

## Does Parental Involvement Affect the Development of Social Skills in Early Childhood Education Students?

Ecep Supriatna<sup>1</sup>, Ema Aprianti<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Institut Keguruan dan Ilmu Pendidikan (IKIP) Siliwangi, Cimahi, Indonesia

<sup>2</sup> Universitas Bhayangkara Jaya, Jakarta, Indonesia

<sup>1</sup> [ecep83supriatna@gmail.com](mailto:ecep83supriatna@gmail.com), <sup>2</sup> [emaaprianti@ikipsiliwangi.ac.id](mailto:emaaprianti@ikipsiliwangi.ac.id)

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**INFO ARTIKEL** Diterima: 14/07/2025; Direvisi: 15/07/2025; Disetujui: 16/07/2025

### ABSTRACT

### KEYWORDS

Parental  
Involvement;  
Social Skills;  
Early Childhood  
Education

This study aims to examine the effect of parental involvement on social skills in early childhood education students in Bandung City (1). The research approach uses quantitative with a comparative study method that compares two groups of children based on their parental involvement (3). The sampling technique used is convenience sampling. This technique selects respondents who are easy to reach and willing to participate. This study involved 227 parents who assessed their involvement in their children's education through a self-report scale, and 34 early childhood education teachers who assessed their children's social skills through observation (2). The instruments used consisted of a parental involvement scale and an observation-based social skills scale. Data analysis used the Mann-Whitney U nonparametric statistical test to see differences in children's social skills based on the level of parental involvement. The results showed that there were significant differences in the social skills of early childhood education students between children with high and low parental involvement (5). Children with higher parental involvement tend to have better social skills. This topic is important to study considering the role of parents in early childhood education is a key factor in forming social skills that are important for children's development in the future.

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## INTRODUCTION

Social skills are one of the important aspects of competence in child development, especially for children at the early childhood education level. These social skills include the ability of individuals to interact, communicate, share, cooperate, and understand and respond to the emotions of others (Bornstein et al., 2012). In this early period of life, social skills play a crucial role in forming the basis of children's interactions in the future. In the context of early childhood education, children who have good social skills tend to be able to adjust more positively in the learning environment, both now and in the future. They are more likely to have healthy relationships with peers, show empathy, and are able to manage conflict constructively (Denham, Bassett, & Zinsler, 2012). These skills are not only important to a child's life today but also have a long-term impact into adulthood. The optimal development of social skills from an early age contributes to an individual's success in various aspects of life. A number of studies show that individuals who have good social skills from an early age tend to have more positive interpersonal relationships, have higher life satisfaction, and are more empowered in overcoming various life challenges (Eisenberg, et al., 2015). In addition, well-developed social skills in childhood can act as a protective factor against various psychosocial risks later in life, such as social anxiety, social isolation, and aggression (Walker, 2005).

On the other hand, parental involvement in early childhood education plays an important role in facilitating the development of these social skills. Parents who are actively involved in children's education, both through direct participation in school and in supporting the learning process at home, tend to have children who are more able to adapt to

their social environment (Fantuzzo et al., 2004). Engaged parents not only provide emotional support, but also exemplify the social skills that children adopt through daily interactions. Forms of parental involvement can include attendance in school activities, effective communication with teachers, and providing a home environment that supports the child's emotional development (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011). Children who have high parental involvement tend to show better self-confidence, higher empathy skills, and more effective communication skills (Lau & Power, 2018). However, in Indonesia, studies on the relationship between parental involvement and social skills in early childhood are still relatively limited. In a culture that values collectivity, parental involvement can serve as an essential source of support for a child's social development. Therefore, the study of the role of parental involvement in the development of social skills in early childhood is becoming increasingly relevant to fill the gap in the literature and provide practical implications for families and early childhood education institutions.

The theory underlying this research is the developmental ecology theory from Bronfenbrenner (1979), which emphasizes the importance of the interaction between individuals and their environment in the process of development. In the context of early childhood education, Bronfenbrenner showed that children's development is not only influenced by individual factors, but also by environmental factors consisting of family, school, and society. Parents, in this case, are environmental agents who play a significant role in shaping the development of children's social skills (Tudge et al., 2009). According to Bronfenbrenner, parental involvement in early childhood education is in the layer of microsystems that have a direct influence on children's development. In addition, the attachment theory proposed by Bowlby (1969) also provides a theoretical basis for understanding how the emotional relationship between parents and children contributes to the development of social skills. Bowlby argues that children who have a strong emotional attachment to their parents tend to be more confident in exploring their social environment. This attachment provides a safe foundation for children to learn social skills such as empathy, sharing, and collaboration (Ainsworth, 1989).

