

The Role of Parenting in Supporting Early Childhood Emotional Development

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Abstract

Parenting plays a crucial role in shaping early childhood emotional development, influencing self-regulation, social skills, and psychological stability. Inadequate parenting practices, often linked to low knowledge and skills, can lead to emotional and behavioral problems in children. This community service program aims to improve parenting patterns through education and measure its impact on children's emotional development. A quantitative quasi-experimental one-group pretest-posttest design was implemented in Wage Village, Sidoarjo Regency. The program targeted 40 parents of children aged 0–6 years, selected using purposive sampling. Twenty participants received a 20-minute parenting education session using verbal explanations, visual aids, and guided discussions before completing the post-test, while the other 20 served as a control group. Data were collected using a validated questionnaire assessing parenting styles and children's emotional development. Paired sample t-tests were conducted with a significance level of $\alpha = 0.05$. Parenting education significantly reduced authoritarian parenting scores (mean pre-test 4.6; post-test 2.4; $p < 0.001$) and increased democratic parenting tendencies. Significant improvements were observed in children's emotional problems ($p < 0.001$), behavioral problems ($p = 0.001$), and hyperactivity ($p = 0.003$). However, peer relationship issues ($p = 0.398$) and prosocial behavior ($p = 0.185$) showed no significant change. Effect size analysis indicated large impacts on parenting style and selected emotional indicators, while social skill improvements remained limited. The findings confirm that structured parenting education effectively enhances parenting patterns and reduces emotional and behavioral issues in early childhood. However, social skills may require longer-term interventions and direct child-focused strategies. Sustained, participatory parenting education—supported by community and local government—can be a strategic tool for fostering healthy emotional development in early childhood, ultimately contributing to the creation of a more resilient future generation.

Keywords: Parenting; Children's emotions; Parenting education; Early life

Abstrak

Pola asuh memiliki peran penting dalam membentuk perkembangan emosional anak usia dini, termasuk kemampuan regulasi diri, keterampilan sosial, dan stabilitas psikologis. Praktik pengasuhan yang kurang tepat, sering kali disebabkan oleh rendahnya pengetahuan dan keterampilan orang tua, dapat memicu masalah emosional dan perilaku pada anak. Program pengabdian kepada masyarakat ini bertujuan untuk meningkatkan pola asuh melalui edukasi serta mengukur dampaknya terhadap perkembangan emosional anak. Metode kegiatan ini menggunakan pendekatan pemberdayaan dengan *Quasi* eksperimen dengan one-group *pretest-posttest* digunakan di Desa Wage, Kabupaten Sidoarjo. Program ini menyasar 40 orang tua dengan anak usia 0–6 tahun yang dipilih secara purposive sampling. Sebanyak 20 peserta

menerima edukasi pola asuh selama 20 menit menggunakan penjelasan verbal, media visual, dan diskusi terarah sebelum mengisi *post-test*, sedangkan 20 peserta lainnya menjadi kelompok kontrol. Data dikumpulkan menggunakan kuesioner teruji yang menilai pola asuh dan perkembangan emosional anak. Analisis dilakukan menggunakan uji *paired sample t-test* dengan tingkat signifikansi $\alpha = 0,05$. Edukasi pola asuh secara signifikan menurunkan skor pola asuh otoriter (rata-rata *pre-test* 4,6; *post-test* 2,4; $p < 0,001$) dan meningkatkan kecenderungan pola asuh demokratis. Peningkatan signifikan juga ditemukan pada masalah emosional anak ($p < 0,001$), masalah perilaku ($p = 0,001$), dan hiperaktivitas ($p = 0,003$). Namun, tidak ada perubahan signifikan pada masalah hubungan dengan teman sebaya ($p = 0,398$) dan perilaku prososial ($p = 0,185$). Analisis efek menunjukkan dampak besar pada pola asuh dan beberapa indikator emosional, sedangkan peningkatan keterampilan sosial masih terbatas. Edukasi pola asuh terstruktur efektif dalam meningkatkan pola pengasuhan dan mengurangi masalah emosional serta perilaku anak usia dini. Namun, keterampilan sosial memerlukan intervensi jangka panjang dan strategi yang langsung berfokus pada anak. Edukasi pola asuh yang berkelanjutan dan partisipatif—dengan dukungan masyarakat serta pemerintah daerah—dapat menjadi strategi penting untuk mendorong perkembangan emosional anak yang sehat dan membentuk generasi masa depan yang lebih tangguh.

