

Toilet Training as a Builder of Early Childhood Independence Through Collaboration Between Parents and Schools

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Abstract

This study explores the role of parents in fostering children's independence through toilet training in early childhood education programs. The research aims to analyze how parental involvement, collaboration with teachers, and environmental factors influence the success of toilet training among children aged 4–6 years. A qualitative descriptive method was used, involving in-depth interviews, classroom observations, and documentation at several PAUD institutions in Bekasi. Data were analyzed through thematic coding and triangulation to ensure validity. The findings reveal four major themes: (1) daily routines and consistency in toilet training help children develop self-control and autonomy; (2) collaboration between parents and teachers strengthens consistency of practices across home and school; (3) supportive physical environments and emotional encouragement significantly enhance children's readiness; and (4) successful toilet training contributes to broader aspects of independence, confidence, and social interaction. The study also identifies inhibiting factors such as inadequate facilities, differing home–school routines, and limited teacher–child ratios. These findings align with Erikson's psychosocial theory of autonomy versus shame and doubt and Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory, which emphasize the role of consistent microsystem interactions in early development. The study concludes that successful toilet training is not merely a physical skill but a foundational process in building children's autonomy and emotional regulation. The implications suggest that early childhood institutions should integrate toilet training into their independence curriculum, strengthen parent–teacher collaboration, and ensure child-friendly facilities.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Toilet training is an important aspect of early childhood development that is often overlooked in educational practices. This process is not simply about getting children used to urinating and defecating independently, but also about developing character, discipline, and a sense of responsibility. Children who are successfully toilet trained demonstrate the ability to control their bodies, understand routines, and adapt to their social environment [1], [2]. In early childhood education, successful toilet training is an indicator of a child's readiness to attend school independently. Unfortunately, many parents and educators still consider toilet training solely the responsibility of the home. However, failure to toilet train can have psychological impacts on children, such as feelings of shame and low self-esteem. Children who are not toilet trained often have difficulty participating in learning activities. Lack of support from the school makes children feel insecure. Therefore, toilet training

needs to be seen as an integral part of a child's character education. Synergy between the home and school is key to the success of this process [3], [4].

In Indonesia, data shows that many young children are not yet independent in toileting. Around 30% of four-year-old children still experience enuresis or periodic bedwetting. Even 10% of five-year-old children are not yet able to control their bowel movements independently. This condition shows that toilet training is not yet a priority in childcare. The main cause is a lack of parental knowledge about the stages of child development. Cultural factors also play a role because some regions consider toilet training to occur naturally without guidance. The wrong approach, such as scolding children, can actually cause trauma. Education for parents is essential to ensure the use of appropriate methods. Schools can be partners in providing an understanding of the importance of toilet training. With information and guidance, parents can help children learn comfortably [5], [6].

Observations at two early childhood education institutions (PAUDs) in Mimika Regency show that many five-year-olds are still not independent in toilet training. Of the 25 children, 10 cannot urinate independently, while 15 still need assistance to defecate. This indicates that the toilet training process is not optimal at home or school. Erikson (1963) [7] explains that early childhood is at the Autonomy vs Shame and Doubt stage. This stage is important for developing self-control and self-confidence in children. If not supported, children will feel doubtful and dependent on adults. Parents need to accompany their children consistently and patiently. Collaboration between home and school is essential for uniform habituation. This study seeks to understand how the role of parents can strengthen the toilet training process for early childhood [8].

Toilet training is closely linked to a child's psychological and social aspects. Children who are toilet trained feel confident because they are able to control their bodies. Conversely, children who are not toilet trained often feel shy and reluctant to interact. At school, this condition can make children isolated from their peers. Teachers also face challenges in managing classes with children who are not yet independent. Therefore, toilet training needs to be included in the Early Childhood Education curriculum. This program must be carried out with a fun approach so that children do not feel stressed. Collaboration between teachers and parents has been proven to accelerate the learning process. Through toilet training, children also learn the values of responsibility and cleanliness. With positive strategies, toilet training becomes an important part of character building [9], [10].