Within the framework of this theory, the role of parental involvement in early childhood education not only includes aspects of emotional support, but also shapes the cognitive and social aspects of the child. Involved parents will interact more with children in various social situations, thus providing experiences and learning that enrich children's social skills. Studies show that children who have high parental involvement in education show higher levels of empathy, as well as better abilities in managing emotions and resolving conflicts (Padilla-Walker & Christensen, 2011). Research on social skills and parental involvement in early childhood education has been conducted in various countries, especially in Western countries (Fan & Chen, 2001; Jeynes, 2005). However, in Indonesia, research with a specific focus on the influence between parental involvement and the development of social skills in early childhood is still very limited, especially in comparative studies that try to compare social skills in two groups of students who have different parental involvement. In the Indonesian context, cultural and social factors that are different from other countries have the potential to influence parental involvement and its impact on child development. For example, collective values and social relationships in Indonesian culture can form unique patterns of parental involvement, which have an impact on the development of children's social skills, so the purpose of this study is to see the influence of parental involvement on social skills in early childhood education students.

## METHOD

This study uses a quantitative approach with a comparative method. This approach allows researchers to measure parental involvement in children's education objectively and allows data collection on a larger scale, so that it can strengthen the generalization of research results. This method aims to see the differences or influences between variables in the compared groups. The sampling technique used is convenience sampling, which is a technique that selects respondents who are easily accessible and willing to participate in this study. Convenience sampling was chosen because of its flexibility and ease in reaching respondents within a limited research period. However, this technique has the disadvantage of being less representative for generalizing the population as a whole. To reduce these limitations, researchers ensure that respondents come from various socio-economic backgrounds and levels of education. The number of samples in this study was 227 parents who assessed their involvement in children's education through a self-report scale, and 34 Early Childhood Education teachers who assessed children's social skills through observation. The participation of Early Childhood Education teachers as observers of children's social skills aims to obtain a more objective and measurable assessment of children's social skills, compared to if it is only based on parental reports.

The instruments used in this study consisted of two scales, namely the parental involvement scale and the observation-based social skills scale. The Parental Involvement Scale is designed to measure the extent to which parents are involved in their children's education at home and at school. This scale is structured based on aspects of parental involvement that include participation in educational activities, emotional support, and communication with teachers. Each item in this scale is measured using a Likert scale with a score range of 1 to 5, indicating how often parents carry out certain involvement activities. The Observation-Based Social Skills Scale is used by Early Childhood Education teachers to assess children's social skills directly through observation during teaching and learning activities. This scale covers several aspects of social skills, such as the ability to share, communicate, collaborate, and manage emotions. Each dimension is assessed based on the frequency and quality of children's social behavior observed by teachers in the context of interactions with peers and in group activities. This study began by identifying Early Childhood Education schools that would be involved and obtaining permission from the school and approval from the parents and teachers who would participate. Parents who were willing to participate were asked to fill out a questionnaire regarding their involvement in their children's education. Meanwhile, Early Childhood Education teachers were given guidance on the use of the observation-based social skills scale to ensure that the assessment was carried out consistently and in accordance with instructions.

Data collection was carried out in two stages. The first stage is the parents' independent filling out of the questionnaire to assess their involvement in their children's education. The second stage is the observation of children's social skills by Early Childhood Education teachers, which is carried out in a classroom setting for several weeks so that the assessment of children's social skills is more accurate and natural. Data analysis in this study used the non-parametric Mann-Whitney U statistical test to see the differences in children's social skills based on the level of parental involvement. This test was chosen because the variables of social skills and parental involvement are not assumed to follow a normal distribution, and the sample size is not uniform between the high and low involvement groups. The Mann-Whitney U test is suitable for ordinal or interval data that is not normally distributed, as well as to compare two groups that are independent of each other. The Mann-Whitney U test is carried out by grouping respondents based on the level of parental involvement into two categories, namely high

involvement and low involvement. Children's social skills are then compared between these two groups. The analysis was carried out using SPSS statistical software to ensure the accuracy of the calculations and accurate interpretation of the data.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Result

Based on the results of the Mann-Whitney U statistical test conducted to see the influence of parental involvement on the social skills of early childhood education children, the following is the analysis:

#### a. Mann-Whitney U and Z Score Test Results

Tabel 1 Statistical test

Test Statistics <sup>a</sup>	
	Social Skills
Mann-Whitney U	4.500
Wilcoxon W	2930.500
Z	-12.294
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
a. Grouping Variable: Parent Engagement Category	

The value of p (Asymp. Sig) of 0.000 showed that the difference between the high and low parental engagement groups on children's social skills was significant at a significance level of 0.05. In other words, there is a very significant difference between children's social skills with high and low parental involvement.

#### b. Mean Rank and Sum of Ranks

Tabel 2. Rank

Ranks				
	Categories Parent Engagement	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Social Skills	High parental involvement	76	38.56	2930.50
	Low parental involvement	151	151.97	22947.50
	Total	227		

A higher Mean Rank in the low parent engagement group (151.97) compared to the high engagement group (38.56) suggests that low parental involvement tends to be associated with lower levels of children's social skills.

