



## Analysis of Daily Living Skills Technique of James W Parington and Michael Muller by Teacher of Special Needs School in Deliserdang North Sumatera

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### ABSTRACT

Developing individuals with independent personal characteristics has become one of the primary goals of education in contemporary Indonesia. Numerous studies have demonstrated that daily activity skill contributes positively to both academic achievement and logical thinking abilities. The objective of fostering daily activity skills is not only directed toward students in general but also toward students with special needs, commonly referred to as Children with Special Needs (CWSN). Through the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology, the Indonesian government encourages the development of independent individuals among all students in both mainstream and special education settings.

**This study aims to** examine how teachers in special schools (SLB) develop independent character among students with special needs, particularly students with ASD (Autism Spectrum Autism). The focus on students with ASD is motivated by the continuously increasing prevalence of autism spectrum disorders worldwide, including in Indonesia. **This research employed** a qualitative approach and was conducted at a special school in Deli Serdang Regency. **The findings** indicate that teachers adapted and further developed the basic independence skills framework proposed by James W. Partington and Michael Mueller, tailoring its implementation to the individual characteristics and needs of their students. **Conclusion:** The development of daily living skills for students with autism must consider the unique characteristics of each individual, particularly those in phase A. Basic communication skills can be integrated with other daily living skills activities, and the learning process is more effective when implemented through direct practice and gradual prompting techniques.

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### INTRODUCTION

Especially for student with special needs, ability of daily living skills is an important fundamental goal which always intergrated to almost all subjects and learning project at school. The ability to achieve personal of daily living skills among students with special needs will encourage the development of other aspects in their learning and future lives, such as the ability to work, socialize within their environment, and even ensure competence in financial management ( Krempley, MSW, & Schmidt). The Indonesian government, through the Ministry of Education and Culture, has integrated the interests of developing daily living skills activities for children with special needs through a special program, known as PROSUS (Special Program), or they called it with bina- diri, self-development, in every special needs school unit (Rafikayati et al., 2022). For students with visual impairments, PROSUS is known as the orientation and mobility development program. This program focuses on developing the ability to read and write using Braille techniques, as well as enhancing daily living skills (Activity of Daily Living/ADL) that has been adjusted to the visual needs of the learners (Activity Daily Living/ADL) (Hasanah, 2019).

For students with ASD (Autism Spectrum Disorder), prosus is implemented in the form of the PMDS (Self-Care Management Program). This program aims to enable students with ASD to develop basic daily life skills at an early stage, ultimately allowing them to become independent individuals within the family environment, and further achieve independent person as social beings within the broader community. This program is designed to facilitate students with ASD in developing foundational daily activities skills from an early stage, ultimately enabling them to function independently within the family environment and to achieve autonomy as social individuals in broader community life (Seran, Wardany, & Herlina, 2025) (Ramadhany, Hadis, & Zulfitriah , 2026).





Table 1. Implementation of daily living skills of Deep Learning at Special Needs School

Level	Daily living skills focusing
Primary	Focusing to development of knowledge, skills, and attitudes, with the objective of fostering a foundation for critical thinking and problem-solving capabilities
Special Needs School	Instruction emphasizes the development of life skills (Activities of Daily Living/ADL) and social competencies, implemented through adaptive teaching approaches supported by intensive guidance, sensory-based activities, and the utilization of assistive technologies.

In the Deep Learning approach (an educational approach that began to be implemented in Indonesia in 2024), the urgency building of independent individual of self-care skills is emphasized, particularly in special education institutions (Special Needs School -SLB) (Kemdikdasmen, 2025), this approach highlights learning that prioritizes the development of life skills (Activities of Daily Living/ADL) and social skills, through the use of adaptive teaching methods accompanied by intensive support, sensory-based activities, and the utilization of assistive technology.

