



The Role of Single Parents in Developing Independence in Early Childhood

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ABSTRACT

There are many children in society who are educated by single parents. Likewise, several children at RA Tarbiyah Isamiyah Al-Musthafawiyah. His parents experienced several obstacles in raising their children, because they had to work to earn a living while simultaneously educating and raising their children. This causes obstacles for single parents in developing their children's character, especially regarding independence. The aim of this research is to describe the role of single parents in developing independence in early childhood. The research sample was determined using a purposive sampling technique with the criteria being single parents who had children aged 4-6 years. This research is a qualitative descriptive study. The collection techniques used were interviews and observation. The research results show that the role of single parents in developing children's independence is very large by being a motivator, facilitator and role model for children who also wake up early. Based on the research results, it can be concluded that parents play a very important role in training their children to be independent by habituating and controlling their children's daily activities. This research can provide an understanding to parents of the importance of the role of education and motivation in children through small things in the home environment such as giving examples of getting up early, making beds, then bathing. So that children grow to be more independent.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The family is the first environment a child knows and plays a very important role in the child's development. By interacting through the family, children can learn to know themselves, get to know other people around them, and within the family they can shape the child's character or personality. The character formed in the family environment will have an impact on the child's future life. The role of parents is very important in the development, education and formation of character in children (Sari & Rosyidah, 2019). The parental component consists of mother and father, which are basically the result of a person's legal marriage ties which create a family. Both parents are the people who are responsible in a family for daily life under the names of mother and father. Therefore, his responsibility is in everyday life for his children to provide guidance and attention in an effort to direct and achieve the goals or stages he wants to achieve so that they can quickly adapt to society (Saragih, 2022).

The reality is that we often find families where one of the parents is not present. This situation can be called a single parent family. A single parent is a family consisting of a single parent, either father or mother, as a result of divorce, death and other reasons. Single parenthood can occur when a child is born without a legal marriage bond and his or her care becomes less of a responsibility. The task of being a parent, especially for a mother, will become even more difficult if you become a single parent. Everyone never hopes to be a single parent, a complete family is definitely everyone's dream, but there are times when fate has other plans. In reality, these ideal conditions cannot always be maintained or realized. Many parents, due to certain conditions, care for, raise and educate their children alone or become single parents (Sundari, 2023).

The absence of the father or mother will affect the child's mental development. A single parent family will cause the child to lose a father or mother figure. Some children will even lose their second figure, because they have to live with their grandmother, grandfather, or other father or mother's relatives (Azhari et al., 2023). Single parents must be more patient and tough and must be able to provide good understanding in dealing with problems that exist in their family. Single parents are required to work extra in carrying out their activities, work or in other matters in their daily social life to carry out their duties or functions, because as single parents they have to fight for their own lives. Single parents will usually feel pressured compared to parents who are intact in their abilities as parents. Because this will be able to influence the way parents care for their children. Single parents do not have a partner to share in facing problems and in terms of educating and raising their children, which will later affect the psychological development of their children (Yanuarsari et al., 2021).

The interaction of parents and children influences the child's character. This interaction involves demands and support for the child's behavior, where demands are the parents' expectations for the child and support is a positive response to the fulfillment of these expectations. In interacting, parents need to make adjustments to the child's mental development and needs, such as developing independence. Independence is a process of forming positive character that is very important in a person's life. The development of independence begins at an early age and needs to be increased at every stage of a child's development (Murcahyanto & Hamzanwadi, 2023).

In the process of developing children's independence, there are several obstacles that parents must face as explained in research conducted by (Mulyadi, 2020) which states that

there are several factors that become obstacles in parents' efforts to develop children's independence. Factors that influence children's independence include; (1) Internal factors, namely the child's emotions and intellect; (2) External factors, namely the environment, family economic status, stimulation, parenting style, love and affection, quality of information between children and their parents and the mother's employment status. The findings in this research imply that parents, teachers and the community must understand the types of parenting styles in educating children and use appropriate parenting patterns to develop children's independent attitudes so that children can overcome the problems they face in everyday life.