Kata Kunci: Pengasuhan anak; Emosi anak; Pendidikan pengasuhan anak; Kehidupan awal

INTRODUCTION

Early childhood is known as the *golden age* that lasts from birth to the age of six. At this stage, children's physical, cognitive, social, and emotional development takes place very quickly and is sensitive to various stimuli from the surrounding environment (Dwi Masita et al. 2022). One of the important aspects of this period is emotional development, which is the basis for the formation of social intelligence, self-regulation, and interpersonal relationships for children in the future. (Dewi et al. 2024) Parenting plays a strategic role in supporting children's emotional development, because parents are the first and main characters who interact intensely with children from the beginning of their lives. Parenting practiced by parents, both consciously and unconsciously, can have a significant impact on a child's ability to recognize, manage, and express his emotions. Research shows that democratic and responsive parenting tends to produce children with better emotional regulation and stronger psychological stability. (Kaylor-Tapscott and Sullivan 2024) On the other hand, authoritarian or permissive parenting can trigger various emotional problems, such as irritability, lack of confidence, or difficulty adapting socially (Mueller et al. 2023). The family environment as the first space for children to interact also has a great influence on their emotional development. Healthy two-way communication, emotional support, and secure attachment between children and parents form a strong psychosocial foundation. Children who grow up in a supportive and caring family environment are better able to show empathy, build confidence, and cope with stress in a healthy way (Masita and Ristanti 2021). In the context of a modern society full of dynamics and challenges, not all parents understand the importance of the role of parenting in the emotional well-being of children. Busy work, economic pressure, and lack of education about parenting are obstacles in creating a healthy parenting style (Alsancak-Akbulut and Kömürçü-Akik 2024). Therefore, it is important for educators, policymakers, and society at large to encourage parenting practices that optimally support children's emotional development. The results of the survey conducted in February 2025 found that of 15 parents, 7 of them had an authoritarian parenting model, 3 permissive models, 5 authoritative models, while 15 children aged 3-5 years,

8 of them experienced inadequate social-emotional development, including being alone and afraid when interacting with others. Based on these results, it is very important to carry out education related to the parenting model so that the child's social-emotional development can develop properly

GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE COMMUNITY, PROBLEMS AND TARGET SOLUTIONS

General Description

This community service activity aims to empower parents from children aged 1 to 5 years in Wage Village, Taman District, Sidoarjo Regency, through education and mentoring programs that focus on parenting and early childhood emotional development. The target group consisted of 50 parents from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds, mostly in the lower middle class, who faced challenges in both the education and health sectors—particularly related to inadequate parenting knowledge and the emergence of emotional and behavioral problems in children.



Figure 1. Research Location (Wage Village, Sidoarjo)

The main problems identified included low levels of knowledge and skills regarding effective parenting approaches and the prevalence of emotional and behavioral problems among young children. To address this issue, the program implements short but intensive parenting education sessions, supported by visual materials, guided discussions, and practical simulations.

Table 1. Description of the target

No	Name of Target	Characteristics of Target	Amount	General Problem or Targets
1	Non-Economic Goals	Parents of children aged 1-5 years	50	Problems in the Health and Education Sector

Table 1 explains that the target group for this activity was all parents with children aged 1 to 5 years, with a total of 50 participants. The characteristics of the target group have similar health and educational problems, especially those related to early childhood parenting and emotional development.

Problem

Problems in the field of education, health sector

Table 2 Problems and solutions

No	Problem	Percent	Solution	Goal indicators
1	Education: Knowledge and skill level	56%	Knowledge transfer Mentoring	Improve your score knowledge and Skills
2	Health: Poor parenting practices	52%	Parenting style practices, health	Increased emotional Children's regulation

			class	child
			interventions	
3	Role models are not applied at home	47%	Empowerment through example-based learning (role models)	Positive adoption and parenting consistent

Target Solutions

The program's solutions are focused on health through classroom learning, parenting practices, and role modeling. The goal is to improve parents' knowledge and skills in early childhood care. Success is measured by increasing understanding and implementation of appropriate parenting as well as positive changes in children's emotions and behaviors.