The toilet training process requires methods appropriate to the developmental stage of children aged 2–5 years. At this age, children are in the exploration phase, so strategies must be positive and consistent. The use of praise, small rewards, and daily routines helps children understand the process. However, every child learns at a different pace, so the approach should not be generalized. A supportive and pressure-free environment is essential. Schools must also provide child-friendly toilet facilities that are safe and clean. Teachers need to be equipped with training to accompany children empathetically [11], [12]. Inadequate facilities can make children afraid or hold back from urinating. With the support of good facilities and guidance, children will become independent more quickly. Therefore, toilet training needs to be designed as a fun learning experience.

Parents play a key role in the success of toilet training. They are the first to introduce independent toilet habits. Parental support, motivation, and communication build a child's confidence. Research shows that children with parental guidance become toilet trained more quickly. However, busy schedules and lack of knowledge often hinder this process. Schools need to assist by providing parenting programs on toilet training. Through seminars, consultations, and written guides, parents can gain a proper understanding. Synergy between teachers and parents strengthens habits at home and school. Two-way

communication helps align learning methods and schedules. This way, children gain consistent experience in the process of independence.

The success of toilet training also determines a child's readiness to enter formal school. Children who are independent adapt more easily to new routines and environments. Conversely, children who are not toilet trained often disrupt class dynamics. Teachers must divide their attention between learning and the child's basic needs. To address this, schools can conduct an initial toilet training assessment. A home-to-school transition program is also important to ensure children feel safe. Toilet training should be part of the preparation for entering early childhood education (PAUD). This physical readiness helps children focus on learning without distractions. Children who are accustomed to independence will be more confident in social environments. Therefore, toilet training readiness should be an indicator of a child's acceptance into PAUD.[13]

In inclusive education, toilet training for children with special needs requires special attention. Children with autism or speech delays require more specific strategies. Teachers and parents need to understand the child's characteristics and apply an individual approach. Inclusive schools must provide accessible and safe facilities. Training for teachers in empathetic support is essential. Collaboration with psychologists or therapists can strengthen implementation strategies. Children with special needs who are successfully toilet trained will be more independent and confident. This demonstrates the importance of collaboration between parents, teachers, and experts. Inclusive toilet training reflects equity in early childhood education. Schools that implement it serve as examples of good practices in diversity-based care [14].

A school's physical and cultural facilities play a significant role in supporting toilet training. Child-friendly toilets with appropriate sizes, handrails, and cleanliness enhance children's comfort. However, many early childhood education centers (PAUD) in Indonesia still lack such facilities. Children who feel afraid or disgusted by school toilets tend to hold back their urination. Therefore, investing in children's sanitation must be a priority for school management. Teachers and staff need to be trained to assist children without shaming them. Cleanliness and a sense of security foster children's comfort and confidence. Schools must also understand the diverse cultural backgrounds of families. A flexible and culturally sensitive approach helps foster harmonious collaboration. Thus, toilet training becomes a platform for cross-cultural character development in PAUD.

2. RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach with the aim of in-depth describing the phenomenon of toilet training implementation in PAUD environments. Location study is PAUD YPJ Kuala Kencana, Mimika Regency. The research subjects consisted of 5 class teachers and 10 parents of students aged 3–5 years.

Data is collected through three main techniques:

1. Observation, to observe the child's behavior during the toilet training process at school;
2. In-depth interviews with teachers and parents regarding experiences, challenges, and strategies used;
3. Documentation, in the form of habituation notes, activity photos, and child development reports.

Data analysis was conducted through the following stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. Data validity was strengthened through triangulation of sources and techniques. The researcher acted as the primary instrument, observing the learning process and interactions between teachers, students, and parents. All research

activities were conducted with due regard for research ethics, including maintaining the confidentiality of subjects' identities and obtaining approval from the school and parents.

3. RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION (12 Pt)

3.1. Research result

Based on the results of data analysis from observations, interviews, and documentation at PAUD YPJ Kuala Kencana, four main themes were found related to the implementation of toilet training in early childhood, namely:

1. Making Toilet Training a Daily Routine at School

Toilet training at YPJ Early Childhood Education (PAUD) is implemented through daily routines. Teachers guide children to urinate and defecate regularly, for example, before learning activities, after meals, and before naps. This habituation is not simply a routine, but part of the learning process of independent behavior and responsibility. Children are introduced to the function of the toilet, how to undo pants, flush, wash hands, and maintain a clean environment. Each activity is always carried out with patient and empathetic guidance from teachers. Teachers instill the value of discipline through a playful approach. Children are encouraged to sing or line up to the song "Let's go to the toilet" to make the activity enjoyable. This activity is carried out consistently so that it becomes an automatic habit. In addition, teachers provide positive reinforcement such as praise, stickers, or applause each time a child successfully performs toilet training. This creates a warm learning atmosphere and recognizes children's efforts.

