

## MORAL VALUES EDUCATION IN EARLY CHILDHOOD

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**Abstract:** Education as an effort to change children's behavior to be better, especially in educating the morals of early childhood. The implementation of moral education in early childhood involves many parties, namely: parents at home and teachers in educational institutions. Parents act as the first teachers for children. The behavior, speech, and appearance of parents will be imitated by children. Adults around children must be ready to be models and role models for children in forming good morals. Efforts made in providing moral education to early childhood in educational institutions begin with the personality of the teacher who should be a model and role model for children, and continue in the implementation of the learning process by including moral elements into the components of education. Moral development in children can take place through direct education, imitation, and the process of trying. The key to a person's happiness lies in their temperament and character. If a child is neglected in their moral education, of course most of them will grow up to be children with bad personalities and morals. Moral education is carried out from an early age, this is because at that age the child's soul is still pure, clean and has not been contaminated with various bad traits.

**Keywords:** Early childhood; Moral values; Education

### Introduction

According to Sjarkawi, (2006:28), morals are views on good and bad, right and wrong, what can and cannot be done. In addition, morals are also a set of beliefs in a society regarding character or behavior and what should be done by humans. According to Jamie (2003:15) morals are teachings about good and bad about actions and behavior (morals). While the understanding of morals itself by Al-Ghazali as the equivalent of the word moral, as a temperament (character, nature) that is firmly embedded in the human soul and is the source of certain actions from him easily and lightly, without the need to think and plan in advance.

According to Isjoni (2009:19-24), Early childhood is an individual who is experiencing a very rapid growth and development process. Early childhood is a child aged 0-6 years. Early childhood is an individual who is experiencing a very rapid growth and development process. It is even said to be a developmental leap. Therefore, early age is said to be the golden age, which is a very valuable age compared to the following ages. Early childhood is known as a unique human being, sometimes surpassing adults who are difficult to guess, predict, when viewed from their speech, behavior or thoughts.

Early childhood has unique characteristics. Early childhood has a high curiosity. Everything wants to be known about its existence and process, so it is not uncommon for children's high curiosity to make it difficult for adults to explain, such as when children ask about abstract things. Early childhood is explorative in carrying out various activities to build knowledge, skills, and foster character values. Early childhood is egocentric, namely having their own point of view on something. Therefore, children need direction from parents and

the environment to be able to manage their thoughts so that children continuously gain new knowledge, are able to develop positive behaviors in accordance with the values of life in their living environment, and develop daily life skills. Moral education is an education that must be obtained by children from an early age. Early moral education will equip children's morals throughout the life span that is passed in interacting with others. Therefore, considering the importance of moral education, moral education is very important to be given to early childhood.

This journal explains the importance of moral value education for early childhood, how the process of instilling moral values is carried out, what challenges will be faced, and who are the individuals and groups who have a role and are able to impact the growth and development of children in the process of instilling moral values at each stage of their age, sourced from several literature and the thoughts of figures.

### **Literatur Riview**

Moral education is an education that must be obtained by children from an early age. Early moral education will equip children's morals throughout the life span that is passed in interacting with others. Therefore, considering the importance of moral education, moral education is very important to be given to children at an early age. Education is one of the human needs, in addition to the need for clothing, food, and shelter. Education is an effort made by humans to change behavior so that it becomes better and is able to develop the knowledge they have.

The implementation of education starts from the family environment since the child is born and even since the child is in the womb. Education since the child is in the womb is given through various parental behaviors, one of which is by listening to good words to the baby. A child is one of the gifts from Allah SWT to both parents. In addition, the child is also the full responsibility of the parents, including in terms of providing education. Education is the main factor in determining the behavior of the child. All parents really want their children to be intelligent, high-achieving, strong and resilient children in facing an increasingly complex life. The success or failure of a child's education depends greatly on the extent of the role of parents in helping and guiding children in a process of development and adaptation to their environment. The environment referred to in this case includes everything that can affect all the basic abilities and potentials of the child.

