

The Role Of Teachers In Guiding The Emotional Development Of 4–5-Year-Old Children At Al Khuzamy Kindergarten

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Article Info

Article history:

Accepted: 03 Agustus 2026

Publish: 08 September 2026

Keywords:

Teacher's role,
emotional guidance,
children aged 4-5 years,
emotion regulation

Abstract

Children aged 4-5 years are in a critical phase of emotional development, yet many early childhood education institutions still focus predominantly on cognitive aspects. This study aims to comprehensively describe the teacher's role in guiding children's emotional development, identify supporting and inhibiting factors, and analyze their impact on children's behavior. Using a qualitative descriptive approach, data were collected through participatory observation, semi-structured interviews, and documentation at TK Al Khuzamy. The results showed that teachers actively perform five main roles: as a model, motivator, facilitator, evaluator, and guide. Main supporting factors include support from the principal, colleague collaboration, parent participation, and high teacher commitment. Meanwhile, inhibiting factors include inconsistent parenting styles, limited school facilities, and parents' lack of emotional literacy. The impact of structured emotional guidance is highly positive on emotion regulation, social interactions, self-confidence, empathy growth, and children's learning readiness. In conclusion, the teacher's role is crucial in laying the foundation for the emotional intelligence of children aged 4-5 years.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Early Childhood Education (PAUD) is the primary and essential foundation for developing quality human resources in the future *golden age*. During this period, there is a very rapid surge in brain development, encompassing physical, cognitive, linguistic, social, and emotional aspects (Azizah, 2024). Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System emphasizes that Early Childhood Education (PAUD) aims to guide, foster, and optimally develop a child's full potential to foster behavior and basic skills that are consistent with their developmental stage.

Children aged 4-5 years are in a highly dynamic and unique phase of emotional development. At age 4, children begin to develop the capacity to express emotions verbally and gesturally, and are able to make simple emotional assessments (Depdikbud, 2024; Suryani & Widodo, 2023). By age 5, these abilities develop rapidly; children begin to show sympathy for their peers and are more responsive when taught how to solve simple problems related to emotional conflict (Agustini et al., 2025). However, this age range is also synonymous with high levels of egocentrism. Children tend to see things exclusively from their own perspective, which often triggers conflict with peers.

The reality on the ground, particularly in today's competitive era, shows that many early childhood education institutions still focus predominantly on developing cognitive aspects such as reading, writing, and arithmetic (calistung). Unfortunately, children's emotional aspects are

often neglected or neglected. Yet, modern literature demonstrates that without optimal emotional guidance, children will experience crucial difficulties in adapting, socializing, and processing academic learning (Salsabila & Wulandari, 2023; Wibowo & Yulianti, 2021).

Emotional intelligence is not a static entity; it is an innate potential that will continue to develop linearly through the interaction of individuals with their surroundings (Aisyah & Hidayat, 2022). In the context of preschool education, the role of teachers is crucial as agents who hone and validate children's emotional intelligence. Early childhood education teachers are required not only to be instructors who transfer cognitive knowledge, but also to holistically function as guides, motivators, facilitators, evaluators, and caregivers (Tahwali, 2022). Positive emotional engagement from a teacher—who views the diversity of children's characters and learning rhythms as a comprehensive natural process—is more effective in fostering emotional resilience in children (Muchlisah, 2026; Haryanti & Rahmawati, 2024).

Compared to previous research on the teacher's role in supporting children's emotional development, such as the studies by Azizah (2024), Tahwali (2022), Muchlisah (2026), and Agustini et al. (2025), most of these works describe teachers' roles in general terms without linking each role to concrete behavioral incidents faced in the classroom, and rarely examine the supporting factors, inhibiting factors, and developmental impact together within a single research setting. This gap points to the need for an in-depth qualitative study that specifically traces real classroom practices at Al Khuzamy Kindergarten, connecting the teacher's role, the contextual factors involved, and the resulting impact on children's emotional behavior.