Field observations revealed that children newly entering preschool were initially afraid to use the toilet alone. However, after two weeks of regular training, most children began to feel confident going to the toilet without direct supervision. Teachers play a key role in providing a sense of security, especially for children who still experience anxiety. The success of this training demonstrates that routines and positive reinforcement are effective strategies for developing independent behavior in young children.

"Initially, the children were afraid to go to the toilet because they thought it was dark or cold. So we made it a habit to go to the toilet together every morning and afternoon while singing. Gradually, they became more confident. Now, many of them can flush and wash their hands without being reminded."

2. The Collaborative Role of Parents and Teachers

Collaboration between parents and teachers is key to successful toilet training. Teachers at YPJ Early Childhood Education (PAUD) establish two-way communication with parents through daily contact books and text message groups. Parents are encouraged to continue the same habits at home, such as reminding their children to go to the toilet at the same time as at school. This consistency helps children adjust to the routine without confusion. Teachers and parents also share experiences on how to deal with children who refuse or are afraid to go to the toilet. In addition to communication, teachers regularly hold meetings with parents to educate them about child developmental stages and the importance of toilet training. Parents are given simple guidelines on how to accompany their children patiently, without anger or punishment. This approach builds awareness that toilet training is a shared responsibility, not just at home or school. This way, children gain consistent learning experiences in two different environments.

Interview results showed that parents who actively collaborated with teachers experienced faster progress in toilet training their children. Children became more confident and bolder in expressing their need to use the bathroom. Conversely, children who didn't receive similar training at home tended to regress or return to a fear of using the toilet alone. This underscores the importance of continuity of parenting between the home and school environments.

"The teacher told us to continue the child's toileting schedule at home, not just at school. So every two hours I remind him to go to the bathroom. He used to wet the bed often, but now he can say, 'Mommy, I need to pee.' That's a big improvement for us."

3. Supporting and Inhibiting Factors in the Implementation of Toilet Training

Effective toilet training is essential for a conducive learning environment and facilities. YPJ Early Childhood Education provides child-friendly toilets with low seat heights, handrails, soap, and a regular cleaning system. These facilities provide a sense of security and comfort for children. Teachers also receive special training on how to assist children without embarrassing or intimidating them. Support from school management and parents contributes to the program's success.

However, several obstacles remain in implementing toilet training. One is the difference in habits between home and school. Not all parents have the same amount of time and patience to accompany their children. Some children experience anxiety or trauma from being scolded for bedwetting. Some children refuse to use the school toilet because it differs from the toilet at home. Small differences, such as the shape of the door or the smell of the room, can affect a child's comfort. Another obstacle stems from the limited number of teachers compared to the number of children in the class. In a class of 15 children, teachers often struggle to accompany all children who need to use the toilet at the same time. This requires patience and effective scheduling strategies. Nevertheless, teachers strive to provide equal attention so that each child feels supported. These obstacles serve as a reflection for the school to improve the toilet training system going forward.

"Sometimes children are afraid to use the toilet at school because they say it's different from the toilet at home. Some won't pee until their parents wait. We're also limited, with one teacher handling 15 children, so we need a strategy to ensure everyone gets their time."

4. The Impact of Toilet Training on Children's Independence

The toilet training program has been shown to have a positive impact on the independence of early childhood children at the YPJ Preschool. Children who are accustomed to using the toilet independently show increased self-confidence and responsibility. They begin to ask teachers for permission without fear or embarrassment. Furthermore, children demonstrate concern for environmental cleanliness by flushing and washing their hands without being reminded. This independence is also reflected in other activities, such as eating independently and tidying up play equipment. Teachers assess toilet training as contributing to children's social-emotional development. Children who successfully master toilet training appear calmer and interact more easily with their peers. They are no longer anxious or feel different because they are not yet independent. This improvement indicates that toilet training impacts the development of a positive self-concept and self-discipline in children. This aligns with Erikson's theory that a sense of belonging

is a key factor in the development of self-esteem *autonomy* arises from the child's success in mastering body control.

