

# The Role of Parents in the Social-Emotional Development and Independence of Children

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## ABSTRACT

Alpha generation is a generation that is growing up in the current era. This generation brings very rapid digital transformation. Along with the advancement of new digital technologies, many accompanying problems have also emerged, especially among children. This condition significantly affects children's emotional development. Children spend more time looking at mobile phone screens than socializing with others. Therefore, there is a need to improve parenting patterns in educating children, as this can influence the development of positive social feelings. This research was conducted at KB ANANDA using a qualitative research method with a phenomenological approach. This approach was applied to understand the phenomenon of children's emotional development. Fifteen parents who enrolled their children at the institution were selected as the research sample and observed directly. The results of the observations were compared with literature sources as supporting information to strengthen the obtained data. The literature used consisted of books and scientific journals. Based on the discussion of children's emotional development at school, it can be understood that there are various multidimensional aspects, ranging from internal to external factors. Internal factors include children's ways of thinking, which influence their personalities. Children under the age of eight tend to have temperamental characteristics that can be categorized as easy or difficult. Children with easy temperaments are generally easier to guide, while children with difficult temperaments are more challenging to direct. External factors include parenting styles, peer interactions, teacher-child relationships, and school regulations. These factors become the main foundation in shaping children's emotional competence.

**Keywords:** Children, Emotional Development, School.

## I. Introduction

The Alpha Generation is a generation growing up in the modern era, characterized by rapid digital transformation. Along with the advancement of digital technology, various problems have also emerged, especially among children. This condition significantly affects children's emotional development. Children now spend more time staring at smartphone screens rather than socializing with others. As a result, children interact less with their surroundings and have fewer opportunities to learn directly from real-life environments. They also tend to lack the ability to manage emotions in real situations. Furthermore, frequent exposure to non-educational digital content can accustom children to unrealistic conditions, such as instant gratification. This may lead children to become easily frustrated, slow to adapt, and in severe cases, prone to tantrums when their desires are not fulfilled. Therefore, proper guidance toward positive activities is necessary to help children develop healthy emotional growth. According to Sari Nasrianti et al. (2025), appropriate parenting patterns for Alpha Generation children are needed to support developmental aspects and shape children's character. This generation requires ideal parenting approaches so that children can develop their personalities naturally and positively. In this context, parents play a central role in shaping children's



personalities. Parents are expected to balance the rapid development of digital technology with effective educational methods. Education should not only focus on formal academic learning but also include emotional, social, and creative development. Such educational approaches can help children become more confident and provide greater opportunities for social interaction with peers and family members. Through creative learning, children can also develop more critical and organized thinking patterns.

In today's era, the role of parents is essential in developing children's emotional abilities. Parents serve as figures who provide children with feelings of comfort, security, and appreciation. The presence and involvement of parents can determine children's success in later stages of life. Parents influence children's development by giving attention, guidance, direction, and creating a positive family environment. These factors help children develop the ability to recognize, understand, feel, motivate themselves, and manage emotions effectively. According to Muali and Fatmawati (2022), parents and children share a reciprocal relationship that continues throughout life, where parents remain role models who strongly influence their children's future. Therefore, parents must possess strong principles in fostering children's emotional development. In Indonesia, many parents still lack sufficient understanding of emotional character education for children. Various cases, such as bullying, indicate that many parents do not fully understand how to educate children emotionally and socially. Consequently, this often leads to bullying cases or even acts of violence committed by peers at school. Such incidents can severely affect children's mental health, causing them to fear attending school, and in extreme cases, the problem may even proceed to legal processes. Therefore, improving parenting patterns is essential because they strongly influence the formation of positive social feelings in children. Through appropriate emotional guidance, children can better understand the emotions they experience and avoid expressing them in negative ways.

## II. Literature Review

### 2.1. Children's Socio-Emotional Development

Emotions can be classified into several categories, including basic emotions, secondary emotions, positive emotions, and negative emotions. Basic emotions are emotions that exist from birth and determine how individuals respond to surrounding situations. Secondary emotions emerge after individuals gain social experiences, such as feeling embarrassed when meeting peers, jealousy, or envy. Positive emotions lead individuals toward constructive conditions, such as happiness and self-confidence, while negative emotions include anger, anxiety, and fear. In children, these emotional aspects are still in the developmental stage. Without proper guidance, negative emotions may dominate children's personalities Nor (2024). According to Adelia and Nur Budiono (2024), children's emotional development must be guided and controlled to ensure that it develops positively. Emotional development refers to children's ability to recognize, understand, and manage emotions while interacting with others. Positive emotional development can make children more sensitive to their environment and foster caring, empathy, and compassion toward others. On the other hand, if emotional development is not properly directed, negative traits such as hatred, jealousy, and indifference may emerge. Children with strong self-control can regulate their emotions according to existing situations. According to Rohman et al. (2023), self-control is a process of shaping psychological, physical, and behavioral responses in accordance with environmental norms, thereby encouraging positive behavior. As a result, children become capable of considering appropriate actions in different situations.