Self care skills mean of James W. Partington and Michael Mullers Kemandirian sendiri menurut oleh James W. Parington dan Michael M. Mueller (Partington & Mueller, 2012) consist of six stages, (1) Basic Living Skills Assessment Protocol (2) Home Skills Assessment Protocol (3) Community Participation Skills Assessment Protocol (4) School Skills Assessment Protocol (5) Independent Living Skills Assessment Protocol (6) Vocational Skills Assessment Protocol. For children with GSA, especially at the early age level, the independence target achieved is stage 1, namely Basic Living Skills Assessment which consists of (1) Self-management (self-control ability) (2) Basic Communication (3) Dressing (4) Toileting (5) Grooming (6) Bathing (7) Self Safety (8) Night time routines.

Given the urgency of achieving basic self care skills, an in-depth and comprehensive examination of the characteristics of learners with autism spectrum disorder is required, particularly based on their levels of support needs and developmental profiles. This understanding serves as a foundation for determining appropriate instructional models, enabling Special Programs (PROSUS) to be implemented in an integrated, effective, and individualized manner. Furthermore, a systematic and continuous evaluation process is essential to measure the development of how independent person can be achieved, as well as to assess the effectiveness of educational interventions in supporting Activities of Daily Living (ADL) among learners with autism spectrum disorder (Odom et al., 2021) (Wike Afsari Sinaga et al., 2025).

This study aims to examine how classroom learning practices are implemented in autism classes within the Special Program (PROSUS) for students with autism spectrum disorder, particularly at Phase A level in Special Needs School (SLB) in Deli Serdang. Phase A in this school consists of 16 students, and this study does not consider gender or verbal and non-verbal aspects in the data collection, as the number of students with autism at this level is relatively limited. Future research is expected to involve a larger number of participants to provide more comprehensive findings.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Autism

Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is a neurodevelopmental condition characterized by deficits in social communication and the presence of restricted interests and repetitive behaviors(Hodges et al., 2020). Individuals with ASD generally experience difficulties in establishing social interactions with others, as indicated by impairments in social communication, including limited eye contact during interactions. This condition can affect an individual's ability to understand social cues, build interpersonal relationships, and maintain reciprocal communication effectively(Stuart et al., 2023).

Numerous studies, including those utilizing Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI), have identified abnormal brain development in children with autism aged 2 to 5 years, particularly in the frontal and temporal lobes, as well as reduced volumes of gray matter (GM), white matter (WM), and the amygdala compared to typically developing children of the same age(Hashem et al., 2020). These developmental abnormalities are believed to be influenced not only by genetic or DNA-related factors but also by various biological and environmental factors that disrupt the development of the nervous system from the prenatal stage through early life(Love et al., 2024), Meanwhile, research on hereditary aspects continues to evolve and remains an area of ongoing investigation (Sandin et al., 2024).

In addition to the deficits in social and communication abilities, recent research has increasingly highlighted the potential of individuals with ASD. This has served as a driving force for academics, researchers, and practitioners to develop various instructional strategies and conduct extensive research, with the aim of improving quality of life and ensuring a better future for individuals with autism spectrum disorder.





Table 2. Few Findings about Autism Potential

No	Author	Metodelogy	Findings	Contribution for ASD student
1	Muñoz et al. (2018)	Digital gaming experiments	showed an increase in logical thinking through stimulation with coding games.	Demonstrates the importance of a visual-interactive approach.
2	Zhao et al. (2024)	Neuroimaging case study	Children with ASD who are gifted in arithmetic have unique brain development	They have a high potential for numerical abilities that can be detected early on.
3	Katusic et al. (2021)	Population of Kohort Studi	Common or more ASD kids, 50 % have average IQ or higher.	Refuting the assumption of GSA cognitive inferiority
4	Zoohorian et al. (2024)	Observation and survey class	GSA students' mathematical understanding is achieved through visual methods	Validation of visual learning styles for numeracy.
5	Li et al. (2024)	Teacher interview	AI interventions have been positively received for numerical learning in inclusive classrooms.	Expansion of data-driven technology for GSA.
6	(Woods & Estes, 2023)	survey	Individuals demonstrate an inherent capacity to filter negative influences in social interactions, maintain honesty and integrity, focus on their strengths while disregarding non-relevant aspects, exhibit positive relational abilities—particularly with animals—and show enhanced visual-spatial reasoning skills.”	he presence of the SASSI instrument (Survey of Autistic Strengths, Skills, and Interests)
7	(Halder et al., 2024)	Quisioner	Strengths include abilities in drawing, memorization, arithmetic, musical excellence, and outstanding visual skills. However, these strengths are spectrum-based and differ across individuals. Their unique responses to the environment are often misinterpreted as deficits by the general public, compounded by a lack of knowledge, awareness, and proper teacher orientation	The need for in-depth understanding, variations in learning techniques according to student characteristics