Based on three months of observations, the toilet training success rate at YPJ Preschool has reached 80%. Children who previously frequently wet the bed now experience only one or two incidents per month. Teachers have noted significant changes in children's ability to recognize body signals and manage toilet times. This demonstrates that consistent practice and environmental support significantly influence the development of independence in early childhood.

"Now almost all the children can go to the toilet on their own. If they need to pee, they just say, 'Mom, I'm going to the toilet.' Afterward, they flush and wash their hands. I'm so happy to see them become more independent and confident."

3.2.Discussion

The first theme suggests that toilet training habits built into daily school routines (such as scheduled sessions, reminders, and the use of "let's go to the toilet" songs) are highly effective in fostering children's independence. A deeper interpretation of your data is that routines enable children to develop self-expectations and an internal locus of control, enabling them to recognize their own bodily needs and respond to them. Theoretically, this is consistent with Erikson's (1963) Autonomy vs. Shame and Doubt stage, where children aged 2–5 learn control over bodily functions and begin to feel confident when supported. Consistent routines also align with Vygotsky's social learning theory, which emphasizes that learning occurs through social interactions and scaffolding (guidance from teachers/parents) within the context of authentic activities. In your study, repeated daily routines appeared to create strong scaffolding, making children less dependent on adults for each step of toilet training. The related research question—what is the role of schools in fostering toilet training independence?—was answered by the fact that schools can facilitate independence through clearly structured routines, a supportive environment, and the use of positive reinforcement. The significance is that this routine is not only a technical aspect but a psychological aspect that builds children's self-efficacy. The practical implication is that PAUD schools need to design a toilet training schedule that is integrated into daily activities, provides visual or audio reminders, and reinforces positive behavior [15], [16]. Compared to previous studies, for example The Toilet Training Habits Formation Strategy for Children Aged 4-5 Years [17] which also found that a structured and consistent strategy is the key to forming toilet training habits. journal.uaindonesia.ac.id In addition, research at Manyaran Kindergarten found that toilet training education increased the independent behavior of children aged 5-6 years although the results were not always statistically significant, indicating that routines alone may need to be combined with other factors.

The second theme shows that collaboration between parents and teachers, through regular communication and a shared home-school method and schedule, significantly influences the success of toilet training. Our data shows that children who receive support in both environments tend to become more independent. This interpretation suggests that consistency of expectations and reinforcement is a crucial variable in child development. In behaviorist theory, consistent positive reinforcement across settings strengthens desired behavior (independent toilet training). Also, developmental ecology theory (Bronfenbrenner) suggests that synchronized microsystem environments (home and school) contribute significantly to child development. The research question, "How significant is the role of parents in fostering independence?" is answered with a

significant role—without parental support, school efforts can be hampered. The significance of this theme is that early childhood education cannot be effective if it is solely focused on school; the home must be aligned. Implications for practice include: schools should routinely provide education and training to parents, provide efficient communication channels (notebooks, digital groups), and create toilet training method guides so parents can follow the same method. This compares with research that found parenting style significantly correlated with toilet training success. Research in Jombang also shows that democratic parenting styles are more successful than authoritarian or permissive ones [18].

The third theme indicates the presence of various supporting factors such as child-friendly facilities, teacher training, and a positive psychological environment; as well as inhibiting factors such as differences in home-school habits, limited resources (teacher: child), and the discomfort of the school toilet environment. It is interpreted that physical and psychological factors combine to influence a child's readiness and courage to become independent. From the perspective of developmental readiness theory, a child must be physically, emotionally, and cognitively ready before toilet training can be successful. Furthermore, stress and coping theory suggests that negative experiences such as humiliation or pressure will lead to shame or anxiety, which in turn hinder the learning process. The research question—what are the barriers and how are they overcome—was answered that the main barriers were environmental misalignment and a lack of resources, and the emerging solutions were facility adaptation and teacher/parent capacity building. The significance is that toilet training interventions must be holistic, not only methodological or psychological, but also the physical and cultural aspects of the school organization. The implication is that PAUDs need to conduct toilet facility audits (size, safety, child accessibility), pay attention to the child's cultural background and experiences, and pay attention to the teacher-child ratio to ensure adequate support. Previous research has shown that education alone may be less effective if facilities are inadequate [19].