Based on the urgency of children's education, it is not surprising that Muslim scientists have emerged as references in Islamic education in modern times who adopt Islamic education methods through the Qur'an and Hadith, one of which is Al-Ghazali's view that considers matters very important and has a strong need for children's education. He said that a child's heart is still pure like a beautiful, smooth and holy pearl. At that time, every form of teaching that is received (whatever is seen and heard) will easily be imprinted in the child's soul which will later become a habit that the child will do in adulthood. If what is received is goodness, the child will be on the path of goodness, conversely, if what is received is a teaching that is in vain without a touch of goodness, the child will surely be harmed and experience destruction in his life (Aditia, 2019).

In addition to Al-Ghazali, one of the Muslim intellectuals as a famous cleric and reformist Islamic thinker in the 13th century was Ibn Qayyim Al-Jauzy. He paid great attention to children's education, even from the prenatal period (in the womb) and the postnatal period (after birth). In his view, he stated that among the many educations that children need, one of the most important is morals. Because morals develop according to the habits taught by their caregivers since childhood, be it in the form of nature, emotional, stubborn, lustful and careless and greedy. If this is not instilled from the start, it is not

surprising that most people's morals are crooked due to errors in parenting patterns since childhood (Ansari & Qomarudin, 2021).

According to M. Za'im, in his article he explained that during pregnancy it will affect the development of intellectual, emotional, and spiritual intelligence, because in it the influence of food and the environment greatly influences during the prenatal period. (Za'im, 2016). In the research of Mubarokah et al., it is also explained that the formation of a child's character is influenced by two factors, namely innate factors (natur) and environmental factors (Martur). Meanwhile, the concept of early childhood education according to Ibn Qayyim Al Jauziyyah begins with determining a mate, marriage, pregnancy (prenatal), and birth (postnatal) (Mubarokah et al., 2018).

Meanwhile, Islami Anggraeni in her research explains that Sufi perspective child education in the view of Ibn Qayyim Al Jauziyah is an effort to educate both the physical and spiritual child with knowledge so that they are able to accept the truth, as a form of moral instillation in the child's soul so that they have good morals, and provide teaching and training so that children do not love their world. With the aim of guiding humans so that they have a personality that prioritizes the pleasure of Allah SWT. rather than the pleasure of their lusts (Islami & Rosyad, 2020).

## Method

This type of research is Library Research. Where, library research is a type of research conducted by studying various library sources such as books, journals, articles, and other documents in order to collect data or information related to this scientific work. This library research leads to descriptive Qualitative Research, where the research has research results that are not obtained through statistical procedures or other quantification methods.

## Result and Discussion

### Result

Moral education is one of the education that must be given by parents and educators to children from an early age. This is because at that age the child's soul is still pure, clean and has not been contaminated with various bad traits. Morals are taught to children also with the aim that children know the good things that are recommended to be done in living life and know the reprehensible actions and dangers that will be detrimental to the child's life. Thus, children will be able to sort out which things are permissible and which must be abandoned or avoided for a better life. In short, the purpose of moral education is to educate character and the formation of children's souls through good moral lessons carried out at school and in the family environment.

Moral education is provided in various educational institutions, one of which is in Early Childhood Education (PAUD) institutions. PAUD or pre-school age is a period where children have not yet entered formal education. PAUD is the basis for the formation of human moral character, so that basic behavior and abilities are formed according to the stage of development so that they can later become good citizens. For this reason, it is necessary to instill moral values in early childhood. The importance of instilling moral values in early childhood so that children's characters can develop with their potential and abilities optimally and the growth of positive attitudes and behavior for children. Moral education concerns attitudes and personalities, so that in its learning it is not only limited to the development of intellectual abilities but more to the development of character, attitudes, and behavior of students.

