because as emphasized by Petrus Irwan Masli, the success of coaching is greatly influenced by the institution's ability to manage limited resources to create an environment conducive to changing children's behavior.¹⁸ Related to regulations, the juvenile criminal law system in Indonesia sets a maximum sentence limit of 10 years, and does not recognize the death penalty or life imprisonment for underage offenders. This is based on the theory that children are future assets that still have ample opportunities to improve themselves. Barda Nawawi Arief stated that criminal law policies against children must be protective and educational, not just a restraint of freedom.¹⁹ Therefore, at LPKA Class I Medan, children are not allowed to be assigned to work like adult prisoners, but are focused on formal and informal education programs.

To prevent the recurrence of criminal acts (recidivism), LPKA organizes an education program to pursue Packages A, B, and C. Abu Huraerah argues that education is the most powerful social rehabilitation tool to break the chain of crime in children, because it provides them with intellectual capital to survive properly²⁰. In addition to formal education, religious guidance is also the main pillar. As explained by Bambang Waluyo, internalizing spiritual values in the coaching process functions as an internal controller so that children have a strong moral fortress after returning to society.²¹

Practical skills programs such as hairdressing and air conditioning service at LPKA Medan also play a vital role. This training aims to equip children with economic independence. This is in line with Soerjono Soekanto's view that one of the driving factors for criminal acts is the lack of economic access or job skills, so that the provision of technical skills is a concrete preventive step²². In the end, the success of this entire program requires synergy between LPKA, families, and outside agencies. Without social integration support from the community, children will be vulnerable to returning to the old negative environment.

2. obstacles in the Special Children's Development Institution (LPKA) in carrying out coaching, so that children who are in conflict with the law do not repeat criminal acts

The implementation of coaching at the Medan Class I Special Children's Development Institution (LPKA) practically faces various complex challenges. As stated by Gultom, the effectiveness of child development is highly dependent on the availability of adequate infrastructure and a balanced ratio of officers to the number of fostered children.²³ However, the reality on the ground shows that there are significant structural barriers. One of the main obstacles is the limitation of human resources. Currently, the

¹⁸Petrus Irwan Masli, *Correctional Management* (Jakarta: Indigo Media, 2010), p. 72.

¹⁹ Barda Nawawi Arief, *Law Enforcement Issues and Criminal Law Policy in Crime Prevention* (Jakarta: Kencana, 2007), p. 115.

²⁰ Abu Huraerah, *Violence Against Children* (Jakarta: Nuansa Cendekia, 2012), p. 88.

²¹ Bambang Waluyo, *Crime and Punishment* (Jakarta: Sinar Grafika, 2008), p. 94.

²² Soerjono Soekanto, *Factors Affecting Law Enforcement* (Jakarta: RajaGrafindo Persada, 2013), p. 63

²³ Maidin Gultom, *Legal Protection of Children and Women* (Bandung: Refika Aditama, 2012), p. 89.

total number of existing employees only amounts to about eighty-two people. This amount is considered insufficient to carry out all supervision and coaching tasks ideally. As a result, there is a phenomenon of task trapping, Where one employee often has to handle more than one responsibility or oversee several activities at once, from work activities to sports.

In addition to personnel limitations, obstacles also arise in terms of physical facilities. Although the formal education program is still running, LPKA Class I Medan currently only has one classroom to serve the Package A, B, and C programs. This condition is in line with Sudarto's opinion that the limitation of physical facilities in correctional institutions is often an inhibiting factor for the achievement of optimal rehabilitation goals²⁴

Another internal obstacle comes from the subject of coaching itself, namely fostered children. Based on the results of interviews, officers often face a lack of willingness or motivation from some children to participate in programmed activities. In some cases, officers must take decisive persuasive actions, even "force" children to participate in worship activities or moral development. This shows that the child's internal awareness to change has not been fully formed. Romli Atmasasmita emphasized that the success of social integration for fostered children is greatly influenced by psychological factors and children's mental readiness in accepting new values during the coaching period.²⁵

Furthermore, an external obstacle that is quite crucial is the lack of involvement and support from the family. It is known that there are some children who are rare, or even never visited by their families since entering the institution. Factors such as long distance, economic conditions, or migrating parents are the main reasons for the lack of these visits. In fact, according to Nashriana, emotional support from the family is a fundamental element in children's psychological recovery process so that they do not feel isolated and lose their identity.²⁶ This lack of support has the potential to hinder the process of social reintegration of children after they are free.

Finally, there are obstacles in the post-coaching aspect (*aftercare*). The institution realizes that the increasing number of children entering LPKA in recent years requires a long-term solution involving outside parties. The absence of a special institution outside LPKA that is tasked with sheltering and distributing former fostered children to the world of work systematically becomes a big gap for recidivism. As emphasized by Dwidja Priyatno, the coaching of children must not stop when they leave the institution, but must be sustainable through supervision and assistance in the community so that children do not fall back into deviant behavior.²⁷

²⁴ Sudarto, *Kapita Selekta Criminal Law* (Bandung: Alumni, 1986), p. 112.

²⁵ Romli Atmasasmita, *Juvenile Criminal Justice System in Indonesia* (Bandung: Mandar Maju, 1997), p. 74.

²⁶ Nashriana, *Legal Protection for Children in Indonesia* (Jakarta: RajaGrafindo Persada, 2011), p. 102.

²⁷ Dwidja Priyatno, *Prison Criminal Implementation System in Indonesia* (Bandung: Refika Aditama, 2006), p.145.

D. Conclusions And Suggestions

The role of Class I Medan Special Child Development Institution (LPKA) in preventing recidivism is carried out through educational, vocational, spiritual, and personality development programs. These programs provide children in conflict with the law with formal education, practical skills, and moral development to support their reintegration into society.

However, the implementation of these programs is constrained by overcapacity, limited personnel and facilities, low participation among some children, insufficient family support, and the absence of an effective post-release aftercare system. These factors may hinder successful reintegration and increase the risk of reoffending. LPKA Class I Medan should strengthen human resources and optimize available facilities to improve the effectiveness of rehabilitation programs. The government and relevant agencies should establish an integrated aftercare system, including vocational placement and family communication support, to facilitate children's transition after release. Families and communities should also provide continuous support and avoid stigmatization to encourage successful social reintegration.

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