Meanwhile, in other research conducted by (Khotimah, 2023) shows that parents in terms of stimulating children's independence are not yet optimal. This condition is due to the fact that the role of parents has not been carried out well, especially in the role of facilitator, parents have not stimulated children, parents have not given children opportunities to carry out various activities so that their independence is not maximized. So, in cultivating independence in children, parents must support children in fostering independence by giving children opportunities to discover and explore new things. Based on two studies, it has been explained that children's independence can be seen from several factors, one of which is the role of parents in providing appropriate parenting patterns. However, it will be different from parents who carry out dual roles with the status of a single parent who must act as teacher, facilitator and head of the family for their child. Of course, you will have to bear a huge responsibility in educating and raising your child.

Independence involves initiative, the ability to overcome obstacles, self-confidence, and the ability to do things on your own. Independence is also related to independent and creative learning styles (Ospankulov et al., 2022). Increasing children's independence can be done through the family environment, education and stages of education (Murcahyanto & Hamzanwadi, 2023). Early childhood education is a very strategic basis in shaping every child's development. One of the ways education in schools is to introduce children to be able to understand and love themselves is by presenting an attitude of independence in children (Norita & Hadiyanto, 2021). Children's independence must be formed from an early age, because in early childhood (0-6 years), children's brain development accelerates to 80% of the entire adult brain. This shows that all children's potential and intelligence develop during this period, so it is very appropriate to instill and form all good characters, including the character of independence.

The form or indicator of independence itself in early childhood, especially pre-school age children, is the presence of initiative and the ability to carry out simple activities such as eating without being fed, wearing your own socks and clothes, being able to carry out toilet training, wearing your own clothes and being able to choose what supplies you need. must be taken to school and be able to clean up his own toys. Brewer also said that indicators of kindergarten children's independence include habits consisting of physical ability, self-confidence, responsibility, sociability, sharing and emotional control. (Kale & Cendana, 2022). Independence needs to be taught to children. Without being taught, children will not know how they should shape themselves. In a family environment, to instill independence in children requires a process that is carried out in stages and adapted to the child's level of life development. There are 2 factors that encourage children's independence, namely internal factors (emotional and intellectual) and external factors (environmental, social, stimulation and the role of parents in caring) (Saleh et al., 2022).

Individual development is greatly influenced by the socialization process that occurs in the family through parenting patterns. In a nuclear family, parenting is ideally carried out by

the father and mother, because both have different roles that can optimize the development of the child's character. In fact, child care in some societies is only considered mother care (Antawati, 2022). A large body of research shows children living in nonintact families (i.e. families that do not consist of two married biological parents) are more likely to show negative psychological and educational outcomes such as poorer academic performance, more risky behavior, and decreased well-being. A number of studies show that parent-child relationships are generally better in intact families than in non-intact families. The parenting patterns of fathers and mothers in divorced families are likely to be different (Shek et al., 2015).

School for children is a new world, new place, new environment, new activities, and everything is still a question mark for them. We often find many children crying on the first day of kindergarten. They don't want to go to class. They frowned and asked their parents to wait in class. This happens because they have fear, anxiety and worry about new situations they have never encountered.

Based on previous observations at the RA Tarbiyah Islamiyah Al-Musthafawiyah school, there are still many children who find it difficult to carry out daily activities independently, such as opening their lunch box, taking off their shoes when entering the classroom, children find it difficult to socialize well, they often feel afraid to speak well, and children still have difficulty sharing toys together, and some seem to tend to be rude, such as throwing toys, grabbing toys roughly, and crying when studying. The characters shown by these children cannot be separated from the parenting style applied by their parents. Some children who appear to have emotional problems turn out to have psychological problems, the loss of the role of one parent being the most prominent thing, single parents who care for their children will have difficulty dividing the time to care for their children while working, the result is that parents cannot make time to communicate with children, and only always follow the child's wishes so that they don't have tantrums and waste their time working. Therefore, the author is interested in conducting research describing the role of single parents in developing independence in early childhood.