METHOD

This study use a quantitative approach with a quasi-experimental design of one pretest-posttest group. This design involved a group of parents who were measured before and after being given an intervention in the form of parenting education. Respondents were asked to fill out a questionnaire first (pre-test), then take a short counseling for approximately 20 minutes about the importance of parenting in supporting early childhood emotional development. After that, respondents filled out the same questionnaire again (post-test) to see any changes in their comprehension and response scores. This study was conducted in Wage Village, Sidoarjo Regency, with the target population, namely parents who have early childhood between 0 and 6 years. The sampling technique was carried out by the purposive sampling method, with a total of 40 respondents. Of these, 20 people were first educated about the importance of parenting in supporting early childhood emotional development before filling out the questionnaire, while the other 20 people were only asked to fill out the questionnaire without getting education first. Counseling is given verbally and visually for approximately 20 minutes. This study aimed to see if there were significant differences between the two groups in terms of parenting and parenting perceptions and perceptions of early childhood emotional development. The instrument is in the form of a closed questionnaire that has been validated by experts, and tested for reliability through initial trials. The questionnaire includes items related to parents' understanding of parenting and aspects of the child's emotional development. The data was analyzed using SPSS software. Before the analysis is carried out, the data is tested for normality first. Because the data is distributed normally, *paired sample t-tests* are used to see the difference in scores before and after the intervention. The significance level is set at $\alpha = 0.05$.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

1. Sample Couples Test on Parenting Style

Analysis was conducted on the two main dimensions of parenting before and after parenting interventions.

Table 1. The results of the t-test

Parents	Average Pre-test	Post-test average	t-value	p-value
Authoritative	3.4	2.6	6.658	0.000
Authoritarian	4.6	2.4	9.575	0.000

2. Paired Sample t-test on Children's Emotional Development

The test was carried out on five indicators of children's emotions and behavior. The results of the statistical calculation can be seen in the following Table 2:

Table 2. Results of the Child Emotional Development T Test

Children's Emotional Indicators	Average Pre-test	Post-test average	t-value	p-value
Emotional Issues	3.6	2.2	4.873	0.000
Behavioral Problems	3.6	2.2	4.156	0.001
Hyperactive	3.6	2.4	3.387	0.003
Problematic peer relationships	3.6	3.2	0.865	0.398
Proposal Behavior (prosocial)	3.2	3.6	-1.377	0.185

3. Significant Important Role Samples

Analysis was performed on three pairs of pretest and posttest data to measure changes in scores before and after the parenting intervention. The results of the t-test are presented in Table 3 the t-test below.

Table 3. The t-test

Test Pairs	Average Pre-test	Post-test average	t-value	p-value
Pretest1 – Posttest1	3.95	2.55	6.658	0.000
Pretest2 – Posttest2	3.55	1.80	5.872	0.000
Pretest3 – Posttest2	3.45	1.80	5.819	0.000

4. Children's Emotional Samples

Table 4

Test Pairs	Mean Difference	t	p	Cohen's d	Effect Interpretation
Pretest1 – Posttest1	1.000	4.873	0.000	1.090	Big
Pretest2 – Posttest2	1.000	4.156	0.000	1.046	Big
Pretest3 – Posttest3	0.800	3.387	0.003	0.892	Medium – large
Pretest4 – Posttest4	0.250	0.865	0.398	0.277	Small
Pretest5 – Posttest5	-0.350	-1.377	0.185	-0.296	Small – insignificant

Discussion

The results of the analysis showed significant differences in most pretest–posttest pairs. In Pretest1–Posttest1, there was an increase in scores with a mean difference of 1,000, a value of $t = 4,873$, $p < 0.001$, and *Cohen's d* = 1,090 which was included in the big effect category. This indicates that the interventions given to this group have a very strong impact on improving the participants' achievements. A similar pattern was also seen in Pretest2–Posttest2, with a mean difference of 1,000, $t = 4,156$, $p < 0.001$, and *Cohen's d* = 1,046 (big effect). These findings confirm that interventions consistently exert a large influence on change in both groups. Meanwhile, Pretest3–Posttest3 showed a mean difference of 0.800 with $t = 3.387$, $p = 0.003$, and *Cohen's d* = 0.892. This value is in the medium–large effect category, which means that the intervention still has a positive effect, although not as much as in the previous two groups. These results indicated a variability of participants' responses, with most showing a fairly strong

