

SOCIAL SCIENCE AND EDUCATION | RESEARCH ARTICLE

Teacher Strategies in Developing Children's Social-Emotional Skills at RA Al-Khairat Skep, Ternate City

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This study aims to describe the strategies used by teachers in developing the social-emotional abilities of early childhood at RA Al-Khairat Skep. This study used a descriptive qualitative approach with data collection techniques through observation, interviews, and documentation. The research subjects included teachers and students at RA Al-Khairat. The results of the study indicate that teachers' strategies in children's social-emotional development are carried out through play-based learning, positive behavioral habits, and empathetic emotional approaches. These strategies contribute to improving children's abilities in social interaction, cooperation, managing emotions, and appropriately expressing feelings. Supporting factors in the implementation of strategies include teacher commitment and a conducive school environment, while inhibiting factors include limited time, learning facilities, and differences in children's family backgrounds. This study emphasizes the importance of teachers' role in creating a safe learning environment and supporting the social-emotional development of early childhood.

Keywords: Teacher Strategies, Social-Emotional, Early Childhood.

I. Introduction

Early childhood social-emotional development is a fundamental aspect that plays a crucial role in shaping a child's personality and behavior in later stages of development. During this period, children begin to learn to recognize and manage emotions, understand the feelings of others, and build social relationships with their environment. Optimally developed social-emotional skills help children adapt to social situations, demonstrate empathy, and build self-confidence in interacting with others. Therefore, developing social-emotional aspects is a crucial part of early childhood education (Handayani & Kaffa, 2025). Conceptually, social-emotional development encompasses a child's ability to express emotions appropriately, control negative feelings, and develop social behaviors that align with prevailing norms. Children with strong emotional intelligence tend to cooperate, share, and resolve conflicts positively. Conversely, children who lack social-emotional stimulation are likely to experience difficulties in interacting, become easily frustrated, and

exhibit deviant behavior. This demonstrates that social-emotional aspects have a direct influence on the success of a child's learning process (Djamnezhad et al., 2021). In educational practice, the urgency of socio-emotional development is increasing, along with changes in children's social patterns. Limited direct interaction, the influence of digital media, and differences in parenting styles are factors that influence children's emotional development (Djamnezhad et al., 2021). Therefore, early childhood education institutions must provide a learning environment that stimulates balanced and sustainable socio-emotional development from an early age.

Early childhood education teachers play a central role in character formation and emotional development of early childhood. At this age, children tend to imitate the behavior of adults around them, especially teachers, who are important figures in their daily school life. Teachers' attitudes, communication styles, and responses to children's behavior influence the development of children's emotional and social patterns. Therefore, early childhood education teachers serve as instructors, role models, and emotional guides for students. In implementing learning, early childhood education teachers are expected to implement strategies oriented towards children's socio-emotional development. These strategies can be realized through play activities, group work, positive behavioral habits, and reinforcement of moral and religious values. Through appropriate strategies, teachers can help children understand their own emotions and those of others and guide them in expressing their emotions in a healthy and constructive manner (Damayanti & Syafril, 2024).

Furthermore, RA teachers play a role in creating a safe and comfortable learning environment for children. A conducive environment helps children feel accepted, valued, and free to express their feelings without fear. The teacher's role in establishing a positive emotional climate is crucial to the success of children's socio-emotional development; therefore, teachers are required to possess adequate pedagogical competence and emotional sensitivity. (Nurina & Setiyadi, 2025) RA Al-Khairat Skep, Ternate City, is an early childhood education institution that strives to develop all aspects of child development, including socioemotional aspects. Based on initial observations, this school has implemented various learning activities that encourage children's social interaction, such as playing together, group activities, and instilling Islamic values into daily life. These efforts demonstrate the importance of developing children's character and emotions from an early age. However, empirical conditions in the field indicate that the social-emotional development of children at RA Al-Khairat Skep, Ternate City remains uneven. Some children are able to demonstrate good social behavior, such as working together and sharing with friends, while others still struggle to control their emotions, become easily angered, or withdraw from social environments. These differences are influenced by family background, social experiences, and parenting styles. This variation in social-emotional development presents a challenge for teachers in implementing learning strategies. Teachers are required to understand the characteristics of each child and adapt their learning strategies, accordingly. This empirical condition demonstrates the need for an in-depth study of teacher strategies for developing children's social-emotional skills so that learning can be more effective and tailored to students' needs. (Andre et al., 2025). Teachers at RA Al-Khairat Skep, Ternate City, face various complex challenges in developing children's social-emotional skills. One of the main issues is the diversity of the characters and abilities of children within a class. This diversity requires teachers to provide different types of attention and approaches to each child, which is not always easy to achieve within a limited learning time. Another problem relates to the limited availability of learning resources and media that specifically support children's social-emotional development. Teachers often have to utilize the available media and rely on their personal experience to manage children's emotional behavior. Furthermore, the demands of a curriculum that encompasses various developmental aspects mean that the focus on social-emotional development is not fully optimized. (Eva et al., 2024)