2. METHODS

This research is included in field research, namely conducting direct observations regarding the role of single parents in the development of independence in children aged 4-6 years. This research is descriptive qualitative research. The research was conducted at RA Tarbiyah Islamiyah Al-Musthafawiyah, Jalan Taud No. 27 A Ex. Siderejo, District. Medan Tembung, Medan City, North Sumatra, 20222. In this study a purposive sampling technique was used with the criteria namely single parents who have children at an early age (4-6) years. During the research implementation process, data collection was carried out through observation and direct interviews. The exploratory analysis stage is shown in **Figure 1**.

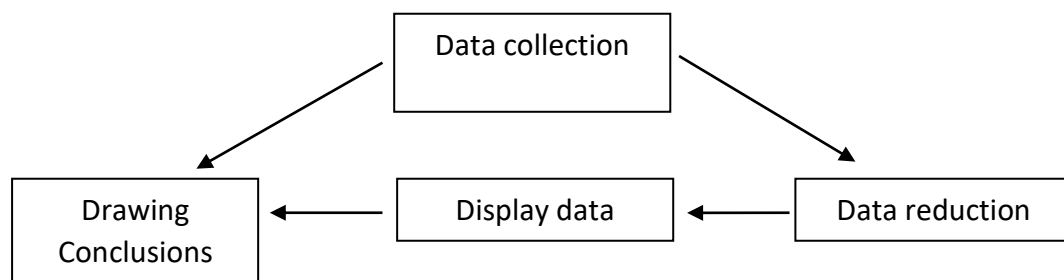


Figure 1. Data Analysis Stages

The data obtained from interviews are primary data and secondary data. Then the data collected is used to support the interview data. Observations are carried out to collect information describing children's activities, to analyze data. The data analysis technique in this research is model triangulation, which includes data collection, data reduction, data display and conclusion drawing (verification) (Sari et al.,2023). In this research, a source triangulation technique was used which was achieved by comparing observational data with interview data.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Parents have a role in the growth and development of children, parents are the first educators in child care because children are raised and educated by parents. However, sometimes childcare is done alone, the loss of one of the parental figures makes the sole role in childcare. The role of a single parent is a very big role in the family, one of which is related to education in forming the character of an independent attitude in children. Single parents must be good at dividing their time, completing their status as father and mother at the same time. Independence in making decisions and making policies independently for their small family. Apart from that, they have to provide for their family's living needs. Single parents also play a role in providing direction, guidance, motivation and good role models for their children, as well as supervision in educating and developing their children's character. Based on the results of analysis and discussions through interviews, observations and documentation that have been carried out at RA Tarbiyah Isamiyah Al-Musthafawiyah, Jalan Taud No. 27 A Ex. Siderejo, District. Medan Tembung, Medan City, North Sumatra, 20222, by looking at several aspects of the role of parents in the development of children's independence, including; (1) The role of single parents as educators; (2) The role of single parents as a motivator; (3) The role of a single parent as a breadwinner.

1) The role of single parents as educators

Parents as the first educators of children in the family are very important because the education received from parents is the basis for forming children's independence from an early age, therefore parents must be actively involved or have the responsibility to support and supervise children's education and growth (Dewi & Widyasari, 2022). Based on the results of interviews conducted in child care, parents educate children through habituation by setting an example for children and providing assistance to children in their activities at home, for example making the bed, wearing their own clothes and shoes, arranging books, and getting their own food and drink. However, there are some parents who still do not allow their children to do homework, so that children are only used to being helped and provided by their parents. As seen in **Table 1** below :

