

## The Role of Parents in Forming Children's Independence

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### Abstract

Independence is an essential aspect that needs to be instilled in children. Independence becomes a desired goal for every parent, especially as their children enter the school phase. Therefore, parents should provide opportunities for their children to grow and develop, enabling them to cultivate independence effectively. This research aims to investigate the role of parents in shaping children's independence. The study employs a qualitative descriptive method, with the subjects consisting of five children attending RA Siti Khodijah Majalengka. The research was conducted in February 2023. Data were collected through interview, observation, and documentation techniques. The research findings highlight the crucial role of parents in fostering children's independence. Parents must provide opportunities and room for their children to continuously learn about independence, while also consistently motivating and reminding students to be self-reliant, avoid dependency on others, and be capable of self-direction in the future. Throughout the process of cultivating independence, parental consistency and patience are vital, encompassing every phase and aspect of developing independence in children aged 5-6 years at RA Siti Khodijah Majalengka. The implementation of stimulation through habitual practices in shaping the independence of 5-6-year-old children at RA Siti Khodijah Majalengka is carried out through several school programs or activities, and this can be extended to the home environment or wherever the child is situated, specifically through life skills. Notably, activities conducted at school have a significant impact on fostering independence in children. Children are consistently provided with motivation, stimuli, and positive habits, repeated on a regular basis within the school setting.

## INTRODUCTION

Children exhibit distinct characteristics that differentiate them from adults. They tend to be active, dynamic, enthusiastic, and possess a significant curiosity about various matters (Baccassino & Pinnelli, 2022; Maulidya, 2020). During early childhood, children undergo a critical and sensitive period for shaping attitudes, values, and behavioral patterns in the future (Lippard et al., 2018). Within this critical period, a child's potential, inclinations, and sensitivities develop when they receive appropriate stimuli (Yafie et al., 2020).

To ensure positive development, children require suitable stimuli and treatment (Kucirkova & Flewitt, 2020). Conversely, neglecting a child's critical period would render external influences ineffective in character formation (Machmud & Alim, 2018). This phase of childhood is also known as a significant golden period (Hasanah, 2018).

Education doesn't solely transpire within school but also within the family and the surrounding environment as informal education (Nahdi & Jatisunda, 2020). The role of parents, especially within the family context, is pivotal in child education (Olokooba & Owoyale-Abdulganiy, 2022; Shehu, 2019). Parents are a child's first teachers and play a primary role in their growth and development (Staniewski & Awruk, 2018). The education a child receives from the family, particularly parents, lays the foundation for further schooling (Kumpulainen et al., 2020). Parents have a responsibility to support and oversee their child's education and growth, as they are a child's initial educators within the family (Muhsin, 2017).

Independence in children is a desired goal for every parent, especially as children enter the school phase. Independence isn't innate; rather, it's an outcome of learning and development processes (Asmanita, 2019). Broadly defined, independence is an individual's ability to stand on their own, take initiatives, solve problems unassisted, and direct behavior toward excellence (Ramadhani et al., 2019). The early childhood period is regarded as a golden time to foster independence, emphasizing the importance of early cultivation (Asmanita, 2019).

Several strategies exist to develop children's independence, including instilling trust, fostering age-appropriate habits and discipline, and involving parents and teachers in consistent supervision (Asmanita, 2019). Recent research on forming early childhood independence underscores the crucial role of parents. Supportive factors encompass parents acting as guides, motivators, and facilitators, while inhibiting factors involve parental consistency in collaboration (Khotimah & Zulkarnaen, 2023). Parents should be primarily responsible for the education of their children (Fajriati et al., 2022). Parents should provide opportunities for their children to grow and develop, enabling them to cultivate independence effectively.

In this study, the role of parents in shaping early childhood independence takes center stage. Independence extends beyond a child's ability to stand alone; it encompasses overcoming challenges, taking initiatives, and directing behavior towards success (Asmanita, 2019). Thus, this research highlights the importance of collaboration between teachers and parents in fostering early childhood independence. While previous similar studies exist, this research adds novelty by depicting a distinct context and emphasizing the crucial role of parents in developing children's independence.

## **METHODS**

This research is a literature study with a qualitative approach. This approach does not involve quantitative data calculations and is more focused on description and disclosure of facts that occur at the research site (Wolcott et al., 2020). The method used in this research is a qualitative descriptive method, aiming to depict existing facts about the role of parents in shaping the independence of children aged 5-6 years at RA Siti Khodijah Majalengka.