Teachers also face challenges in managing children who exhibit emotionally unstable behaviors, such as tantrums, aggression, or difficulty following rules. Handling these behaviors requires patience, consistency,

and a deep understanding of children's emotional development. This indicates that teachers need appropriate and planned strategies to develop children's social-emotional skills. Ideally, early childhood education is expected to produce children who develop holistically, cognitively, socially, and emotionally. Children are expected to interact positively, manage their emotions well, and demonstrate behaviors that reflect moral and social values. Teachers are expected to implement effective learning strategies to achieve these goals (Putri et al., 2025). However, the reality on the ground shows a gap between expectations and the actual conditions. Despite various efforts, children's social-emotional development has not fully met expectations to date. Some children still exhibit difficulties in interacting and managing their emotions, indicating that the implemented learning strategies require further review and development. Based on this gap, this study aims to describe in-depth the teachers' strategies for developing children's social-emotional skills at RA Al-Khairat Skep, examine the forms of social-emotional skills developed through these strategies, and analyze the supporting and inhibiting factors that teachers face in their implementation. Therefore, this research is expected to contribute to improving the quality of learning and social-emotional development in early childhood.

II. Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

2.1. Social-Emotional Development of Early Childhood

Early childhood social-emotional development is crucial to a child's ability to recognize, express, and manage emotions and establish social relationships with their surroundings. This aspect encompasses a child's ability to interact with peers, understand social rules, demonstrate empathy, and gradually control emotions according to their developmental level. In the context of early childhood education, social-emotional development forms the foundation for character formation and children's readiness for the next level of education. Research conducted by Suryani (2019) showed that social-emotional stimulation through structured play activities can improve early childhood cooperation and empathy. The results confirm that consciously designed social interactions within the learning process provide meaningful emotional experiences for children. This research is relevant because it emphasizes the important role of the learning environment in developing children's social-emotional skills. Furthermore, research (Azizah, 2016) found that fostering positive behaviors based on moral and religious values in early childhood education institutions contributes significantly to children's socio-emotional development. Children demonstrate improvements in discipline, responsibility, and emotional regulation. This finding strengthens the view that children's social-emotional development cannot be separated from the values instilled through daily learning activities in educational institutions.

2.2. Teacher Strategies in Developing Children's Social-Emotional Skills

Teacher strategies are key factors in developing early childhood social-emotional skills. Teachers play a role in designing and implementing learning that allows children to interact, express emotions, and learn to understand others' feelings. Commonly implemented strategies include play-based learning, role-playing, group work, fostering positive behaviors, and modeling emotion management. These strategies aim to create a safe and enjoyable learning environment that supports children's emotional development. Maharani et al. (2024) showed that teachers who implement role modeling and emotion-based learning strategies can help children develop emotional control and positive social behavior. Responsive and empathetic teachers can build positive emotional relationships with children, enabling them to feel safe expressing their feelings and learning to interact in a healthy manner. This research is relevant because it emphasizes the importance of teachers as role models in children's social-emotional development. Furthermore, Gea et al. (2023) revealed

that the use of cooperative learning strategies in early childhood education can improve children's social skills, particularly in cooperation and communication. Children involved in group activities demonstrated improved sharing skills and simple conflict resolutions. These findings suggest that teacher strategies involving direct social interaction positively impact children's social-emotional development. Based on previous research, it can be concluded that early childhood social-emotional development has been extensively studied, particularly regarding the role of teachers and play-based learning strategies and the promotion of positive behavior. However, most of this research has focused on the general context of kindergartens or early childhood education (PAUD) and has not specifically examined the practices of teachers in Raudhatul Athfal (Islamic kindergartens) institutions with strong Islamic values.

The novelty of this research lies in its focus, which specifically examines RA teachers' strategies in developing children's social-emotional skills at RA Al-Khairat Skep in Ternate City based on empirical conditions in the field. This research not only identifies the strategies implemented but also analyzes the supporting and inhibiting factors of their implementation. Using a descriptive qualitative approach, this study is expected to provide a more contextual and in-depth picture of children's social-emotional development practices at RA, thus serving as a practical and theoretical reference for the development of early childhood learning in Indonesia.