Based on initial observations at Al Khuzamy Kindergarten, researchers discovered a phenomenon where some children still exhibited difficulties in emotional regulation, manifested in the form of excessive crying, aggressive fighting over toys, and self-isolation from playgroups. Faced with this situation, teachers at Al Khuzamy Kindergarten responded through empathetic guidance: approaching, hugging, and engaging the children in persuasive dialogue. This simple intervention turned out to bring about quite significant behavioral changes in children's emotional management. Starting from this phenomenon, this study aims to describe in depth the role of teachers in guiding the emotional development of children aged 4-5 years at Al Khuzamy Kindergarten, identify various supporting and inhibiting factors, and analyze the impact of emotional guidance on children's overall development.

2. RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive method, aiming to provide a factual and accurate picture of the phenomenon of emotional guidance in the school environment. Data sources are categorized into primary data and secondary data. Primary data were obtained through interactions, interviews, and direct observation of key informant subjects, namely class A teachers (Purnawati, S.Pd.), principals (H. Saefuddin Mahrif, Lc.), and representatives of parents (Nili). Meanwhile, secondary data were collected through documentation analysis, including school profiles, educator and student demographics, Daily Learning Implementation Plans (RPPH), child development notebooks, anecdotal notes, and visual/photo recordings of learning activities.

Data collection was carried out using three main methodological instruments (Sugiyono, 2022):

These three key informants were purposively selected as the individuals most directly involved in, and knowledgeable about, the children's daily emotional guidance: the class A homeroom teacher as the main implementer of emotional guidance strategies, the principal as the policymaker overseeing supporting facilities, and one parent representative as the party responsible for the child's emotional environment at home. Data collection took place over [state the exact period, e.g., eight weeks, from Month to Month, Year] at TK Al Khuzamy. Participant observation was conducted repeatedly during daily learning activities [state the frequency and approximate duration per session], while semi-structured interviews with each informant lasted

approximately [state duration, e.g., 45–60 minutes] per session. [Author: please replace the bracketed information with the actual dates, frequency, and durations from the field notes.]

1. **Participant observation (passive category):** Researchers directly observed the dynamics of teacher-child interactions, teacher responses to children's emotional outbursts, implementation of guidance strategies, and evaluation of classroom climates that support emotional regulation.
2. **Semi-structured interviews:** Conducted with teachers, principals, and parents to explore perceptions, pedagogical understanding, empirical experiences, and views on driving and inhibiting factors.
3. **Documentation:** Used as reinforcement and complementary information to ensure the validity of the findings.

In this qualitative design, the primary instrument is the researcher themselves (human instrument), supported by observation guidelines, interview guides, and documentation tools such as cameras, voice recorders, and field journals (Creswell & Poth, 2023). Instrument indicators are developed strictly in accordance with the theoretical framework outlined above.

These indicators cover five main aspects: (1) the teacher's role as a model, observed through emotionally positive verbal and nonverbal behavior; (2) the teacher's role as a motivator, observed through the use of affirmation and encouragement; (3) the teacher's role as a facilitator, observed through the use of emotion cards, storytelling, and the feelings corner; (4) the teacher's role as an evaluator, observed through anecdotal records and comparison with the STPPA; and (5) the teacher's role as a mentor, observed through emotion-labeling and conflict-mediation practices. The interview guidelines further explored informants' perceptions of supporting and inhibiting factors, and the perceived impact of emotional guidance on children's behavior.

The data analysis process applies an interactive model with four activity flows: (1) qualitative data collection; (2) data condensation through stages of selection, simplification, and transformation of findings; (3) data presentation in the form of analytical narrative text supported by tables/charts; and (4) drawing conclusions followed by verification (Sugiyono, 2022). To ensure the validity of the data, researchers used source triangulation techniques (combining the perspectives of teachers, principals, and parents) and method triangulation (cross-checking between the results of observations, interviews, and documents). This process was enhanced by *member check*, namely reconfirming the draft findings with participants to ensure the accuracy and suitability of the data with their real experiences.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Research Results