### 2.2. Children's Independence

Children's independence refers to their ability to carry out daily activities without relying heavily on assistance from others. Independent children can make decisions, taking responsibility, and demonstrating self-confidence. This characteristic should be developed from an early age Kristiana and Hardianti (2024). Independence influences children's future development because children gradually learn to perform simple activities independently, such as dressing, eating, and bathing by themselves. In addition, independent children develop responsibility for their belongings and begin making decisions in situations that require choices. These abilities help children manage their daily lives more effectively. According to Rahmah et al. (2025), several factors influence children's independence, including the school environment, parenting styles, and education. At school, children are required to complete tasks individually or collaboratively, which encourages them to determine strategies for solving problems independently or through discussion. Parenting styles that encourage responsibility and independence positively contribute to children's character

development. Conversely, children who are not trained to be independent may become fearful, lack self-confidence, and depend excessively on others. Education obtained from various environments also influences children's independence. Positive environments help children learn constructive behaviors from those around them. Moreover, implicit educational experiences can shape children's mindsets toward becoming more independent Najmudin et al. (2024).

### 2.3. The Role of Parents in Children's Emotional Development

Parents play a highly important role in children's emotional growth. The ways parents educate and interact with their children greatly influence the personalities that develop within them. Putri and Masyithoh (2024) explain that children tend to imitate and learn from their parents' interactions and behaviors. The habits children acquire from their parents become the foundation of their emotional development. Since children spend much of their daily lives with their parents, parental influence becomes highly significant. There are several parenting styles commonly practiced by parents, including authoritarian, permissive, and authoritative parenting. Authoritarian parenting prioritizes parents' desires and gives parents full control over children's development, requiring children to obey parental rules strictly. Permissive parenting allows children considerable freedom to engage in activities without strict demands or limitations from parents. However, this parenting style may expose children and adolescents to excessive freedom that could lead to negative behaviors. Meanwhile, authoritative parenting involves parents in children's decision-making processes while still allowing children a degree of independence under parental supervision. Children are given opportunities to determine their own activities, while parents provide guidance regarding their actions. This parenting style encourages children to develop through experiences while still receiving appropriate direction from parents Adelia and Nur Budiono (2024).

## III. Research Method

This study was conducted at KB ANANDA using a qualitative research method with a phenomenological approach. This approach was employed to understand the phenomenon of children's emotional development. Fifteen parents whose children attended the institution were selected as research participants and observed during the study. The observation results were compared with relevant literature as supporting information to strengthen the obtained data. The references used included books and scientific journals. Data was collected through direct observation of parents, interviews, and documentation. Observation was conducted to identify parenting patterns in parent-child interactions within the research setting. Interviews aimed to explore parents' strategies and knowledge in educating children during the process of emotional development. Documentation was used to provide more concrete explanations related to parents' practices in supporting children's emotional development. Data analysis employed the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. To ensure data validity, triangulation techniques were applied, both between data sources and among different resource persons.

## IV. Results and Discussion

The findings revealed two major factors influencing children's emotional development, namely internal and external factors. Internal factors originate from the child's own mindset. Emotional development can grow optimally when supported by healthy thinking patterns. Children with unhealthy thought patterns tend to interpret surrounding events negatively, whereas children with healthy cognitive development are more likely to interpret experiences positively. Therefore, conditioning children's thinking patterns becomes an important effort in supporting optimal emotional development. However, the children at KB ANANDA who became research subjects were generally under eight years old. At this developmental stage, children's cognitive abilities are still unstable and immature. Rather than thinking critically about cause and effect, children tend to absorb events from their environment into memory and imitate the behavior of others. The culture within the school environment was reflected in the children's emotional expressions, which varied widely and sometimes created discomfort for adults. These emotions included crying, happiness, empathy, and anger (Isnaini Nurdiah & Mirna Nur Alia Abdullah, 2024).

In processing emotions, children also possess individual tendencies or temperaments in responding to events around them. According to Mulati Abdullah et al. (2025), temperament can generally be categorized into easy, difficult, and slow-to-warm-up types. Children with difficult temperaments tend to express

emotions intensely and therefore require special attention and guidance. External factors were found to dominate children's emotional development. These factors emerge from outside the child and include parenting styles, peer interactions, teacher-student relationships, and school regulations.