The treatment and stimulation given to early childhood is different from the treatment given to adults. This is based on the nature of early childhood learning, namely that early childhood learns through play, and early childhood play is a learning process to answer

curiosity and obtain various information. Play activities carried out by children will be a source of learning for children to build knowledge, develop skills, and foster commendable behavior. Ali Nugraha, et al., (2015) explained that in play activities supported by a conducive environment, children actually also learn to develop character values. When playing, children learn to share, care, cooperate, and be responsible. The instillation of character values for early childhood will occur by itself when children practice directly and see models/examples from others. Therefore, teachers in Early Childhood Education are expected to be able to provide various stimulations to support children's development and growth, one of which is by creating a conducive learning environment for children.

According to several experts, the strategy for instilling moral values can be done in several ways:

- 1. Setting an Example**

Children tend to imitate the behavior of adults around them. Therefore, parents and teachers must be good role models in terms of honesty, empathy, and responsibility (Bandura, 1977).

- 2. Using Moral Stories**

Stories or fairy tales that contain moral messages can be an effective tool for teaching positive values to children. Through stories, children can understand moral concepts in a concrete and enjoyable way (Piaget, 1932).

- 3. Habits and Positive Reinforcement**

Good habits can be formed through daily habits, such as saying thank you, apologizing, or helping others. Positive reinforcement, such as praise or awards, can also strengthen expected moral behavior (Skinner, 1953).

Early Childhood Education is the first education that children go through in their life phase and has a great influence on the child's future life. John Siraj-Blatchford (2009: 9) stated "*Early Childhood Education therefore has a major role to play in achieving sustainable development.*" Early childhood education has a major role so that children can achieve sustainable development. Sustainable development will take place throughout the child's life. Development is not limited by the level of education that has been taken by the child, but will continue continuously until the end of his life. Knowledge, skills, and behaviors that are developed and fostered in children through the implementation of Early Childhood Education will be the foundation for the child's further development, as explained by Husni Rahim and Maila Dinia Husni Rahiem (2012: 454) "*The objective of early childhood education is to establish a foundation for the development of a child's character, behavior, knowledge, skills and creativity to spur further development and growth.*" Indeed, early childhood education is to form the foundation of child development, which includes: character, behavior, knowledge, skills and creativity to spur further growth and development. Fostering commendable behavior in children from an early age will underlie the growth and development of other commendable behaviors along with the maturity and increasing age of the child.

Moral is one aspect of development that must be stimulated in children from an early age. Husni Rahim and Maila Dinia Husni Rahiem (2012: 454) explain "*There are six aspects of development that are focused on in kindergarten education: moral and religious values; social and emotional. development and independence; language ability; cognitive ability; physical/motor ability; and artistic ability.*" There are six aspects of development that are focused on in children's education, namely moral and religious, social emotional and self-confidence development, language ability, cognitive ability, physical motor ability, and

artistic ability. Based on this explanation, the existence of moral development in children as individuals cannot be considered trivial.

Ahmad Nawawi (2010:2-4) Moral/Religious Values education is very important for the next generation of the nation, so that the dignity of the nation is raised, the quality of life increases, life becomes better, safe and comfortable and prosperous. Moral/religious values education is very important for the establishment of a nation. Without moral values education (religion, character, morals) it is likely that a nation can be destroyed, chaotic. Pam Schiller & Tamera Bryant (in Ahmad Nawawi, 2010: 3-4) stated that: *"if we abandon the lessons on moral values that have mostly changed, we, as a country, risk losing a piece of peace from our culture. It is time to determine whether moral values are important for the future of our children and our families, and then support and encourage them to practice these moral values in our daily lives. Who is responsible for teaching these moral values to our children? That responsibility lies with all of us. Whether we realize it or not, we always teach moral values, but we must try harder to teach them. The moral values we instill now, consciously or unconsciously, will have a huge influence on the society of the future."*

The implementation of moral education at each stage of early childhood is carried out through different methods, meaning that stimulation is provided for the growth and development of children according to the age stage and abilities of the child at that age. R. Andi Ahmad Gunadi (2013: 87-88) explains that for children aged 0-2 years, learning is more oriented towards motor activity exercises and fulfilling children's needs proportionally.