#### c. Interpretation

The significant value of the Mann-Whitney U test indicates that parental involvement has an effect on the social skills of early childhood education children. Children with

parents who have higher involvement in their education tend to have better social skills, including aspects of sharing, communication, collaboration, and emotional management.

### **Discussion**

The results of the study showed differences between the social skills of early childhood education children based on the level of parental involvement, where high parental involvement was positively associated with better social skills in children. This finding is in line with previous studies showing that parental involvement plays an important role in supporting children's social development. Grolnick & Slowiaczek's (1994) study found that children who receive active support from parents, such as participation in educational activities and communication with teachers, tend to have better social competence. Parents who are actively involved not only provide emotional support but also build a positive learning environment, which allows children to develop social skills, such as sharing, effective communication, and emotional management (Hill & Tyson, 2009).

Theoretically, these results are supported by Bronfenbrenner's (1979) developmental ecology theory, which emphasizes that child development is influenced by the interaction between individuals and their environment. In the context of early childhood education, parents are part of the microsystem that has a direct impact on the learning process and the formation of children's social behavior. A supportive family environment will form a strong foundation for the development of children's social skills. Positive interactions between parents and children, such as giving praise, listening, and teaching children how to resolve conflicts, will provide direct examples of good social behavior. This is consistent with Bowlby's (1969) attachment theory, which suggests that a strong emotional relationship between parents and children can provide security for children to explore their social world. Children who have secure emotional attachments tend to be more confident in interacting with peers and demonstrate better social skills, such as sharing and empathy (Ainsworth, 1989).

This study also supports findings that suggest that parental involvement can improve children's social skills in several ways. First, by paying attention to children's educational activities at home, parents form behavioral patterns that lead to the development of empathy, discipline, and emotional management (Fantuzzo et al., 2004). Children who are accustomed to receiving support from their parents in learning and playing tend to be better able to face social challenges. Second, effective communication between parents and teachers plays a role in building synergy between education at home and at school. Good communication allows teachers and parents to work together to understand and overcome social problems faced by children at school. This finding is also in line with research by Hornby & Lafaele (2011), which shows that parental involvement in children's education is very helpful in identifying and overcoming obstacles to early social development.

The findings of this study have several important practical contributions to early childhood care and education, especially in efforts to develop social skills. First, this finding confirms the need for active parental involvement in supporting children's education. Parents can increase their involvement in simple ways, such as taking the time to talk to children about their experiences at school, listening to complaints or problems

they face, and providing examples of positive social behavior. For example, parents can teach children how to share or manage emotions when there is a conflict with peers. This is very important, considering that social skills such as sharing, working together, and managing emotions are important aspects in character formation that will affect children's social lives in adulthood (Denham, et al., 2012). Second, parental involvement in children's education can increase children's self-confidence in socializing. Children who frequently receive support and attention from their parents tend to have higher levels of self-confidence, which in turn makes them more able to express themselves effectively in social interactions (Eisenberg et al., 2015). This support can also improve children's ability to cope with feelings of anxiety or fear when interacting with peers or facing new situations at school.

Third, the results of this study provide recommendations for early childhood education institutions to improve cooperation with parents in supporting children's social development. For example, schools can hold programs or activities that involve parental participation, such as parent-teacher meetings, seminars on positive parenting, or activities that allow parents and children to learn and do activities together. These programs allow parents to better understand their children's social development and provide opportunities for them to play an active role in the educational process. This is supported by research by Fan and Chen (2001) which shows that parental involvement in educational programs at school can improve children's development outcomes, including in the social aspect. Overall, the results of this study provide an important contribution in supporting children's social development through active parental involvement. Supportive care and collaboration between parents, teachers, and early childhood education institutions have the potential to provide a solid foundation for children's social skills, which are not only beneficial in their current lives but also in their long-term lives.

## **CONCLUSION**

This study revealed that parental involvement significantly influences the development of early childhood social skills, including the ability to share, communicate, collaborate, and manage emotions. These findings support Bronfenbrenner's developmental theory and Bowlby's attachment, which emphasize that a supportive family environment plays a major role in shaping children's social skills. In practice, these results emphasize the importance of parents' active role in children's education, which can be strengthened through collaboration with Early Childhood Education institutions and parenting training programs. Prospects for developing this research include further studies on the specific elements of parental involvement that are most influential and the use of technology to strengthen parental involvement.

Thus, increasing parental involvement has the potential to have a long-term positive impact on children's social development. Based on the findings of this study, it is recommended that parents increase their active involvement in children's educational activities at home, such as assistance in learning assignments, as well as teaching emotional management and positive ways of interacting. Early Childhood Education institutions also need to strengthen collaboration with parents through routine communication and participation programs that involve families, as well as support training programs for parents on parenting that supports children's social skills. In addition, the use of technology such as digital platforms to facilitate parental involvement

and communication with teachers can strengthen the role of the family in children's social development.

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