Based on the table above, the research findings regarding individuals with autism indicate that approximately 50% of individuals with autism have average or even above-average IQ levels compared to typically developing children. In general, children with autism demonstrate potential in numeracy and arithmetic abilities. With appropriate stimulation, improvements in logical thinking skills have been observed among children with autism.

Furthermore, research using the SASSI instrument (Survey of Autistic Strengths, Skills, and Interests), which is designed to assess the potential of individuals with autism, has revealed that individuals with autism are generally capable of filtering out negative influences from their social interactions. They tend to independently disregard aspects that do not align with their strengths and interests, which in turn promotes deep understanding and mastery in areas they are passionate about. In addition, they have been shown to possess stronger visual-spatial abilities, and their sincerity is reflected in their positive relationships, such as their ability to care for animals.

From several studies, it is generally found that the strengths of children with autism lie in their strong visual-spatial abilities, their capacity to remember symbols and logos, and their ability to recognize patterns quickly and accurately. They are also sensitive to spatial and sensory conditions that may disrupt their sensory processing, such as environments that are too bright, too dark, involve inappropriate or flickering lighting, as well as certain sounds

**PROSUS (Special Program)**

PROSUS, or the self-care program, is a program mandated by the government for implementation in every Special School (Sekolah Luar Biasa/SLB) as a support system for achieving basic daily living skills and its developmental stages among students with special needs (Septiaji & Sartinah, 2024; Suarnizal et al., 2024). The





implementation of PROSUS varies across schools, depending on the characteristics of the students' environment as well as regional policy conditions.

For students with visual impairments, PROSUS is known as the orientation and mobility development program, which is related to the use of Braille and mobility skills. Meanwhile, for students with autism spectrum disorder and intellectual disabilities, PROSUS is implemented in the form of the PMDS (Self-Care Management Program). In general, PROSUS developed in special schools for students with intellectual disabilities is also applied to students with ASD, including: (1) self-care (eating, drinking, personal hygiene), (2) personal management (dressing, grooming), (3) self-help (maintaining personal safety and responding to hazards), (4) communication (verbal, written, gestures, and visual), and (5) adaptation (Ayuningtyas et al., 2023; Suarnizal et al., 2024).

Teachers in special education settings (SLB) employ various techniques in implementing PROSUS, including demonstration and repetitive practice, as well as the TEACCH (Treatment and Education of Autistic and Related Communication Handicapped Children) method, a structured instructional approach that emphasizes learners' individual needs, interests, and skills (Rafikayati et al., 2022). Several international studies have highlighted that the teaching of daily live skills is implemented through video modeling, utilizing tablet-based media as instructional support (Rega et al., 2018), using pictures and videos (Cihak, 2011), directing and modeling (Duncan et al., 2021).

### METHOD

This is a qualitative research design with a case study approach. The primary objective of the study is to gain an in-depth understanding of instructional practices implemented by teachers in developing the daily live skills of students with autism through the PROSUS program. The case study approach is used as it allows the researcher to explore in detail the phenomena occurring within a specific setting, namely SLB Mutiara Hati in Deli Serdang, by directly examining how teachers design, implement, and evaluate the PMDS program. Data were collected through interviews, observations, and documentation, enabling a comprehensive understanding of the strategies, techniques, and challenges faced by teachers in implementing independent-focused learning. The data were obtained from 16 students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) at Phase A level, aged between 7 and 12 years, without distinguishing gender and without considering the verbal or non-verbal conditions of the students. Data collection and research were conducted during the second semester (January 2026 – April 2026). Interviews were conducted with the classroom teachers of these students; among the 16 phase A students, there were three classroom teachers involved.