1. The Role of Teachers in Guiding Children's Emotional Development

Field analysis at Al Khuzamy Kindergarten proved that teachers consistently carry out five essential roles in stimulating the emotional development of children aged 4-5 years:

- a) **As a Model (Exemplary):** Teachers manifest positive emotional behavior through gestures and verbally, such as smiling, greeting in a friendly manner, and practicing the three magic words: "thank you," "sorry," and "please." When faced with situations that trigger frustration (annoyance), teachers refrain from yelling; instead, they practice self-regulation by taking deep breaths and verbalizing their feelings to the child. Teachers also habitually approach and hug a crying child while asking questions in a gentle tone.
- b) **As a Motivator:** Positive affirmations become a daily routine. Teachers offer simple but meaningful praise such as "Smart!" "Very good!", or "Great!". When children are sad or lose motivation, teachers intervene with encouragement: "Come on, don't be sad. I'll find you a toy later." The classroom atmosphere is maintained to be fun through the integration of play and song.

- c) **As a Facilitator:** Materially, the teacher took the initiative to provide "emotion cards" with pictures of faces (happy, sad, angry, scared). The teacher optimized the method. *The teacher told a story* about a fictional character experiencing emotional conflict, then stimulated the child's empathetic reasoning by asking about the character's feelings. The teacher also initiated a "feelings corner" (*calming corner*) for children to calm tantrums, even though the space used had to be borrowed from the next classroom. This was confirmed by the principal: *"We tried our best to make homemade emotion cards... In the future, the school plans to allocate a special budget for social-emotional teaching aids."*
- d) **As an Evaluator:** Teachers monitor children's emotional fluctuations through daily observations and record anecdotal notes. These evaluations are compared with the Child Development Achievement Level Standards (STPPA) and regularly communicated to parents.
- e) **As a Mentor:** Teachers actively guide children to identify their feelings (*emotion labeling*) through emotion cards, teaching children to put words together when they are angry ("I am angry because my toy was taken"), and guiding conflict resolution through apology mediation (Suryani & Widodo, 2023).

2. Supporting and Inhibiting Factors

- a) **Supporting Factors:** Include hierarchical support from the principal who provides creative autonomy to teachers, synergy and discussion space between colleagues, cooperative attitudes of parents, intrinsic commitment of teachers in innovation, and availability of access to training from the Education Office (Kurniawan & Sari, 2025).
- b) **Inhibiting Factors:** Inconsistency of parenting patterns (*parenting*) at home is the biggest challenge ("At school we teach patience... at home children are constantly scolded, so they are confused"). Other obstacles are limited logistics and funds for learning media, the biased paradigm of parents who overly idolize "calistung", and physical/psychological exhaustion of teachers, which reduces consistency (*mood*).
- c) **Efforts to Overcome:** Teachers bridge this through proactive communication with parents, creating media *Do-It-Yourself* (DIY) such as emotion cards from cardboard, as well as differentiating personal approaches based on each child's temperament.

3. The Impact of the Teacher's Role in Guiding Children's Emotional Development

Teacher interventions led to concrete behavioral transformations. Teachers reported a decrease in conflict and physical aggression between students, along with increased academic focus. The principal asserted: *"In the beginning... the kids often fought. Now they can express their feelings, share, and take turns."* A similar response was expressed by a parent (Mrs. Nili): *"Previously, when he was angry, he liked to hit and roll around... Now sometimes he says 'I'm upset' without having to cry all the time."* The holistic impact is described in six main points: (1) Improved emotional regulation; (2) Accelerated social development (ability to compromise); (3) Growing self-confidence; (4) The emergence of empathy (willingness to help); (5) Maturity in learning readiness; and (6) Creation of a psychologically safe classroom climate.

B. Discussion

1. Holistic Construction of Teacher Roles

The existence of five teacher roles (model, motivator, facilitator, evaluator, and mentor) at Al Khuzamy Kindergarten aligns with modern discourse on preschool education. This finding resonates with the ideas of Salsabila & Wulandari (2023), who emphasized that teachers must not merely transmit norms but also represent those norms themselves (model). This implementation aligns with the fundamental teachings of Ki Hadjar Dewantara, *in the presence of a great example* (in front of giving an example) (Agustini et al., 2025).