The fourth theme demonstrates that successful toilet training has a positive impact on children's independence, both physically (ability to urinate and wash hands independently), psychologically (self-confidence, initiative), and socially (interaction with friends, not feeling different). Your data shows that after a period of familiarization, the success rate is high, and children are able to ask permission to go to the toilet independently—this indicates the internalization of self-control. Erikson's theory of psychosocial development states that at the stage of autonomy versus shame and doubt, children who successfully master their own bodies will develop a sense of autonomy (self-confidence), while failure can lead to shame and doubt. Also, self-determination theory (Ryan & Deci) mentions success in competence and providing autonomy encouragement as important aspects of intrinsic motivation. The research question on impact found a very significant impact on aspects of children's self-confidence and social readiness. The significance of your research shows that toilet training is not just physical learning, but the formation of identity, self-esteem, and social readiness. The practical implication is that schools should evaluate and report toilet training progress as part of the independence indicator in a child's portfolio, and parents/educators should be aware that building independence paves the way for other life skills. Previous research found a correlation that learning toilet training significantly reduces the incidence of enuresis [20]. Similarly, research shows that parents with high understanding see their children as more independent [21].

Combining the four themes, this study shows that the role of parents is crucial, along with schools, in shaping the independence of toilet training in early childhood. The research question "what is the role of parents" is answered that parents who are active in carrying out habits at home, communicating with teachers, and providing a supportive physical environment will accelerate the achievement of independent toilet training. The second question "how is home-school collaboration" is answered that effective collaboration includes shared methods, synchronous routines, and regular communication. Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory reinforces that consistent microsystem interactions will shape child development. Behaviorism theory shows that positive reinforcement from both environments greatly increases the probability of independent behavior. Social cognitive theory also supports that children learn from observation and modeling: seeing other children do it, teachers/parents demonstrate, then children follow [22], [23], [24].

Compared to previous research, your results are very consistent with the national literature. Research has found that moderate/democratic parenting styles are related to success [25], [26]. Research has shown that the overall role of parents is strongly related to toilet training ability. Research has also found that extended family support and sanitation facilities influence toileting outcomes [27], [28], [29]. However, several studies have noted that even though parents have high levels of education and knowledge, physical factors/facilities or a less supportive environment remain a barrier. Your holistic approach (method + facilities + emotional support + collaboration) appears to be more effective than studies that focus only on one aspect [30], [31], [32], [33].

The significance of your research lies in: (a) providing empirical evidence that home-school collaboration is not an option but a necessity for successful toilet training; (b) expanding the understanding that physical (child-friendly toilets), psychological (emotional support, sense of safety), and social (school culture, family culture) environmental factors are interrelated; (c) informing early childhood education (ECE) policies to include toilet training in character and independence curricula; (d) implications for teacher training and parent education as part of early childhood education programs [34], [35], [36].

4. CONCLUSION

Overall, the research results indicate that the success of toilet training in building independence in early childhood depends heavily on consistent routines, strong collaboration between parents and teachers, supportive physical facilities, and emotional-psychological factors such as a sense of security and positive reinforcement. The relationship with developmental theories—Erikson, Bronfenbrenner, behaviorism, and motivational theory—reinforces that toilet training is not just a physical aspect but also a building block for character and self-control. The research question is answered, stating that parents play a fundamental role and that home-school collaboration is key to success. This research is significant because it provides a relatively comprehensive, holistic empirical picture compared to previous studies that tended to be one-dimensional. Early childhood education (PAUD) needs to include toilet training as an official part of the habituation curriculum, develop schedules and methods, and provide related facilities. Parents must be provided with education and guidance tools so that the methods and rhythm at home are the same as at school. Local governments and education administrators need to establish child-friendly toilet standards for PAUD, including sanitation and accessibility.

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