This study employs a case study approach, where the researcher conducts in-depth analysis of the role of parents in forming independence among children in Group B at RA Siti Khodijah Majalengka. The research location is RA Siti Khodijah Majalengka in West Jakarta, with data collection carried out in February 2023. The research subjects involve 5 children aged 5-6 years, 4 educators (teachers) who teach the group, and 5 parents of the students who serve as the research sample.

The collected data is divided into two types: primary data and secondary data. Primary data is obtained directly from informants through interviews and observations. This data encompasses actions and statements provided by the informants. Meanwhile, secondary data consists of additional data obtained from written documents related to the research object.

The data collection process involves observation, interviews, and documentation techniques. Observation is conducted to observe the learning and habituation processes performed by the children in the class related to the formation of independence, as well as the role of parents in this context. Interviews are conducted with informants directly and also through Google Form to gather more detailed information. Documentation includes a general overview of RA Siti Khodijah Majalengka, children's activities at school, and documentation of the research activities.

Data validity testing is conducted through triangulation, which involves comparing data from several relevant sources. Source triangulation and technique triangulation are employed to verify data obtained through interviews and observations.

Data analysis is conducted following the Miles and Huberman (1994) model, which includes three stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Data reduction involves collecting essential information, identifying themes and patterns, and eliminating irrelevant information. Data display is carried out through brief narratives, charts, and inter-category relationships. Conclusion drawing is performed to address the research questions established beforehand.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

RA Siti Khodijah Majalengka is an Islamic Kindergarten located in Karyamukti Village, Panyingkiran Subdistrict, Majalengka. The learning process involves stimulating children, one of which is through habituation during activities conducted from Monday to Friday, starting at 8:00 AM to 10:30 AM. The observations of children's arrival at the school are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Observation results on the arrival of children to school

No	Activity Indicators Stimulated	Role of Parents	Children	Role of Teachers
1	Children come to school delivered	√	√	
2	Children are escorted to the school gate	√	√	
3	Children kiss their parent's hand	√	√	
4	Children are greeted by the teacher		√	√
5	Children say hello		√	
6	Children kiss the teacher's hand		√	√
7	Children take off their shoes		√	
8	Children put shoes on the shoe rack		√	
9	Children wash their hands with running water and soap		√	
10	Children enter the class by saying hello		√	

From the data presented in Table 1, it is evident that the children arrive at school accompanied by their parents, whether it be their mothers, fathers, or other guardians. The children's arrivals vary in methods, including walking, using bicycles, motorcycles, or cars. Upon reaching the school gate, the children are greeted by the designated teacher on duty for the day.

Before entering the classroom, the children perform a series of actions. They greet their parents or guardians who accompanied them by kissing their hands and exchanging greetings without needing reminders. At the school gate, the duty teacher welcomes the children with open arms and greets them, and the children reciprocate by greeting the teacher and kissing their hand. Some parents signal or remind their children to carry out these actions, while others allow their children the autonomy to do so without intervention.

Subsequently, the children proceed to remove their shoes in the designated area. Some children are capable of doing so independently, while others seek assistance from their teacher or

accompanying adult. After removing their shoes, the children wash their hands with running water and soap in accordance with the school's regulations. They have been prompted through prior habituation by their teachers about the importance of handwashing. This measure is intended to ensure that the children have clean hands before entering the classroom. Following handwashing, the children enter the classroom, greet their teacher, and kiss their hand. They then choose their desired seating spots and place their bags on the chairs they have selected. They also prepare their reading books and tilawati books for the integrated reading activity. At RA Siti Khodijah Majalengka, the process of fostering independence also occurs through various school activities. The children have been taught about the steps and processes of preparing their own learning materials.

Every day, there is an integrated reading activity involving reading regular books and religious texts. The children are accustomed to preparing their own learning materials, which entails tasks such as opening their bags, retrieving books, and forming a line to read. While awaiting their turn, some engage in conversations with friends, some immediately prepare themselves to read, and others venture outside to play. Once the reading activity concludes, the children return the books to their respective bags.