In children aged between 2–4 years, moral learning is more directed at forming a sense of independence in children in entering and facing the environment.



For children aged 4-6 years, moral learning strategies are directed at developing children's initiative to solve problems related to good and bad behavior.



Syamsu Yusuf LN. (2011: 134) explains that moral development in children can take place in several ways, namely: (1) direct education through instilling an understanding of right and wrong or good and bad behavior by parents, teachers, or other adults. (2) identification by imitating the appearance or moral behavior of adults who are their idols. (3) trial and error process by developing moral behavior through trial and error. Behavior that brings praise or appreciation will continue to be developed, while behavior that brings punishment or criticism will be stopped.

The implementation of early childhood moral education in the PAUD educational environment is played by teachers as the closest adults to children while at school. In order to carry out their role, teachers must have these provisions, so that good behavior is not only carried out while at school, but has become a habit that is rooted in each teacher's personality. Ministerial Regulation No. 58 of 2009 contains personality competencies that must be possessed by early childhood educators, namely: behaving and behaving in accordance with religious norms, culture and children's beliefs; respecting students without distinguishing between beliefs, ethnicity, culture, and gender; behaving in accordance with religious norms, laws, and social norms that apply in society; developing students' attitudes to respect other religions and cultures; presenting themselves as individuals with noble character, behaving honestly, being responsible for their duties, and behaving as role models. Based on this, the good personality possessed by an educator must be reflected in their speech and actions so that educators are worthy of being models imitated by children.

Early childhood education is carried out in learning activities through play. In the learning that is carried out, there is moral education for children. The implementation of early childhood learning uses various methods, because in the application of each method there are moral values that are adhered to and implemented by teachers and children. Sependi (2015: 18) explains that teachers as role models in teaching and learning activities must communicate two ways with children based on their sincerity. Moral education cannot be carried out through the education and learning process only through the use of lecture methods. Moral education for children requires methods that are more than just lectures. Teachers are expected to be models who will be seen, idolized, and imitated in their speech, attitudes, and behavior. Therefore, teachers in schools must be able to behave and speak according to the values that apply in society, so that they are worthy of being moral models for children.



Sapendi (2015: 19) further explains that as educators, both parents and educators at school are responsible for the welfare of the child's soul. Both educators have the authority to direct the child's behavior as desired, if the parents are responsible for the physical welfare and religious development of the child while at home. While educators at school are also responsible for stimulating and fostering the development of the child's attitude and religion. Parents and educators complement each other in fostering children and it is hoped that there will be mutual understanding and close cooperation between the two in an effort to achieve a common goal, namely the welfare of the child's religious soul.

Syamsu Yusuf LN. (2011: 133-134) explains several parental attitudes that need to be considered in relation to the moral development of children, namely: (1) consistency in educating children. Parents must have the same attitude and treatment in prohibiting or allowing certain behavior to children. (2) parental attitudes in the family. Parental attitudes towards children can influence the moral development of children through the process of imitation. (3) appreciation and practice of the religion they adhere to.

The development of education in early childhood can provide an initial foundation for the development of a child to be able to form their character, knowledge, behavior, and creativity in influencing their development and growth in the future. The growth and development of early childhood is based on the guidance and teaching of their commendable behavior from an early age, along with their increasing age and maturity. Therefore, the role of the environment, including family and school, is very important in forming moral values in early childhood.

### **Benefits of Moral Values Education for Early Childhood**

#### **1. Forming a positive character**

Moral education helps children understand the difference between good and bad, and instills good habits that will shape their character. Lickona (1991) states that good moral education can help children become responsible, honest, and caring individuals.



**2. improve social skills**

Children who understand moral values tend to have better social skills. They can interact with others positively, understand other people's perspectives, and work together in groups. This is important for building harmonious social relationships later in life (Kohlberg, 1984).