#### 4.1. Parenting Style

Parenting refers to actions intended to guide children through discipline, interaction, and role modeling. Parenting styles have a significant influence on children's emotional development. Appropriate parenting can maximize emotional growth, whereas inappropriate parenting may hinder emotional development and shape personalities inconsistent with social norms (Dhiu & Fono, 2022). For children under eight years old, parenting plays a crucial role in shaping personality and long-term behavior. Positive parenting contributes to children becoming more confident in social interactions, less prone to anger, and more capable of displaying positive behavior (Regina & Hidayat, 2022). At KB ANANDA, most parents were high school graduates or above, indicating a sufficient educational background to support child development. Parents with formal operational thinking are generally able to understand the importance of affection, communication, and responsive parenting in emotional development. Nevertheless, cultural traditions, inherited parenting patterns, and personal experiences may also influence parental perspectives.

#### 4.2. Peer Interaction

Peer interaction plays an important role in children's emotional development. Interactions among children create opportunities for experiencing complex emotions, enabling children to learn how to express feelings appropriately in various situations. Through peer relationships, children also learn to recognize the emotions experienced by others (Istikomah & Andriani, 2026). Peer interaction provides meaningful experiences in emotional growth. Children often feel equal and comfortable when interacting with peers, which naturally facilitates emotional exchange such as happiness, disappointment, anger, and empathy. Conflicts arising from competition over toys, for example, encourage children to negotiate, practice self-control, and seek solutions beneficial to both parties. According to Muslimah et al. (2026), conflict situations can help children recognize others' emotions and develop emotional responses in accordance with social norms. However, children lacking emotional regulation skills may instead express anger impulsively. At KB ANANDA, children were given extensive opportunities for interaction through play activities. These interactions involved taking turns, helping friends operate toys, and waiting patiently in line. Such experiences naturally stimulated emotional development.

#### 4.3. Teacher-Student Relationships

Teachers play an important role in children's emotional development at school. Beyond delivering academic material, teachers also function as parental figures who guide children in forming emotional experiences. Positive teacher-student relationships are characterized by warmth, responsiveness, and empathy. When children feel comfortable with teachers, they tend to express emotions more openly and demonstrate greater emotional stability. Children also learn emotional responses by observing and imitating teachers' behavior (Tiara et al., 2025). Positive relationships between teachers and students contribute significantly to children's emotional well-being. Children who feel close to their teachers are more comfortable attending school, feel protected and valued, and demonstrate higher learning motivation. In contrast, poor teacher-student relationships may lead to discomfort, insecurity, and reduced confidence in social interactions (Khairunnisa & Rigianti, 2023). Teachers at KB ANANDA are expected to be adaptive and responsive caregivers. They create a comfortable environment like that experienced by children at home, fostering emotional security and motivation to participate in learning activities. Teachers also guide students in socializing according to appropriate norms, contributing to positive personality development.

#### 4.4. School Regulations

School regulations are important elements contributing to a supportive educational environment and emotional development. Rules function not only to regulate students' behavior but also to teach children appropriate social conduct according to accepted norms. The presence of clear rules helps children feel safe and understand behavioral boundaries. School regulations also assist children in managing emotions, anxiety, fear, and impulsive behavior. Examples of school rules that train emotional control include waiting in line,

avoiding disturbance of peers, and using polite language. Such regulations encourage children to practice self-control (Tihnik & Farida, 2023). At this developmental stage, children begin learning to recognize, manage, and express emotions adaptively. Therefore, rules are not merely prohibitions but instruments for building positive habits.

The implementation of rules through positive discipline demonstrates significant implications for emotional development because this approach emphasizes value internalization rather than external control. Positive discipline operates through cognitive and affective mechanisms in which children not only obey rules but also understand the meaning behind them. This understanding fosters stronger self-regulation, as behavior becomes guided by personal awareness rather than fear of punishment (Mukarromah & Wulandari, 2025). Overall, these factors collectively stimulate children's emotional development. Children become more sensitive and capable of expressing themselves effectively when supported by a positive environment. Furthermore, schools should provide educational programs for parents focusing on children's emotional development. Such programs can improve parents' abilities in nurturing and educating children, understanding children's social behavior both at home and school, and guiding them in selecting positive peer relationships.

## V. Conclusion

Based on the findings and discussion, children's emotional development at school can be understood as a multidimensional process influenced by both internal and external factors. Internal factors include children's cognitive patterns and temperament, which shape their personality and emotional responses. Children under eight years old generally display temperamental characteristics that can be categorized as easy or difficult. Children with easy temperaments tend to be more adaptable and easier to guide, whereas children with difficult temperaments often require greater attention and emotional support. External factors such as parenting style, peer interaction, teacher-student relationships, and school regulations serve as the primary foundations for developing children's emotional competence. Responsive, supportive, and consistent parenting contributes positively to emotional growth. Intensive peer interaction encourages children to develop negotiation skills, empathy, and conflict resolution abilities. Warm, empathetic, and responsive relationships between teachers and students create emotional security and motivation for learning. In addition, school regulations help children develop discipline and self-control. Collectively, these factors optimize children's emotional development in a holistic and sustainable manner, enabling them to better understand social norms and develop more positive personalities.

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