Table 2. Observation Results At The Start of Learning

No	Activity Indicators Stimulated	Role of Parents	Children	Role of Teachers
1	Children go to their respective classes, without being escorted		√	
2	Children prepare their own reading books and tilawati books for integrated reading activities		√	
3	Children queued waiting for their turn to read		√	
4	After the integrated reading activity, the children put the books back into their respective bags		√	√
5	Children play and socialize while waiting for the bell to ring		√	
6	The bell rings, the children line up		√	√
7	Children sing, move under the direction of the teacher		√	√
8	The chosen child becomes the leader of the pledge		√	√
9	Children read pledges, creeds, hadiths, pray		√	√
10	Children enter their respective classes		√	

While waiting for the school bell to ring, the children fill their time by playing or socializing with their peers. Once the school bell rings, the children line up in front of the classroom under the guidance of their teacher. During the line-up process, stimulation through habituation is also incorporated, involving activities such as singing and moving their bodies in response to the accompanying songs. In this process, the children are given the opportunity to take the lead, stepping forward to lead the recitation of pledges, including reading greetings, the declaration of faith (shahada), a religious saying seeking knowledge, a prayer for entering the classroom, and concluding with greetings. All of these actions are conducted under the guidance and supervision of the designated duty teacher, with a scheduled rotation. Following this, the children enter their respective classrooms to engage in their teaching and learning activities facilitated by their respective homeroom teachers.

The data regarding the core activity has been elaborated in Table 3. Based on the data presented, it can be concluded that the children in group B1, who are the subjects of the study, have demonstrated the ability to independently perform and prepare activities.

The activities commence with the recitation of short surahs (chapters) and daily prayers under the guidance of the teacher. The children are given the opportunity to take turns leading the prayers.

One of the habitual practices includes reciting short surahs, daily prayers, and the names of Allah (Asmaul Husna). Subsequently, the teacher provides an explanation of the day's lesson plan, and the children attentively listen to the explanation.

Table 3. Observation Results During Learning

No	Activity Indicators Stimulated	Role of Parents	Children	Role of Teachers
1	Children enter their respective classes		√	
2	Children pray led by the child whose turn it is		√	
3	Children murozaah short surah, daily prayer and asmaul husna		√	√
4	The teacher explains the learning activities, the children listen to the teacher's explanation		√	√
5	Children prepare equipment to be used		√	
6	The children took the equipment in each cupboard locker		√	
7	Children do activities		√	
8	Children collect activities at the table provided		√	
9	Children tidy up equipment after use		√	
10	Children play and choose what they want		√	
11	Preparing for self-development activities, the teacher reviews the activities that have been carried out		√	

Before commencing their learning activities, the children are asked to ensure their readiness. They are questioned about their understanding of the tasks assigned by the teacher. Each child retrieves the necessary materials from their individual lockers. They then proceed to work on the assigned tasks or activities provided by the teacher.

Upon completing the tasks, the children organize their materials. All of these processes are undertaken with enthusiasm. Following the completion of their tasks, the children are granted time to play and choose Exploratory Learning Activities as per their preferences.

From the aforementioned facts, it is evident that the children in group B1 have displayed the ability to independently participate in learning activities, prepare materials, and execute tasks with great enthusiasm.

Additionally, within the classroom activities, the observation of self-development activities has also been noted. The findings from these observations are outlined in Table 4.

Table 4. Observation Results on Self-Development Activities

No	Activity Indicators Stimulated	Role of Parents	Children	Role of Teachers
1	Children prepare and take extracurricular equipment according to the schedule in their respective lockers		√	
2	Children gather in the place provided by the teacher		√	√
3	Children prepare to take part in extracurricular activities with their respective eskul teachers		√	√
4	The teacher explains extracurricular activities and the children listen		√	√
5	Children take part in extracurricular activities, according to the direction of the eskul teacher		√	√
6	After extracurricular activities, the children return their extracurricular equipment to their respective lockers		√	
7	Children get ready to rest and prepare for life skill activities		√	
8	Children waiting their turn to wash their hands		√	

Based on the data presented in Table 4, after the classroom learning activities are concluded, the scheduled extracurricular or self-development activities commence. The children are given the opportunity to prepare their own extracurricular materials from their individual lockers. Subsequently, they gather at a designated area as prepared by the teachers. The class teacher and extracurricular teacher collaborate to conduct these activities. The extracurricular teacher explains the upcoming activity, and the children attentively listen to the explanation. Following this, the children engage in the extracurricular activity as directed by the extracurricular teacher. Upon completion, they return their extracurricular materials to their respective lockers.

