

How daycare develops self-confidence in young children

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Abstract

Self-confidence plays an important role in children's lives because it allows them to be creative according to their talents and abilities in solving problems and improving their quality of life. The study was conducted at a daycare center in Bandung with six participants, namely three caregivers and three parents who had entrusted their children to the center for more than a year. The method used was descriptive qualitative with interview techniques, direct observation, and documentation, and validated through triangulation. The results showed that children's self-confidence developed through consistent routines, play-based learning, and structured activities such as art, music, and outings. Positive reinforcement from caregivers and parental support play an important role in encouraging children to express themselves. This study concludes that collaboration between parents and caregivers is very important in building the self-confidence of early childhood

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INTRODUCTION

Early childhood is the golden age, a period in an individual's life when brain development, memory, and learning abilities reach their peak. During this phase, the foundations of a child's personality and character begin to form. The formation of character is greatly influenced by consistent habits, both at home and in childcare institutions such as daycare centres (Masrurroh, 2020). Therefore, harmonious cooperation and communication between parents and daycare providers are essential to create an environment that supports children's optimal growth and development.

Parents play a crucial role in helping children become independent. This is because parents are the primary role models that children emulate in shaping their personalities. Parents also serve as guides in character development from an early age. According to (Erikson, 2009), independence is a child's effort to begin to break away from dependence on parents in order to get to know themselves and build their personal identity. In young children, signs of independence can be seen in their ability to make decisions on their own, demonstrate creativity, take initiative, regulate their behaviour, and take responsibility for their actions. Children also begin to exercise self-control, solve problems, and not always rely on others for help (Sari & Rosyidah, 2019). Therefore, independence should be cultivated from an early age so that children become accustomed to taking responsibility for themselves and those around them.

Independence brings many positive benefits for children, as it helps them carry out daily activities with greater confidence. Generally, a child's level of independence can be observed through their physical and socio-emotional behaviour in daily life. Besides the family, environments such as school and society also play a role in shaping a child's independent attitude. Parents play a crucial role in uncovering and developing a child's potential. This can be achieved by identifying the child's interests and talents, providing appropriate stimulation, offering support and praise, and guiding the child according to their strengths and uniqueness. The potential that can be developed includes moral, emotional, social, and intellectual aspects (Rijkiyani et al., 2022). When this potential is facilitated appropriately, children will grow into confident individuals with good social skills.

Various studies show that children's self-confidence can be nurtured through fun and meaningful learning methods. (Kurniasih et al., 2021) revealed that morning journal activities varied with media such as theme-based command cards can increase children's courage in speaking and expressing themselves. Additionally, the play-based learning approach has proven effective in fostering children's self-confidence and independence (Anggraeni, 2017). Furthermore, (Kamaruddin et al., 2022) emphasise that parents' role in nurturing children's self-esteem how children perceive and value themselves is crucial for them to become confident individuals.

Daycare centres or childcare institutions, especially those that implement a full-day care system, play a significant role in shaping children's character and self-confidence, particularly for children whose parents work. Daycare services not only include childcare but also play-based education, habit formation, meeting nutritional and health needs, and the involvement of professionals who understand children's development comprehensively. Budyawati et al., (2023) emphasise that working parents greatly need daycare centres that can provide comprehensive educational programmes, competent caregivers, and facilities and infrastructure suitable for children's needs. This indicates that the quality of services at daycare centres is an important factor parents consider when choosing a childcare facility that can support children's optimal growth and development.

Self-confidence in young children can be seen in their ability to speak in front of others, sing, express their feelings, and openly communicate their desires. According to research by (Kim et al., 2022; Wulandari, 2020), flexible and professional childcare institutions play a significant role in encouraging parental involvement, particularly working mothers, in the educational and developmental processes of children. The availability of a structured and communicative full-day care system enables mothers to actively fulfil their caregiving roles, even with non-standard work schedules. This highlights the importance of collaboration between daycare centres and parents in creating an environment that supports children's social and emotional growth, including the development of their self-confidence from an early age.

Based on this background, it is important to examine how collaboration between parents and daycare centres, as well as the routines implemented, can influence the development of self-confidence in young children. This research was conducted at a daycare centre in Bandung, with the aim of exploring the role of habits and the synergy between parenting at home and at daycare in fostering self-confidence in young children. The results of this study are expected to serve as a reference for parents, educators, and daycare managers in creating an environment that supports the optimal development of children's self-confidence.

