

**THE ROLE OF PARENTS IN SHAPING THE RESPECT  
CHARACTER OF EARLY CHILDHOOD: AT PAUDQU DAARUL  
ATHFAAL TANGERANG**

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**ABSTRACT**

This study was conducted in response to the decline in children's respect toward parents and their surroundings, which has become increasingly evident in the digital era. A lack of attention, support, role modeling, and excessive exposure to technology are among the factors influencing this behavior. The study aimed to describe the role of parents in shaping respect in early childhood. A qualitative descriptive approach was employed with five parents of Class A students at PAUDQU Daarul Athfaal, Tangerang, as participants. Data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation, and analyzed using data reduction, presentation, and verification. The findings show that parents, particularly mothers, play a dominant role in fostering respect through disciplined parenting, positive communication, and the habituation of polite manners in daily life. This study contributes novelty by highlighting how parents in early childhood settings address the challenges of digital exposure in transmitting respect as a core value, an aspect less emphasized in previous studies. The results are also in line with international concerns on the role of digital parenting in promoting children's prosocial and respectful behaviors.



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Keywords: early childhood character, parental role, respect.

## INTRODUCTION

Parents are the primary educators responsible for raising, caring for, and educating children from an early age. Their role is not limited to meeting physical needs such as food and shelter, but also includes shaping the child's personality, attitudes, and character through guidance, example, and daily interactions. As the first educators within the family, parents hold a very strategic position in instilling moral and social values before children become familiar with the formal educational environment (Wahib, 2015).

Childhood, especially early childhood, is a crucial period in which physical, cognitive, social, and emotional development occurs very rapidly. At this stage, parental involvement is highly crucial in shaping a child's character, which later becomes the foundation for their social and personal development. A child's character is not only formed by innate traits but is also greatly influenced by the family environment, parenting style, and daily social interactions (Atik Latifah, 2020; Darmawanti, 2023).

One of the important values in character education is respect. Respect is reflected in a child's ability to communicate politely, appreciate parents and teachers, and treat peers fairly. However, signs of declining respect in children are increasingly evident. This phenomenon is apparent in children's behavior, such as speaking harshly to parents, interrupting conversations, refusing to apologize, or ignoring instructions (Naimah, 2020). At school, similar symptoms appear in the form of rude behavior towards teachers or peers, such as arguing, ignoring reprimands, or bullying.

Various factors contribute to the decline of respect in children. These factors include a lack of attention, support, and role modeling from parents, the absence of a sense of security within the family, as well as excessive demands placed on the child (Darmawanti, 2023). In addition, the rapid development of digital technology also presents new challenges. Children are becoming increasingly familiar with gadgets, online games, and media content that often normalize harsh communication styles, instant gratification mindsets, and selfish behaviors. Without adequate supervision and guidance, this situation can erode the habit of respecting values from an early age (Maulana Ahmad et al., 2024).

From an Islamic perspective, respect is a fundamental part of morality. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said (Hasanah, 2021):

رُكْبِيرُنَا لَيْسَ مِنَّا مَنْ لَمْ يَرْحَمْ صَغِيرَنَا وَيُوقِ

*“Those who do not love the younger ones and do not respect the elders are not part*

*of our group.*” (HR. al-Tirmidzi, no. 1842).

This hadith emphasizes the importance of instilling the value of respect from childhood as part of the moral education of a civilized Muslim.

Nevertheless, the fact is that many parents leave character education entirely to the school due to limited time and busy schedules (Naimah, 2020). This raises an important question: what is the role of parents in instilling the value of respect in young children, especially in the challenging digital era? Several studies have discussed parenting patterns and early childhood development, but further research is still needed regarding the role of parents in shaping respect as one of the core character traits. (Amini & Mariyati, 2021; Syafri et al., 2024).

Based on the description above, this study aims to describe the role of parents in fostering respect in early childhood. By exploring the strategies and challenges faced by parents, particularly in the context of community-based early childhood education, this research is expected to contribute to the understanding of how the value of respect is instilled as a foundation for children's social development in the digital era. To strengthen the analytical basis, the following section presents a literature review covering early childhood character education, the concept of respect from psychological and educational perspectives, the role of parents in character building, previous research findings, and the study's conceptual framework.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### 1. Early Childhood Character Education

Character education in early childhood is the main foundation that will determine the direction of a child's personality development in the future. According to Lickona (Amini & Mariyati, 2021), Character education aims to cultivate good habits (habit of the mind, heart, and action) that enable individuals to live and cooperate in society. In the context of early childhood, character education is carried out through habituation, role modeling, and a conducive environment. (Atik Latifah, 2020). Other research emphasizes that early childhood is a golden age during which character education stimuli will take hold more strongly compared to later ages. (Darmawanti, 2023).