Moving on to the break and Life Skill activities as outlined in Table 5, following the learning activities, the children are given the opportunity to rest and have a meal together. The school has provided nutritious and healthy food for the children. The teachers have arranged food items such as rice, dishes, vegetables, and fruits on the tables. The children are responsible for serving themselves, including taking utensils and food. Prior to starting the break, the teachers explain the food that has been prepared and its benefits for the body. The children line up and wait their turn to collect utensils and the food that has been prepared by the teachers.

From Table 6, it is evident that the children are called by their names when their parents or guardians arrive to pick them up. The children retrieve their shoes from the shoe lockers and put on their own shoes. Subsequently, they greet the teacher by touching their hands and offering a salutation. The children are then greeted by their parents or guardians, who also touch hands and offer a salutation. After this process, the children head home with their respective parents or guardians.

From this series of activities, it can be concluded that at RA Siti Khodijah Majalengka, children are taught to undertake numerous tasks and activities independently, ranging from preparing and executing learning activities to engaging in extracurricular pursuits and the processes of resting and heading home. This reflects the school's effort in fostering independence among children from an early age.

Table 5. Observation results at Rest and Life Skill activities

No	Activity Indicators Stimulated	Role of Parents	Children	Role of Teachers
1	The teacher gives an explanation of food and its benefits for the body		√	√
2	Children line up and queue to get cutlery		√	
3	Children take food: rice, side dishes and vegetables and fruit that have been prepared		√	
4	Children sitting preparing to eat with friends		√	
5	The teacher reminds us to recite prayers before eating and drinking		√	√
6	Children eat by himself		√	
7	After eating, the child prepares to wash the cutlery that has been used by himself		√	
8	Children return the clean cutlery to the place provided by the teacher		√	
9	Teacher reminds to pray after eating and drinking		√	√
10	Children get ready to go home and sing		√	√

Afterward, the children will sit together with their friends, preparing for a communal meal. The teacher will also remind them to recite a prayer before eating and drinking. The children will eat on their own, and following the meal, they will prepare to wash their utensils that they have used and return the cleaned utensils to the designated area as provided by the teacher. The teacher will also remind them to conclude the meal with a prayer. The children then get ready to head home, singing as they do so.

Observations were also conducted in the children's home environments and with their parents as informants. The researcher visited each child's home according to a schedule agreed upon with the parents. The focus of the stimulated and observed activities was the implementation of life skills at home. The extended activities that were stimulated at school are explained in Table 5.

Table 6. Observation results at pick-up and return

No	Activity Indicators Stimulated	Role of Parents	Children	Role of Teachers
1	Children praying		√	√
2	Children waiting to be picked up and called by name		√	√
3	Children take shoes in shoe rack locker		√	√
4	Children put on their own shoes		√	
5	Children kiss teacher's hand		√	√
6	Children say hello		√	√
7	Children are greeted by parents	√	√	
8	Children kiss parent's hand	√	√	
9	Children come home	√	√	

From the findings of the research conducted at RA Siti Khodijah Majalengka, several findings were identified. Firstly, the children had become accustomed to responding to the practices that encourage independence at the age of 5-6 in group B. They were able to carry out tasks independently in every activity and understood their responsibilities, both following the teacher's instructions and taking personal initiative. Secondly, RA Siti Khodijah Majalengka has a prominent program, namely the daily life skills activities. This program is designed to instill independence in children from an early age and is practiced by the school. Thirdly, during observations, the children exhibited behaviors that aligned with practices that foster independence. Upon arriving at school and entering the classroom, they greeted the teacher and the researcher independently. These actions exemplified independent behavior, where they carried out these actions on their own. As the learning session began, the children displayed independent behavior toward their peers, such as reminding each other to tidy up their belongings. Fourthly, the children already possessed an understanding of personal hygiene and maintaining cleanliness in their surroundings. Most of them kept their nails clean, and they also understood proper waste disposal. Moreover, they were accustomed to washing their hands with flowing water and soap as a part of their independent efforts to maintain cleanliness and health.