improvement, but not as large as the first and second groups. In contrast to the above findings, Pretest4–Posttest4 showed no significant difference ($p = 0.398$), with a *mean difference* of 0.250, $t = 0.865$, and *Cohen's d* = 0.277 (small effect). This suggests that interventions in this group have minimal influence and tend to be meaningless. A similar interpretation was also found in Pretest5–Posttest5, which showed a *mean difference* of negative (-0.350), $t = -1.377$, $p = 0.185$, and *Cohen's d* = -0.296 (small–insignificant effect). This condition indicates not only the weak impact of the intervention, but also the possibility of a decrease in achievement in some participants. Overall, the results showed that the intervention was able to have a large effect on some groups (especially groups 1, 2, and 3), but was inconsistent in all groups. This variation in outcomes can be influenced by several factors, such as differences in participant characteristics, the context of the implementation of the intervention, and the cultural and behavioral factors that play a role in the individual's response to the program. Thus, these findings emphasize the importance of adjusting intervention strategies to reach all groups equally. When compared to previous research, these results are in line with the findings of Nuryani et al. (2022) who showed that health education-based interventions provided a significant improvement in nutritional knowledge and behavior, with a large effect value in groups with high exposure intensity. However, the results of this study also support the report of Rahmawati & Putri (2023) which emphasizes that the success of interventions is often not uniform between groups, as they are influenced by socio-cultural backgrounds, education levels, and family support. In addition, the World Health Organization (2023) emphasizes that the effectiveness of community-based nutrition interventions is greatly influenced by the consistency of implementation, cultural relevance, and cross-sectoral engagement. The findings of this study are also different from the results of the study of Sari et al. (2021) which reported the effects of relatively homogeneous interventions in all groups. This difference is likely due to variations in program design, duration of interventions, and availability of resources in the field. Thus, this study makes an important contribution by showing that the effectiveness of programs is not always uniform, so intervention strategies need to be designed more adaptive and contextual.

The analysis examines shifts in parenting patterns before and after parents participated in the parenting education program, focusing on authoritative (democratic) and authoritarian dimensions. For the authoritative style, the mean score declined from 3.4 to 2.6 ($t = 6.658$, $p = 0.000$), indicating a significant improvement in parents' understanding and application of democratic parenting. In the authoritarian dimension, the score decreased from 4.6 to 2.4 ($t = 9.575$, $p = 0.000$), showing a substantial reduction in rigid, command-driven practices and greater adoption of supportive and communicative interactions. The programs impact on children's emotional development was also assessed across five indicators. Emotional problems declined from 3.6 to 2.2 ($t = 4.873$, $p = 0.000$), and behavioral problems from 3.6 to 2.2 ($t = 4.156$, $p = 0.001$), reflecting significant reductions in negative emotions and disobedience. Hyperactivity decreased from 3.6 to 2.4 ($t = 3.387$, $p = 0.003$), suggesting better self-regulation. In contrast, problematic peer relationships declined only slightly from 3.6 to 3.2 ($t = 0.865$, $p = 0.398$), while prosocial behavior increased from 3.2 to 3.6 but without statistical significance ($t = -1.377$, $p = 0.185$). These results imply that improvements in social interactions may depend more on external factors such as school and peer networks. Paired sample t-tests confirmed significant changes in three dimensions, with large effect sizes (*Cohen's d* > 0.8), demonstrating that the intervention meaningfully improved parenting practices and children's emotional outcomes. The findings support evidence that democratic parenting fosters emotional stability, autonomy, and healthier social boundaries (Garcia et al., 2020), while reduced authoritarian

practices promote a supportive environment for children's growth. However, limited effects on peer relationships and prosocial behavior suggest the need for complementary strategies beyond parental education, as external environments play a crucial role (Rautakoski et al., 2021). Consistent with social learning theory, parental role modeling remains central in shaping children's positive social behaviors (Labella et al., 2019). Overall, structured parenting education is an effective approach to reducing emotional and behavioral problems, while strengthening the foundation for children's long-term development.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

The results of the study show that parenting education has a significant impact on changes in parental parenting patterns and early childhood emotional development. This was proven through *the paired sample t-test* which showed a significant decrease in authoritarian parenting ($p = 0.000$) and children's emotional problems such as problematic behavior and hyperactivity ($p < 0.005$). Nonetheless, no significant changes were found in aspects of peer relationships and prosocial behavior. From these findings, it is recommended that parenting education programs be carried out in a sustainable manner with a practical and participatory approach, and supported by active involvement from the community and village government to create a healthy and consistent parenting environment.

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