



# Strengthening Early Childhood Character Education

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## Abstract

Morality is a problem that will never stop being studied and explored. In the world of education, it is very necessary to have good morals and character. If from an early age children are taught to have good character and manners and be independent, then eventually they will be more accustomed to it as adults. By conducting a study, God willing, a strong generation with good and noble character will be created. This type of research uses natural qualitative research, namely using the habit method which takes place. The data sources used in this study are primary and secondary data sources. The data collection methods used are observation, interviews, and documentation. The data analysis techniques used are data reduction, data presentation, and verification. And to test the validity of the data using triangulation of sources and techniques. Based on the results of research and data analysis, it can be concluded that: 1) The description of character education in strengthening character education in Sungai Sapih Peduli Early Childhood Education is implemented through exemplary methods and habituation methods that are carried out continuously and sustainably by applying character education values including: behavior, patience, politeness, discipline, independence, and having an attitude of tolerance/social care. 2) The factors that influence character education in strengthening character education are divided into two, namely supporting factors and inhibiting factors. Supporting factors are, the school environment through good behavior and examples from the principal, and teachers, teacher readiness in conducting learning in accordance the use of methods used.

## Article Information:

Received Oct 30, 2025

Revised Nov 17, 2025

Accepted Des 30, 2025

**Keywords:** *Strengthening education, Character Education, Early Childhood*

## INTRODUCTION

Early childhood education institutions are institutions that provide services to early childhood, where children can learn to interact with their surroundings and their peers (Harmaini et al., 2022). Ahmad Rudiyanto stated that early childhood education is a place where children at an early age can train their emotional and mental development properly and learn to socialize with their environment, especially with their peers (Ismail, 2016).

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| <b>How to cite:</b>  | Rahmi, E., Felayati., Ningsih,S, Y., Efendi (2025). Strengthening Early Childhood Character Education. <i>Journal of Islamic Early Childhood Education</i> , 3(2), 46-52. |
| <b>E-ISSN:</b>       | 3031-2159   |
| <b>Published by:</b> | STAI Yayasan Tarbiyah Islamiyah (YASTIS) Lubuk Bagalung Padang, Indonesia   |

Therefore, parents and families are fully responsible for ensuring that children grow and develop into individuals who are useful to themselves, their families, society, nation, country, and religion. The family is the first and foremost. In Early Childhood Education, the benefits are very great because children are educated from as early as possible on how to have good character and noble morals. For this reason, it is necessary to instill and strengthen a trustworthy character, namely mutual respect and appreciation for others (Zahra & Khunaifi, 2025).

Formal and non-formal education: Schools play a central role in shaping children's character. Curricula that incorporate character education and extracurricular activities that support collaboration and leadership can reinforce positive values. Furthermore, extracurricular activities, such as social and communication activities, also support children's character development (Santoso et al., 2024).

Morality is a never-ending issue that needs to be studied and explored. Humans are constantly faced with diverse and complex problems and issues. The more complex the problem, the more difficult it is to solve. Especially in this digital era, with increasingly accessible information and communication, humans are easily influenced by its impact (Chykurova et al., 2023). Morality, as high values and behavioral actions, based on the noble values of religion, will lead humans to the highest degree of humanity, both in the eyes of humans and in the eyes of God. Morality is often linked to character education in educational environments. Various methods and efforts are being undertaken to address this increasingly complex moral problem. Education is the primary goal of instilling praiseworthy character in humans (Barirah & Rizalie, 2021; Ismawati et al., 2024).

Strengthening character education is an effort to instill values in behaving towards the better. Character is one of a person's attitudes and traits towards a better direction, as well as moral maturity, instilled from an early age so that in the future they will have a peaceful and calm life as adults (Nurhasanah & Karman, 2025). Strengthening character education in early childhood is very important in building character and a harmonious society. Character education needs to be taught from an early age to shape children's characters who respect differences (Komalasari & Yakubu, 2023). This character education can help children understand cultural and religious diversity, so they can grow into individuals who respect and accept each other. By instilling good character values, both in the social and religious fields, among early childhood, we can prevent potential conflicts caused by differences. Children who are educated to respect diversity will tend to be more able to contribute to harmony in the community (Vinh et al., 2025).

The author's research focuses on an Early Childhood Education school. Where there is a very different character gap between the students, the most prominent is character A and B. Here, character A always considers his friend B inferior because he doesn't have a mother, and B also wants to win alone. From this, the author concludes that the characters of children A and B must be fostered to become better adults (AZLI et al., 2024). The author hopes that there will be changes with the implementation of several achievement measures to change the attitudes and characters of early childhood at this SSP Paud. With a strong determination in goodness, the author is interested in conducting research entitled "Strengthening Early Childhood Character Education in Paud." The author is always directed by the condition of Paud to form the strengthening of children's character education so that it is more directed towards an intelligent, faithful and noble generation (Muzakkir & Muhammad, 2024).