III. Research Method

This study used a descriptive qualitative approach to provide an in-depth description of the strategies used by teachers to develop children's social-emotional skills at RA Al-Khairat Skep. This approach was chosen because it allowed researchers to understand the learning process and teacher-child interactions in a natural context. The study was conducted at RA Al-Khairat Skep, with RA teachers directly involved in the learning process as the subjects. Data were collected through observations, interviews, and documentation related to the implementation of learning and children's social-emotional development. Data analysis was conducted descriptively through the stages of data reduction, presentation, and conclusion drawing. Data validity was maintained through the triangulation of sources and techniques to ensure the accuracy and reliability of the research findings. (Kafilah Imanina, 2025)

IV. Result and Discussion

4.1. Result

The results of this study were obtained through direct observation of the learning process, interviews with RA teachers, and analysis of learning documentation at RA Al-Khairat Skep, Indonesia. The collected data were then analyzed descriptively to describe teachers' strategies in developing children's social-emotional skills, the forms of social-emotional skills that developed, and the supporting and inhibiting factors in their implementation. The research findings indicate that children's social-emotional development has become part of daily learning practices at RA Al-Khairat Skep. Teachers' strategies for developing children's social-emotional skills involve integrating play activities into learning processes. Teachers intentionally design group play activities, such as role-playing and collaborative games, to encourage children to interact with each other. In these activities, children are trained to share, cooperate, and follow rules. Teachers play an active role in directing the course of play and modeling positive social behavior for children (Kutfiana et al., 2025). In addition to play activities, teachers implement strategies to foster social behavior through daily classroom routines. Activities such as lining up, praying together, and tidying up play equipment are consistently carried out to cultivate discipline and responsibility in children. Teachers provide positive reinforcement when children demonstrate good social behavior, such as helping friends or waiting for their turn. These habits are

repeated so that they become part of children's daily habits. Teachers' strategies for developing children's emotional well-being are evident through a communicative and empathetic approach. Teachers provide space for children to express their feelings, whether they are happy, sad, or disappointed. When children display negative emotions, teachers do not immediately punish them; instead, they help them calm down and understand their feelings. This approach helps children gradually learn to recognize and manage their emotions.

The results of the study indicate that the strategies implemented by teachers impact the development of children's social skills. Children begin to demonstrate courage in interacting with peers, actively participate in group activities, and show empathy toward friends experiencing difficulties. Children also begin to understand the importance of cooperation and mutual respect in group activity. This change is evident in the increased participation of children in group activities in the classroom. In addition to social skills, children's emotional development has also shown positive changes. Children are better able to express their feelings verbally than before the intervention. In some situations, children appear to be able to control their emotions, such as by restraining themselves when having to wait their turn or accepting the teacher's decisions. Although there are still children who have difficulty controlling their emotions, the frequency of this behavior tends to decrease as teachers become accustomed to it.

This study also found that each child exhibited different levels of social-emotional development. These differences are influenced by family background, previous social experiences, and the child's individual characteristics. Teachers recognize these differences and strive to adapt their learning approaches to each child's needs. This individualized approach helps teachers address children who require more attention in managing their emotions and social behaviors. The supporting factors in the development of children's social-emotional abilities at RA Al-Khairat Skep include teachers' commitment to consistently implementing positive behavioral habits and a relatively conducive school environment. Cooperation among teachers and support from the school contribute to creating a safe and comfortable learning environment. Furthermore, the application of Islamic values in daily learning reinforces the development of children's social and emotional attitudes. However, the inhibiting factors faced by teachers include limited learning time and inadequate supporting facilities. Teachers also face challenges in managing children with diverse characteristics, especially those who tend to be passive or easily display negative emotions. This situation requires teachers to pay extra attention and implement more varied learning strategies. Overall, the research results indicate that the teachers' strategies at RA Al-Khairat Skep positively contributed to the development of children's social-emotional skills. Although some implementation challenges persist, the strategies implemented have helped children develop social interaction skills and gradually manage their emotions. These findings provide an important basis for further analysis in the discussion section, linking the research findings to the theory and previous research.

4.2. Discussion

The research findings indicate that the teachers' strategies for develop children's social-emotional abilities by integrating play activities, fostering positive behavioral habits, and employing empathetic emotional approaches. These findings align with Hurlock's view that early childhood social-emotional development develops optimally through direct experience and meaningful social interactions. Group play activities and classroom routines implemented by teachers provide a space for children to learn to adapt naturally to their social environment. Teachers' implementation of play-based learning strategies has been shown to enhance children's social interactions. These findings support Vygotsky's theory (Lestari et al., 2024), which emphasizes that children's social development occurs through social interactions and cooperation with others. In the context of the RA Al-Khairat Skep, group play and role-playing enable children to learn to share,

cooperate, and understand simple social rules. This finding also aligns with research (Suryani, 2019) that found that structured play activities can increase empathy and cooperation in early childhood.