Table 1. Aspects of the Role of Single Parents as educators

Aspects	Yes	No
Set an example for children in completing work	4	1
Provide opportunities for children to help with activities at home	3	2
Guiding children to have a sense of responsibility	4	1
Teaching children how to overcome difficulties	2	3

Based on **Table 1**, it can be seen that 4 out of 5 single parents stated that they had set an example for their children in completing homework, such as when they woke up the children were shown and guided to clean the bed, after bathing the towels were hung on

the available clothesline, oran Parents also show how to dress, put shoes on the shoe rack and put dirty clothes in the laundry basket. Getting children used to behaving independently physically and bodily functions is an independence that depends on their personal will, their habituation to an activity or job. Thus teaching children by practicing directly is no less important than just teaching in theory, both are teaching children how to fix clothes, because as has been explained, so that children can remember more easily and quickly how to dress properly (Anggaraini, 2022)

Parents also give their children the opportunity to help with activities at home, such as arranging the books and clothes they will wear to go to school, involving their children in preparing lunch for school, but 2 of the parents do not give their children the opportunity because they are considered too young and too busy. if you have to wait for your child to prepare their own equipment. In guiding children to have a sense of responsibility, 4 out of 5 parents also do this, such as directing children to return items to their proper place, completing homework given by the teacher, arranging books according to schedule. However, only 2 parents taught their children how to overcome their difficulties, for example the parents asked the children to tidy up their toys after playing, let the children do their own homework, and asked the children to pick up their own clothes and school supplies. The parenting style applied by parents can shape a child's personality, because as is known, the parenting pattern applied by parents often helps children do things and does not give children opportunities so that children have less self-confidence and are more dependent on their parents and other people other (Salina & Thamrin, 2018).

2) The role of single parents as a motivator

In terms of education, single parents must be more actively involved in the child's teaching and learning process. They must be able to motivate their children to study seriously, and help them face learning difficulties. Single parents must be able to find adequate information and learning resources for their children, and also monitor their children's academic and social development regularly (Balqis et al., 2023). In this study, the aspects measured in the role of parents as motivators for their children can be seen in **Table 2** below :

Table 2. Aspects of the Role of Parents as Motivators

Aspects	Yes	No
Monitor the development of children's attitudes, morals and behavior	2	3
Monitor the growth of children's academic abilities	2	3
Monitor the efficiency of study hours at school	1	4
Give appreciation in the form of praise to children	3	2

Based on **Table 2**, it can be seen that only 2 single parents monitor behavioral and academic development, to monitor the efficiency of study hours at school, for example asking children about their activities at school, only 1 parent out of 5 single parents. This happens because there are many activities outside the home related to work, so parents find it difficult to divide their time and communicate well with their children. Very few parents pay attention to the development of children's independence, parents are only able to direct, give instructions in an angry tone, children need a strengthening figure in the activities they carry out, so parents must really understand the role in the formation of this independence (Balqis et al., 2023).

Parents also give appreciation for the small things that children show, for example when children take the initiative to make their bed, parents then give praise to their

children and say thank you for helping, parents also always give gifts if the child gets a grade. who are good at school, study calmly and do their assignments well, this praise encourages children to be more enthusiastic about helping and doing their assignments well. Giving praise to children has a positive influence in the process of building their self-confidence. Praise from parents, family and the environment becomes a motivator for children to dare to present themselves and avoid the fear of failure. Praise is one way of fulfilling a child's need for appreciation and recognition for himself (Rohma, 2018).

3) The role of a single parent as a breadwinner

Single parents have dual roles in raising their children, one of which is earning a living as a support for their children's lives. Based on the results of the interview, parents earn a living to provide facilities for their children's growth and development. Based on the results of interviews, single parents earn a living to meet their children's nutritional needs, provide play facilities for their children, and provide for their children's needs such as clothing, education costs and others. Because this is also what hinders parents from establishing good communication and interaction with their children. Because of the mismatch in working time and guiding children. This statement is supported by research conducted by (Qintari & Rahmasari, 2021) External inhibiting factors as a single parent to meet daily needs. One of the public roles played by single parents is work or providing support for their children, so that poor income factors can hinder the optimization of independent behavior in early childhood. Single parents must be able to divide their time to educate and provide the best facilities for their children.