In Indonesia, early childhood character education is regulated through national policies, such as the Ministry of Education and Culture Regulation No. 20 of 2018, which emphasizes the importance of strengthening character education (PPK) in the early childhood education curriculum. One of the main values emphasized is respect, which is closely related to politeness, and appreciation towards parents, teachers, and others.

## **2. The Concept of Respect in the Perspective of Education and Psychology**

Respect is defined as an attitude of valuing and treating others with full politeness, both in verbal and nonverbal communication. (Naimah, 2020). From the perspective of developmental psychology, Piaget (dalam Syafri et al., 2024) emphasizing that children learn to understand social rules through interaction with parents and the environment. Kohlberg later expanded this theory by asserting that respect for authority and social rules is part of the early stages of moral development (Arifiyanti et al., 2024).

From an Islamic perspective, respect is an integral part of morality. A hadith of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) narrated by al-Tirmidhi emphasizes the obligation to respect the elderly and show compassion to the younger ones. (Hasanah, 2021). Thus, respect is not only regarded as a social norm but also as a moral and religious obligation that must be instilled from an early age.

Recent studies show that children's use of electronic media is negatively correlated with parent-child closeness and emotion regulation, which in turn affects children's prosocial behavior (Liu et al., 2024). Furthermore, an evaluation of the digital parenting program in Brazil found that interventions designed with media content and educational messages were able to improve parenting practices and reduce externalizing behavioral problems in children aged 3-6 years (Altafim et al., 2024).

## **3. The Role of Parents in Character Building**

Parents are the first and primary agents of socialization for children. The parenting style applied will determine how children understand the value of respect and practice it in daily life. (Asma Nur, 2022; Wahib, 2015). Baumrind (Syafri et al., 2024) dividing parenting styles into authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, and neglectful, where the authoritative style has been proven to be the most effective in shaping a child's positive character because it combines discipline with emotional warmth.

A study emphasized that active parental involvement in properly guiding children's use of digital technology is very important to prevent the degradation of respect values. (Allika Mawarti, 2022; Hidayatuladkia et al., 2021). Without supervision, children easily imitate aggressive or individualistic behaviors from digital media. On the other hand, parents who practice digital parenting can instill digital literacy while strengthening their children's character values.

## **4. Previous Research**

Several previous studies are relevant to this topic, for instance, the family environment has a significant influence on the development of early childhood character. (Atik Latifah, 2020). Similarly, religious habits and positive communication can strengthen a child's character. (Amini & Mariyati, 2021). Meanwhile, other research shows that mothers, as primary figures, play a very important role in shaping a child's character within the family environment. (Asma Nur, 2022).

Other recent research proves that contextual learning in elementary schools can enhance children's respect for their parents (Solin, 2024). However, this research focuses more on the realm of formal education. Therefore, there is still a research gap regarding how parents, especially in the context of families with young children, play a direct role in instilling a sense of respect.

## 5. Conceptual Framework

Based on the literature review, this study is based on the understanding that:

- a. Character education is the foundation of early childhood development.
- a. a. Respect is a core value that must be instilled from an early age through habituation, exemplary behavior, and communication.
- b. b. Parents are the primary agents in character formation, especially through authoritative parenting, positive communication, and monitoring the use of technology.
- c. c. The challenges of the digital era require parents to develop digital parenting strategies to ensure the formation of children's character remains relevant.

With this framework, the research focuses on how parents at PAUDQU Daarul Athfaal Tangerang carry out their roles in instilling a sense of respect in early childhood.