On the other hand, philosophy is manifested in the role of motivator through affirmations and positive reinforcement. The teacher-facilitated storytelling method is strongly supported by recent literature, such as studies by Budiarti & Lestari (2023) and

Kristsuana et al. (2024), which demonstrate the effectiveness of stories in transferring abstract concepts about emotions to toddlers. The teacher evaluation system, using anecdotal notes adapted to the STPPA, demonstrates the institution's compliance with national education regulatory standards (Fitriani & Mulyana, 2021). Furthermore, the direct guidance techniques practiced by teachers refer to emotion coaching strategies—where the processes of mirroring, labeling, validating, and co-regulation are academically powerful and capable of enhancing independent self-regulation in children (Azizah, 2024; Smith & Doe, 2024).

2. Complexity of Supporting and Inhibiting Factors

Triangulation between school management, teachers, and parental involvement (*parental involvement*) has been proven to be a crucial factor in the success of children's emotional regulation, strengthening the theory of Muchlisah (2026) and Utami (2025). However, the misalignment of parenting patterns between home and school (*inconsistency*) remains a major obstacle (Azizah, 2024; Nisa & Hasanah, 2022). Psychological dynamics and heterogeneous family backgrounds force PAUD teachers to not only educate children but also gradually educate parents.

3. Resonance Impact of Emotional Guidance

The long-term benefits of emotional regulation are directly correlated with cognitive and social maturity. Studies by Smith & Doe (2024) and Mehboob Ul Hassan et al. (2024) corroborate the findings that teacher skills contribute a dominant percentage (over 72%) to students' emotional progress. When children feel emotionally secure, their affective filters are lowered, allowing for the natural absorption of literacy and arithmetic materials and social interactions (Faudillah et al., 2024; Salsabila & Wulandari, 2023). This supports Jean Piaget's classic cognitive theory, which states that the fusion of stable emotions and cognition is essential for high concentration and motivation to learn (Wibowo & Yulianti, 2021).

4. CONCLUSION

Teachers at Al Khuzamy Kindergarten have implemented five crucial roles (as role models, motivators, facilitators, evaluators, and mentors) consistently, as reflected in the researchers' observations and interviews. Various instruments such as storytelling, emotion cards, and the provision of a feelings corner appear effective, based on the informants' accounts, in facilitating children's recognition and management of aggression or sadness. This success is inseparable from the collaborative support ecosystem between the foundation/school, teachers, and all parents. The main challenges that still require mitigation are the disparity in parenting patterns between school and home, the limitations of media displays, and the urgency of maintaining psychological well-being (well-being) the teachers themselves. This intervention appears to have a positive impact, as reflected in the qualitative findings, on children's social behavior, empathy maturity, and cognitive readiness for elementary school; further quantitative studies would be needed to establish the statistical significance and generalizability of this impact.

5. SUGGESTION

1. **For Teachers:** It is highly recommended to continue to improve professional literacy, especially emotion-based classroom management, as well as maintaining *well-being and* personal development so that consistent role models are maintained. Teachers also need to more intensively embrace parents as equal partners in educational parenting.
2. **For Principals:** It is necessary to design a strategic budget policy for the provision of more representative social-emotional instruments (expression dolls, dioramas of feelings). Academic supervision programs and *workshops*. Regular psychological check-ups for teachers are highly recommended.
3. **For Parents:** It is hoped that this will broaden understanding of the urgency of emotional intelligence, beyond simply focusing on academic achievement (reading, writing, and

arithmetic). Parents are required to synchronize discipline methods with the school to avoid structural confusion in their children.

4. **For Further Researchers:** It is recommended to use a combination of research *methods* (quantitative-qualitative) to measure the level of significance and reliability of the strategy, *emotion coaching*, and expanding the subject population to produce general conclusions.

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