4) Children's independence

Children's independence is divided into several indicators including Physical Ability, Self-Confidence, Responsibility, Discipline, Sociability, Sharing, and controlling emotions. The results of observations on physical ability indicators can be seen in **Table 3**. Children's Preparation for School.

Table 3. Preparing Children for School.

No	Observed activity	The role of parents	Child
1.	Prepare school uniforms	√	
2.	Shower and brush your teeth		√
3.	Wearing clothes		√
4.	Wear socks and shoes		√
5.	Prepare breakfast and school supplies	√	√
6.	Breakfast		√

Referring to the data in **Table 3**, it is known that before going to school, parents will prepare the school uniform that their child will wear to school. The child takes a shower and brushes his own teeth then puts on clothes that have been prepared by the mother. After finishing dressing, the child then puts on socks and shoes. Then the child helps the mother organize the lunch for school, by choosing food for breakfast and the provisions to be brought, such as spreading jam on bread and putting packaged milk in a bag, but some parents have prepared breakfast and lunch without involving the child, such as choosing the menu, there are also those who only buy ready-to-eat food. In fact, involving children in preparing their equipment for school is also important training to support early childhood independence.

This is in line with research conducted by (Rohmah, 2013) which states that for young children, this independence training can be done by involving children in practical daily activities at school, for example training children to fetch their own drinking water, training children to take off and put on their own shoes, training children to urinate themselves, training children to feed themselves, training children to go up and down stairs themselves, and so on. Likewise, children's independence to make their choices. Children need to have the opportunity to learn to weigh and make choices. Children will get used to making decisions without depending on other people. Examples include choosing clothes or books, choosing supplies, and so on. Developing independence in children in principle is by providing opportunities to be involved in various activities. The more opportunities given to children, the more skilled they will be in developing their skills so they will be more confident (Sukatin et al., 2020).

The learning process takes place at school, researchers can observe several indicators, namely self-confidence, responsibility and discipline. The results of observations on several of these indicators can be seen in **Table 4** below.

Table 4. Learning Activities.

No	Observed activity	The role of parents	Child
1.	Dare to appear in front of the class		√
2.	Can prepare stationery		√
3.	Dare to ask permission and ask questions		√
4.	Able to do the task		√
5.	Able to tidy up books and toys and other belongings		√
6.	Maintain classroom cleanliness by throwing rubbish in the right place		√
7.	March Orderly		√
8.	Come and go to class on time		√
9.	Follow Teacher's Instructions		√
10.	Arrange books and shoes on the shelves		√

Learning activities observed from the results presented in **Table 2**, can be seen that on average children have the courage to appear in front of the class, ask permission and ask questions, but some children are still embarrassed to appear in front of the class, are afraid to ask permission and do not dare to ask. This can be explained in the interview results that children are shy because at home the parents do not communicate with the children, this is because parents are busy working outside the home, especially for children who have single parents. In fact, communication is one of the factors that parents who want their children to be independent need to pay attention to. Through communication, parents can shape children's independence. How a single mother communicates with her child determines whether the child grows up independent or vice versa. Independent attitudes and behavior can develop well through training and encouragement from parents conveyed through communication (Retnowati, 2008).

Apart from that, the results of the research were also obtained. On average, children were able to prepare stationery when learning started, by following the teacher's instructions, children were also able to tidy up books and other belongings, as well as arrange books and shoes on their respective shelves, children were also able to line up in

rows. orderly according to the teacher's instructions. On average, children come and go to class on time, but there are some children who often don't come and go to class on time, some of these children are children who have single parents and everything is prepared by their mother/father alone, so it is difficult to divide time between preparing children for school and making time to go to work.