## METHOD

This research was conducted at PAUDQU Daarul Athfaal, Legok Village, Legok District, Tangerang Regency, Banten Province. The research took place from February to June 2025. The location was chosen based on the existence of a real phenomenon concerning the decline in respect of young children toward their parents and teachers, making it relevant to the focus of the study. The study used a descriptive qualitative design with a field research approach. Qualitative research was chosen because it focuses on in-depth understanding of processes, meanings, and participants' subjective experiences (Handayani, 2020). This design allows researchers to describe in detail the role of parents in shaping the character of respect in early childhood. Data analysis was conducted interactively by referring to the Miles

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and Huberman model, which involves three stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. In the reduction stage, the obtained data is selected and focused on important information according to the research focus. Next, the data is presented in the form of narratives, tables, and documentation to facilitate understanding. The final stage is verification, where the researcher draws valid conclusions through source triangulation. (wawancara, observasi, dan dokumentasi) (Sugiyono, 2019).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study aims to describe the role of parents in shaping the character of respect in early childhood at PAUDQU Daarul Athfaal, Tangerang. Data were obtained through interviews, observations, and documentation with five parents of students in class A. The analysis produced several main themes as follows:

1. **Disciplinary and Consistent Parenting.** Most parents emphasize the importance of discipline in a child's daily life. They encourage children to say goodbye, shake hands, and greet others when going to and returning from school. This parenting style aligns with Baumrind's theory of authoritative parenting, where clear control combined with emotional warmth shapes healthy social behavior. (Syafri et al., 2024). These findings are also in line with research showing that disciplined, consistent, and communicative parenting patterns are effective in shaping respectful attitudes in young children in the digital era. (Maulana Ahmad et al., 2024).
2. **Exemplary Behavior as a Method of Character Education.** Parents play the role of the main role models. Children imitate their parents' behavior in being polite to adults as well as peers. This exemplary behavior aligns with the view that parental behavior serves as the primary model for children to emulate. (Atik Latifah, 2020). From an Islamic perspective, this exemplary behavior is also reinforced by a hadith of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) which emphasizes the importance of respecting elders and showing affection to the younger ones. - HR. al-Tirmidzi, no. 1842 (Hasanah, 2021).
3. **Religious and Positive Communication.** Interviews indicate that parents use a religious communication approach, such as teaching daily prayers, greetings, and thayyibah phrases. This forms religious habits while also strengthening respectful attitudes, where character reinforcement through religious practices can enhance the positive behavior of young children. (Amini & Mariyati, 2021).
4. **Challenges of the Digital Era.** Some parents admit to having difficulty controlling their children's use of gadgets. Children tend to imitate aggressive behavior from digital content and prefer interacting with devices

rather than with their families. This aligns with research findings that emphasize the importance of digital parenting strategies through supervision, restrictions, and guidance. (Nasution & Mona, 2024). In addition, mothers' involvement in daily communication is more dominant in guiding children to face digital influences (Asma Nur, 2022).

5. **Implications of Character Education.** The results of this study reinforce the view that the formation of respect character cannot be achieved solely through schools, but must begin at home. The role of parents as educators, role models, guides, and supervisors is very crucial. This study aligns with other findings showing that contextual learning can enhance students' respectful attitudes towards their parents. (Solin, 2024).

Thus, this study confirms that the formation of respect character in early childhood is greatly influenced by disciplinary parenting, parental role modeling, religious communication, and adaptive supervision of digital technology.

## CONCLUSION

This study confirms that the role of parents is crucial in shaping the character of respect in early childhood. The results show that respect is instilled through disciplined parenting, exemplary behavior, habituation to religious communication, and positive interactions within the family. In the digital era, parents are required to be more adaptive by implementing digital parenting strategies to guide children in using technology appropriately.

The implication of this research is that the formation of respectful character cannot be entirely entrusted to schools, but must begin at home. Parents are the first and foremost educators who influence children's habits in showing respect to parents, teachers, peers, and the surrounding community. This study contributes to strengthening character education programs, particularly in early childhood education institutions, by emphasizing the synergy between the roles of schools and families.

In addition, this study also provides novelty by highlighting the direct role of parents in shaping a sense of respect in early childhood amid the challenges of the digital era, unlike previous studies that focused more on the formal school setting (misalnya Solin, 2024). This study shows that the family, particularly the mother figure, is the dominant actor instilling the value of respect through disciplinary parenting patterns, role modeling, religious communication, and digital parenting strategies. Thus, this research broadens the understanding that the formation of a respectful character is not solely the domain of educational institutions, but should be viewed as a complementary family-school synergy.

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