## **METHOD**

The method used in this research is a qualitative approach. According to Sugiyono, a qualitative method is a research technique that aims to understand the subject in its

original context. This research is based on the principles of postpositivism, which emphasizes observing subjects in real conditions, without manipulation or artificial experiments (Sarbitinil et al., 2023). As the main instrument in qualitative research, researchers directly engage with research subjects to gain a deep understanding of the phenomenon being studied. Moloeng explained that the purpose of qualitative research is to gain a deep understanding of the experiences of research subjects (Aprilia et al., 2024). This is done by describing these experiences using appropriate language and placing them in the appropriate context. In qualitative research, various scientific methods are used to collect data (Ansori et al., 2024). The result of this process is natural data that can be written text, speech, or relevant policies. This research uses a natural qualitative method, which involves collecting data directly from the source. As the main analytical tool, researchers collect information in the form of text, both sentences and illustrations, which contain specific meanings (Wijaya et al., 2022). Natural qualitative research is conducted with the primary goal of documenting and analyzing facts and characteristics of the research subject or object in a systematic and accurate manner. In this study, researchers did not intervene or create certain conditions on the variables; instead, they allowed the processes, conditions, events, aspects, components, or variables to occur naturally (Armadi et al., 2024). The specific objective of this study was to describe the process of strengthening children's character education among early childhood students attending Early Childhood Education. Data collection techniques are the processes or methods applied to gather the information needed in a study. Therefore, this method is a crucial element, considering that in a study, obtaining information is the main goal (Solihati et al., 2021). Various strategies or methods are needed in this data collection process, including in this study which utilizes several data collection methods often used in qualitative-descriptive research (Yuliana et al., 2020). The data collection methods applied in this study include: observation, interviews, tests, and documentation. Data analysis is a structured method for analyzing and organizing data obtained through observation, interviews, and documentation. This process includes grouping data into certain categories, breaking the data into smaller parts, arranging the parts in a logical order, selecting relevant information for analysis, and finally producing conclusions that facilitate interpretation (Rahayu & Dong, n.d.; Wulandari et al., 2025).

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **Implementation of Education**

The curriculum used at Sungai Sapih Peduli Early Childhood Education in the 2024/2025 academic year is the independent learning curriculum, where this curriculum has 3 learning objectives and their achievements, namely: religious values and character, identity and literacy and STEAM.

Dimensions and elements of the Pancasila Student Profile Based on the Decree of the Head of the Education Standards, Curriculum and Assessment Agency No: 09/H/KR/2022 concerning the Dimensions, elements and sub-elements of the Pancasila Student Profile. The Operational Curriculum describes the overall program planning for one academic year according to its characteristics and vision and mission (Danumiharja et al., 2023; Sugiyono, 2021). It is hoped that the Operational Curriculum can be used as a reference for educators and education personnel, parents and related parties in implementing services in a holistic and integrative manner. This Operational Curriculum does not rule out the possibility of improvements in its implementation, so suggestions and input are still needed so that can provide the best services for children (Agustian et al., 2024).

## **Factors that influence the strengthening of character education**

The factors that influence the implementation of character education in strengthening character education are supporting factors and inhibiting factors. This is all based on the results of observations and interviews with Informan. as one of the educators. 1) Supporting Factors The following are supporting factors for the implementation of character education in strengthening character education for early childhood, namely: a) Teachers who are ready to teach according to the SOP. b) Media and methods used (exemplary methods and habituation methods while the media used is adjusted to the learning activities to be carried out). c) A good school environment from friends as well as through good habituation and exemplary behavior from the head of PAUD and teachers (the teacher's attitude is patient, meticulous, and gentle).

2) Inhibiting factors for the implementation of strengthening character education. The following inhibiting factors influence the implementation of character education in strengthening character education, namely: a) Lack of parental cooperation in implementing education at home as educators do at school (parents who still treat their children spoiled at home and this behavior is carried by the child when at school) and family environment (children's attitudes are difficult to control when at school because the child is treated badly at home / often shouted at). b) Different characteristics of students so that it requires patience in implementing character education (Hanafiah et al., 2024; Ordaz et al., 2021; Tucci et al., 2019).

From the supporting and inhibiting factors above, we can understand that there are factors that influence the success of implementing character education in strengthening character education for early childhood, where good environmental factors, both at school and at home, play a very important role in optimizing character education applied to early childhood (Marabelli et al., 2021; Puspita & Sugiyono, 2021).

The principal also explained various opinions regarding character building for children at Sungai Sapih Peduli Preschool, which strongly recommends self-discipline and good behavior, particularly in speaking, so that children become accustomed to expressing positive words. This reinforcement also focuses on supporting factors, particularly the environment, as reflected in the principal's response to the inhibiting and supporting factors for early childhood character (Becker & Schober, 2017).

The implementation of character education in strengthening character Preschool has been instilled from an early age. The applied character education values allow for the development of character building through a continuous process of character building, so that children develop habits of politeness, patience, discipline, independence, and social awareness/tolerance, even in small matters (Glozer et al., 2019).

This can be seen in the children's behavior, which includes being polite and patient when friends ask for food/lunchboxes during mealtimes, and showing affection for each other even if their mother doesn't pick them up after school. Another aspect of this development is the children's growing independence, learning not to rely on others and to take responsibility for themselves by tidying up their lunch boxes, cleaning up any leftovers, and putting away their stationery after use (Pelatti et al., 2016).

In addition to being polite, patient, and independent, children's tolerance is also developing, as evidenced by simple acts such as sharing with friends who don't bring pocket money. Furthermore, children are accustomed to donating alms every Friday,

where teachers explain that the alms money will be used to help those in need, such as those affected by disasters (Anisah, 2023).

## CONSLUSSION

Strengthening early childhood character education at Sungai Sapih Preschool reinforces learning values that lead to social attitudes/tolerance. This is evident when children begin to get used to sharing and not badmouthing each other, being independent by getting used to putting their lunch containers after eating and putting them in their respective bags, and getting used to donating every Friday. The maximum implementation of character education reinforcement is also assisted by the use of methods, namely the use of the exemplary method, where educators provide good examples by telling stories of the prophets and then educators patiently explain and then ask each child what wisdom or good behavior can be taken from the story. In addition, educators also provide examples/exemplars of discipline by arriving early.

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Journal of Iskamic Early Childhood Education

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