Consistently fostering positive behavior by teachers also contributes to children's social-emotional development. According to Bandura, social learning occurs through the process of imitating significant models. Teachers who exemplify positive behaviors, such as patience and respect for children, become role models for students to emulate. This finding aligns with research (Azizah, 2016), which states that fostering positive behavior based on moral values can increase children's discipline and responsibility. A teacher's empathetic approach to responding to children's emotions plays a crucial role in the development of emotional intelligence. Goleman emphasized that the ability to recognize and manage emotions is a key component of emotional intelligence that must be developed from an early age. Research shows that teachers do not immediately punish children when they display negative emotions but rather help them recognize and calm their emotions. This approach helps children learn to manage their feelings gradually and constructively.

The development of children's social skills, marked by increased courage to interact and cooperate, demonstrates the effectiveness of teachers' strategies in creating a safe and supportive learning environment. This aligns with Erikson's theory, which states that in early childhood, children are in the initiative versus guilt phase, where environmental support is crucial for the development of self-confidence. A conducive classroom environment allows children to develop social initiatives without fear. Research findings also indicate the development of children's ability to express emotions verbally. This supports the theory of language and emotional development, which states that the ability to verbalize feelings helps children reduce their uncontrolled emotional behavior. Rahmawati and Nurhayati (2020) found that communicative and responsive teachers help children develop better emotional control. However, this study found that children's social-emotional development does not occur uniformly. Differences in character, family background, and social experiences influence students' responses to the learning strategies implemented by teachers. This finding aligns with Bronfenbrenner's perspective on developmental ecology theory, which states that child development is influenced by various environmental systems, including the family and school.

Teachers' efforts to implement an individualized approach demonstrate their pedagogical awareness of children's varying needs. According to Mulyasa, professional teachers are required to adapt learning strategies to student characteristics. In this study, teachers attempted to pay more attention to children experiencing emotional difficulties, although time constraints posed a challenge. Supporting factors, such as teacher commitment and a conducive school environment, strengthen the implementation of socio-emotional development strategies. A safe and caring environment aligns with the principles of early childhood education, which prioritizes emotional well-being as a prerequisite for learning. Research (Gea et al., 2023) confirms that a supportive school environment positively influences children's social development. Conversely, inhibiting factors such as limited time, resources, and a lack of continuity with parenting at home pose challenges to children's socio-emotional development. These findings corroborate previous research, which states that successful socio-emotional development requires collaboration between schools and families. Without a supportive home environment, adaptation at school often fails to occur. Overall, these findings reinforce the theory and findings of previous research that teacher strategies play a central role in developing socio-emotional skills during early childhood. Play-based strategies, positive behavioral reinforcement, and empathetic approaches have proven effective in helping children gradually develop social and emotional skills. Thus, this discussion confirms that the practice of teacher strategies at RA Al-Khairat Skep is not only empirically relevant but also has a strong theoretical foundation. The findings of this study enrich the study of early childhood social-emotional development, particularly in the context of RA, and form the basis for formulating practical recommendations in the conclusion and implication sections.

V. Conclusion



Based on the research results and discussion, it can be concluded that the teachers' strategies at RA Al-Khairat Skep for developing early childhood social-emotional skills are implemented through play-based learning, positive behavioral habits, and empathetic emotional approaches. These strategies have been proven to improve children's abilities in social interaction, collaboration, emotional management, and controlled expression of feelings. Teachers act as facilitators, behavioral models, and emotional companions, providing children with a sense of security during the learning process. However, children's social-emotional development does not occur evenly due to differences in individual character, family background, and limited learning resources and time. Overall, the strategies implemented by teachers have been effective and relevant to the principles of early childhood education.

The implications of this research suggest that RA teachers should continue developing child-centered learning strategies that emphasize play, role modeling, and empathetic communication in daily activities. Educational institutions are expected to provide support by providing adequate learning resources and programs to strengthen teachers' competencies in children's social-emotional development. Furthermore, more intensive collaboration between teachers and parents is needed to ensure that sustainable positive behaviors are cultivated at school and home. The results of this study can also serve as a reference for future research examining strategies for early childhood social-emotional development using diverse approaches and contexts.

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