Additionally, observations were also carried out at each child's home. In this context, the researcher visited the homes of the informants and observed various activities performed. However, the primary focus of these observations was on the development of life skills, as indicated by the following activity indicators: (1) The children were accustomed to responding to stimuli that fostered independence at the age of 5-6 in group B. They were capable of independently performing various activities and understood the tasks they needed to carry out, both following the teacher's instructions and through personal initiative. (2) RA Siti Khodijah Majalengka had a prominent program, namely the daily life skills program. This program aimed to instill independence in children from an early age and was conducted by the school. (3) During the observation process, the children exhibited behavior consistent with practices that promoted independence. Upon arriving at school and entering the classroom, they greeted the teacher and the researcher. This behavior reflected independence, as they performed these actions on their own. Throughout the learning session, the children displayed independent behavior towards their peers, such as reminding each other to tidy up their belongings.



(4) The children had an understanding of personal hygiene and maintaining cleanliness in their surroundings. Most of them kept their nails clean and understood proper waste disposal. Additionally, they were accustomed to washing their hands with flowing water and soap as a manifestation of their independence in maintaining cleanliness and health.

Based on the summarized findings above, it can be concluded that the role of parents in shaping the independence of 5-6-year-old children at RA Siti Khodijah Majalengka holds significant importance, particularly within the home environment. Parents serve as guides, motivators, and facilitators for children, aiming to ensure that their independence is nurtured from an early age into adulthood (Pusparini et al., 2022). Parents and teachers are amongst the guiding and observing figures for children, capable of stimulating and witnessing the development of children's character, including their independence, as parents and teachers are the adults present in the child's developmental environment (Rizkyani et al., 2020). Parents need to emphasize the cultivation of independence in children to foster them as self-reliant individuals (Greenfield et al., 2003; Heine, 2012; Keller et al., 2006; Markus & Kitayama, 1991). From an early age, children are encouraged to explore their environment on their own, away from close physical contact with their caregivers (Gonzalez-Mena & Eyer, 2009; Greenfield et al., 2003; Keller et al., 2006).

This research also indicates that children in group B have become accustomed to practices that aim to foster independence at the age of 5-6. They displayed the ability to execute tasks and activities independently, both following teacher instructions and taking personal initiatives. The teacher is one aspect that influences this learning. By providing guidance and opportunities can make children able to work independently (Agustin et al., 2021). This aligns with Anggraeni's (2017) assertion that independence is manifested in the ability to be responsible for one's actions with little or no assistance from others, or the capacity of an individual to be accountable for their actions without burdening others. Independence inherent in children can support their self-regulation, including decision-making, problem-solving, self-confidence, social skills, and interpersonal intelligence (Rusmayadi & Herman, 2019). RA Siti Khodijah Majalengka's prominent program, the daily life skills activities, has been designed to foster early independence. Through these activities, children develop adaptability and positive behavior, enabling effective actions in facing daily needs and challenges (Shawmi, 2015). These activities provide children the opportunity to develop their independent skills across various aspects of daily life.

During observations, the children displayed behaviors that aligned with the practices aimed at fostering independence. Their behaviors ranged from simple acts like greeting teachers and the researcher upon entering the classroom to behaviors such as reminding peers to organize their personal belongings. Several studies have demonstrated that habituation-based methods are effective in training independence in children (Aini et al., 2023; Ambarsari, 2014; Fajarwatiningtyas & Ishaq, 2021).

From the research outcomes, it can be concluded that the education program at RA Siti Khodijah Majalengka has been effective in cultivating independence in 5-6-year-old children. The habituation programs and daily life skills activities conducted at the school, along with support from parents at home, have collectively contributed to shaping independent behaviors in the children.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings, it can be concluded that the role of teachers in shaping the independence of 5-6 year-old children at RA Siti Khodijah Majalengka is paramount. The partnership between teachers and parents is a key factor in the endeavor to foster the independence of children.



Parents need to provide space for children to learn about independence while continuously offering motivation and reminders to enable them to care for themselves, develop skills autonomously, and possess a clear direction in their future lives.

The process of fostering independence demands patience and consistency from parents, especially in each stage of fostering independence among 5-6 year-old children at RA Siti Khodijah Majalengka. Stimulation programs through habitual practices, such as life skills activities, play a pivotal role in cultivating the independence of children. These activities occur not only within the school environment but also extend to the home or any other setting where the child is situated.

These efforts consistently provide motivation, stimulus, and repeated habituation within the school environment. This concept ensures that children are engaged in continuous independence education and are encouraged to apply this independence across various situations. Hence, the robust collaboration between teachers and parents, coupled with the application of stimulative habitual practices in shaping the independence of 5-6 year-old children at RA Siti Khodijah Majalengka, holds significant implications in molding character and preparing children to confront future challenges.

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