Table 3. Interview Questions for level A (phase a) Autism Classroom Teachers

No	Question of interview
1	How many students in level (A) with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) are enrolled in this school?
2	What is the name of the Special Development Program (PROSUS) for students with ASD in this school?
3	What types of basic daily living skills are taught to students with ASD?
4	What techniques do teachers use in implementing the Self-Care Program (PMDS) for each student?
5	How long is the intervention conducted, and what are the outcomes?

The interview consisted of five in-depth questions, supported by evidence and documentation provided by the teachers. After obtaining the responses, as well as supporting documentation such as photographs and student development records, the collected data were analyzed to draw conclusions.

### RESULT

Based on the research conducted from January 2026 regarding the implementation of the Special Development Program (PROSUS) at SLB Mutiara Hati, two major findings were obtained. General Findings (1) At SLB Mutiara Hati, students who enroll are first assessed before entering Phase A as part of the class placement process according to their characteristics and abilities. Preparatory classes, namely P1 and P2 (Preparation 1 and Preparation) (2) Preparatory classes are provided for students who need to adapt to the school environment. The interventions focus on strengthening sensory functions, improving attention, and developing responsiveness (3) Teachers working with all categories of students with special needs provide PROSUS-based learning activities tailored to the specific disabilities and developmental needs of their students. With Specific Findings (1) In the Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Phase A classes, there were 16 students diagnosed with autism, consisting of 5 female students and 11 male students (2) Among these 16 students, 8 were classified as non-verbal (3) Of the 16 students, 2 entered the new academic year still using diapers. After receiving intervention through prompting and direct practice, both students no longer required diapers after approximately one month and were able to demonstrate gestures indicating the need to urinate or defecate.

The findings generally indicate that: (1) At SLB Mutiara Hati, before students enter Phase A, an assessment is conducted to classify students according to their characteristics and abilities; (2) Preparatory classes, namely P1 and P2 (Preparation 1 and Preparation 2), are provided for students who need to adapt to the school environment first.





Interventions in these classes include strengthening sensory functions and developing attention and response skills; and (3) Teachers provide instruction related to the achievement of the Special Development Program (PROSUS) according to the specific disabilities of each student. More specifically, the findings revealed that: (1) There were 16 students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) in the Phase A autism class, consisting of 5 female students and 11 male students; (2) Of these 16 students, 8 were classified as non-verbal; (3) Two of the students entered the new academic year still using diapers, but after one month of intervention through prompting and direct practice, they no longer required diapers and were able to demonstrate gestures indicating the need to urinate or defecate; (4) Basic independence skills targeted in Phase A included communication skills, appropriate eating and drinking skills, independent toileting skills, the ability to put on and remove socks and shoes, handwashing skills, and toothbrushing skills; and (5) Differences in the achievement of independence skills were observed across classes, depending on the individual conditions of the students.

Based on the interview results obtained from the prepared questions, interviews were conducted with three Phase A autism classroom teachers. All teachers implemented the same special development program, namely PMDS (Self-Care Program), which focused on the development of communication skills, eating and drinking skills, independent toileting skills, and the ability to put on and remove socks and shoes. The techniques used by the teachers varied according to the characteristics and needs of their students. However, in general, direct practice and gradual prompting were found to be highly effective in supporting the achievement of PMDS learning objectives.

Within one semester, most students were able to eat and drink independently, including opening their lunch containers and feeding themselves. Some students, however, would only spoon rice if side dishes were not mixed into the meal or were not cut into manageable pieces. Achievement in toileting skills varied considerably among students. Of the 16 students, the two who initially used diapers successfully discontinued their use after approximately two months of direct practice and gradual prompting interventions, supported by strong parental involvement and commitment.