Meanwhile, research conducted by (Sukatin, et al, 2020) explained that single parents act as educators for children to develop responsible behavior in completing tasks to completion, returning things to their original place, and respecting time by going to school at the specified time, in addition to being a role model for children to give children an example of responsibility. obligation to worship. Single parents also act as child motivators to encourage children to be more motivated so that children can be responsible. Besides his role as a breadwinner for his children. This is quite an obstacle with difficulty in dividing time to educate children because they have to work. However, if these roles are carried out well, it will have a positive impact on the child, such as the child being able to be responsible for carrying out the assignment given by the teacher until it is finished, tidying up things that have been used without having to be ordered by their parents, and being able to be responsible for their obligations. pray and go to school on time.

During early childhood play activities, several indicators of independence can be observed, including being good at socializing, sharing with each other, and controlling emotions. This activity has been observed with the results as in **Table 5** below.

Table 5. Early Childhood Play Activities.

No	Observed activity	The role of parents	Child
1.	Play games with friends quietly		√
2.	Don't disturb/seize other friends' toys		√
3.	Helping a friend arrange the blocks		√
4.	Offer food supplies to friends	√	√
5.	Offer stationery to friends who don't have stationery	√	√
6.	Don't cry when your parents leave you	√	√
7.	Orderly queue to wash your hands before eating		√

Based on **Table 5**, it can be seen that on average children are easy to get along with, this can be seen from children's play activities, when children play with their friends children tend to be calm and do not disturb other friends, children can cooperate with their friends when playing such as stacking blocks. Children also don't seem to be fighting over each other's toys, tending to focus on the toy they are holding. However, there are some children who are still embarrassed to play together, have difficulty interacting with other friends, this can be caused by a lack of time for parents to invite children to chat or tell stories, some are due to parents' busy lives, others are due to the parents' overprotective attitude. which causes children to be afraid to start making friends.

Based on observations made in the field, overprotective attitudes and lack of time occur in single parents. When playing, it is not uncommon for some children to offer each other food, this is supported by the role of parents who teach empathy for others, such as preparing more supplies and leaving messages for children to share with their friends. This can also be seen when children offer writing materials to friends who don't have them, the sense of empathy instilled by parents from an early age can lead children to be more

sensitive towards the friends around them. Parents also play an important role in giving children confidence that school is a safe place to play and learn, so that when parents leave their children at school, the children no longer cry. Some children who have single parents have difficulty adapting, so the child often cries and has tantrums when their mother/father takes them to school. Children's emotional control can also be seen from their orderliness in queuing, such as queuing to wash their hands before eating lunch. Some children with single parents have difficulty controlling their emotions, can't wait to wait in line, this can be caused by the parenting style of parents who always let children do whatever activities they want, as long as it doesn't interfere with their work. This finding is also supported by research conducted by (Haryoko et al., 2020) in his research stated that parents who behave overly protectively towards their children who are already attending TK/RA group B, can hinder the development of the child's personality, because it makes the child less independent, less self-confident and less able to adapt to his environment. Children are less able to socialize with their peers and are always dependent on their parents (always want to be close to their parents in carrying out any activities).

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the research that has been conducted, it can be concluded that the role of single parents in developing children's independence is very significant by being a motivator such as communicating with children by asking about children's activities at school, making corrections and evaluations on children's assignments, for example accompanying children to do their homework, inviting children to practice questions on their own. Parents also act as educators by providing role models for children, such as waking up early so that the child will also be woken up early, inviting children to prepare the books and equipment needed, such as compiling a roster, so that children become more independent in carrying out their activities while at home. Apart from that, parents also become facilitators for their children by providing the best facilities that children need, such as nutrition (food), education (school), and other supporting facilities so that children can be more active and independent.

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6. AUTHORS' NOTE

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article. Authors confirmed that the paper was free of plagiarism.

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