**3. prevent deviant behavior**

According to research, children who do not receive early moral education tend to be more susceptible to deviant behavior such as bullying, aggression, or rule violations (Lickona, 1991). Moral value education provides guidance to children to act in accordance with the norms and values that apply in society.



**Challenges in Moral Values Education**

One of the main challenges in moral education for early childhood is the lack of consistency between the family, school, and community environments. Children may receive different moral messages from each environment, which can confuse them (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). In addition, the influence of digital media can also be a challenge, especially if the content consumed by children does not match the moral values that are intended to be instilled.



Anticipating challenges in the process of growth and development and educating behavior or morals of early childhood requires a deep understanding of the characteristics of child development, patience, and a consistent approach. Here are some steps that can be taken:

1. Understand Child Development Stages

Every child has different stages of physical, emotional, social, and cognitive development. Parents and educators need to understand these stages so that expectations for children are in line with their abilities. For example:

- Children aged 2–3 years tend to be egocentric, making it difficult for them to share.
- Children aged 4–6 years begin to show simple logical thinking skills.

2. Create a Positive Environment

A safe, stable, and loving environment is essential for a child's moral and behavioral development. Children learn from what they see and feel around them.

3. Use the Right Disciplinary Approach

Teaching morals and good behavior requires an effective but non-punitive approach to discipline. Apply positive discipline, such as rewarding good behavior (praise, hugs) and giving logical consequences for bad behavior. Avoid physical punishment, as it can have a negative impact on a child's emotional development.

4. Provide Effective Communication

Open communication helps children understand moral values and expected behavior. Use simple, clear language appropriate to their age. Teach empathy by asking, "How would your friend feel if you did that?" to help children understand the impact of their actions on others.

5. Consistent in Approach

Children need consistency to understand behavioral boundaries. Inconsistency can confuse them. Enforce rules in the same way by all adults in the child's environment, including parents, teachers, or caregivers.

6. Recognize and Manage Behavioral Challenges

Some challenges such as tantrums, difficulty sharing, or not listening are common in early childhood. The solution is, Stay calm when facing challenging behavior, Use approaches such as distraction or invite children to express their feelings.

7. Instill Moral Values in Daily Activities

Values such as honesty, kindness, and respect can be taught through daily routines. Example:

- Read stories that contain moral messages
- Involve children in simple social activities, such as helping friends or sharing food.

8. Make Room for Exploration

Young children learn by trying new things. Sometimes they make mistakes, but this is an important part of learning. Give children the opportunity to make their own choices (with supervision). Don't forbid too often, unless the child's actions are dangerous.

9. Collaborating in the Environment.

Parents cannot educate their children alone. Collaboration with teachers, extended family, and the community is essential to ensure that the values taught are consistent.

10. Evaluation and Reflection.

The journey of educating children requires continuous evaluation to assess what is working and what needs improvement.

## Discussion

Based on what has been discussed in the writing above, we increasingly understand that the role model of parents and teachers is important in instilling moral values in children. Being a role model means being an example or figure that will always be imitated, both in words and actions even though the child is in a place far from the figure. Therefore, parents and teachers must be able to provide good role models for children in accordance with applicable norms, both religious norms, legal norms, customary norms, and moral norms.

## Conclusion

Moral education in early childhood is very important to form positive character and personality. With the right approach, such as providing examples, using moral stories, and habits, positive values can be embedded in children from an early age. Despite various challenges, cooperation between families, schools, and communities can help create an environment that supports children's moral development. Moral education in early childhood is an important foundation for building their character and personality. With cooperation between parents, teachers, and the social environment, moral education can be carried out effectively.

By understanding the stages of child development, giving full attention, and teaching moral values consistently, the challenges in educating early childhood can be overcome. Collaboration with the surrounding environment and professionals is also important to ensure that children grow optimally.

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