Table 4. Interview Results with GSA Student Class Teachers

No	Question of interview	Grade 1 teacher	Grade 2 teacher	Grade 3 teacher
1	How many level A (phase) students are enrolled in your class?	7	7	2
2	What is the name of the Special Development Program (PROSUS) for students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) in this school?	PMDS	PMDS	PMDS
3	What types of basic independence skills are taught to students with ASD?	Basic communication skills, toothbrushing skills, independent toileting skills (urinating and defecating without diapers), eating and drinking skills, handwashing skills, and the ability to put on and remove shoes and socks.	Basic communication skills, toothbrushing skills, eating and drinking skills, handwashing skills, and the ability to put on and remove shoes and socks.	Basic communication skills, toothbrushing skills, eating and drinking skills, handwashing skills, and the ability to put on and remove shoes and socks.
4	What teaching techniques do teachers use when implementing the Self-Care Program (PMDS) for each student?	Direct practice and prompting.	Direct practice and prompting.	Direct practice and prompting.
5	How long is the intervention carried out, and what outcomes have been achieved?	Depends on student characteristics	Depends on student characteristics	Depends on student characteristics

### DISCUSSION

Regarding the basic daily life skills proposed by James W. Partington and Michael Mueller for students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), the findings at SLB Mutiara Hati revealed that Phase A autism teachers primarily focused on Basic Activities of Daily Living (ADL), which were further adapted and developed according to students' needs. These included: (1) the development of communication skills, (2) grooming skills, and (3) toileting skills. Grooming skills were implemented through eating-related activities, such as using a spoon appropriately, scooping food correctly, and eating neatly. In the context of eating independence, grooming skills were further connected to the second stage of the Home Skills Assessment Protocol, namely washing eating utensils after meals. Meanwhile, the first component of Basic ADL, Self-Management, particularly emotional self-regulation, was addressed through P1 and P2





classes (Preparation Class 1 and Preparation Class 2), which serve as preliminary stages before students enter phase A. These classes are designed to facilitate students' adaptation to the school environment.

Furthermore, the findings indicated that interventions tailored to the characteristics and individual needs of students had a significant impact on the achievement of targeted independence skills, particularly basic independent competencies. In general, direct practice combined with gradual prompting produced positive outcomes in developing independence among students with ASD in Phase A. This approach was found to be effective for both male and female students, as well as for verbal and non-verbal learners.

The study also found that systematic direct instruction and gradual practice greatly assisted students in understanding and following activity sequences. Consistent routines were maintained, such as beginning with sitting down after removing a school bag, followed by taking off the right and left shoes, placing them on the floor, removing the right sock and placing it inside the right shoe, followed by the left sock inside the left shoe, standing up, and finally placing both shoes containing the socks on the classroom shoe rack. Maintaining a fixed sequence helped students focus on the intended task while minimizing distractions. Prompting was also implemented progressively. At the beginning of instruction, teachers provided direct guidance accompanied by verbal cues, such as "Let's take off your shoes," followed by "Let's put them on the shoe rack." Over time, both physical assistance and verbal prompts were gradually reduced, allowing students to independently understand and follow the classroom entry routine, including greeting others, removing shoes, placing socks inside the shoes, and storing them neatly on the shoe rack.

However, it should be noted that while direct practice and prompting were relatively effective in developing toothbrushing skills, challenges were observed during the rinsing stage. Although teachers consistently demonstrated how to rinse and spit out the water appropriately, four out of the sixteen students experienced difficulties in expelling the water after rinsing. This finding suggests that certain self-care skills may require more intensive and individualized interventions compared to others.

#### CONCLUSION

Based on this research, it can be concluded that ADL Basic by James W Parington and Michael Muller has been developed according to the needs of teachers at SLB. Mutiara Hati, especially teachers with autism spectrum classes, phase A. Techniques that are quite effective in phase A related to prosus are direct practice and gradual prompting, where direct practice must be demonstrated systematically, sequentially with the aim of ignoring things that disturb the child's level of focus related to the goal. With this research, it is hoped that there will be other research developments related to the implementation of techniques or learning models that can increase student independence gradually according to the needs and characteristics of students

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*Keterampilan bina diri merupakan keterampilan seorang individu dalam mengurus dirinya sendiri . Kegiatan mengurus diri sendiri ini mulai dari keterampilan merawat diri seperti mandi , toilet training , mencuci tangan , menggosok gigi , . 124–132.*

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