METHOD

This study was conducted using a qualitative descriptive method. Descriptive research aims to discover facts by providing accurate interpretations of the data obtained. In the process, this study involved a combination of data from observations, interviews, and documentation to produce an in-depth analysis (Nazir, 2005). Qualitative methods were used to obtain naturalistic or factual data, without manipulation or special treatment of the objects being studied (Sugiono, 2018)

Essentially, this section explains how the research was conducted comprehensively. The research was conducted interactively, from data collection to analysis, which was carried out simultaneously. The research location was at a daycare center in the city of Bandung. The focus of this research was on three caregivers who

were responsible for looking after children from 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., or until the parents picked up their children. In addition, this study also involved three parents who had sent their children to the daycare center for more than a year, even sending more than one child. Although the number of participants was limited and the study was only conducted in one location, the validity of the data was strengthened by triangulating data collection techniques. Therefore, the results of this study are not intended to be generalized broadly, but are more descriptive and contextual in nature. The findings are transferable to daycare centers with similar characteristics, while further research involving more participants and daycare centers with diverse socioeconomic backgrounds is needed to obtain a more comprehensive picture.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

This study was conducted on six respondents, consisting of three parents and three caregivers from a daycare centre in Bandung, using a qualitative approach through in-depth interviews, direct observation, and documentation of activities. The results of the study indicate that the development of self-confidence in young children (aged 3–5 years) is highly dependent on consistent habits formed in the two main environments of the child, namely the home and daycare centre. Effective two-way communication between parents and caregivers is a key factor in maintaining the continuity of these habits.

In cross-interviews, it was found that parents place full trust in daycare centres because they have observed significant development in their children, particularly in social-emotional aspects and self-confidence. One indicator is the child's ability to perform in public, such as singing or dancing, even though in some cases the child is not yet fully prepared. Caregivers provide positive reinforcement as a form of motivation, and parents also give permission and support for activities conducted at the daycare centre. Several quotes from respondents illustrate this:

"Children are encouraged to be confident when performing in front of others." (Ama Y, 6 December 2023)

"It's okay if the child doesn't want to dance on stage, but the child is willing to go on stage." (Ama R, 6 December 2023)

"Trusting the child to be left at the daycare centre because the first child left there showed good development and became more confident." (Ibu S, 8 December 2023)

These findings reinforce the view of (Kamaruddin et al., 2022) that children's self-esteem needs to be nurtured through positive experiences and support from their immediate environment. With collaboration between home and daycare, the familiarisation process runs synergistically and creates a sense of security for children to express themselves.

Challenging situations, such as facing new experiences, often cause fear or hesitation in young children. In this case, caregivers and parents have similar strategies: not forcing the child, but giving them the opportunity to try gradually. They prioritise dialogue, playing together, and an emotionally enjoyable approach.

Example from field findings:

"Usually, I first observe what makes the child afraid, then conduct several trials to help the child overcome their fear. However, if they are still afraid, I do not force them." (Ama Y, 6 December 2023)

"I gradually acclimatise the child to new experiences to prevent them from feeling afraid and make the process enjoyable." (Ibu N, 8 December 2023)

This aligns with the child-centred learning approach in early childhood education, which emphasises children's emotional needs and the importance of feeling safe as a foundation for optimal growth and development (Anggraeni, 2017) An empathetic and tolerant attitude towards children's fears indicates that the development of self-confidence does not depend solely on success but also on enjoyable and non-intimidating experiences.

One common challenge in early childhood care is when children become angry because their desires are not met. Both caregivers and parents interviewed demonstrated a reflective rather than reactive approach. They

tried to be understanding, waited for the child's emotions to subside, and then engaged in solution-oriented communication.

Interview quotes support this:

"They are told that not everything they want can happen, and they are allowed to cry. Once they calm down, it is explained to them that it is not good to ask for something by getting angry and crying."
(Ama Y, 6 December 2023)

"Usually, I can't bear to see my child cry, so I give in. But I still explain that not all desires must be fulfilled." (Ibu N, 8 December 2023)

Table 1. Data acquisition

From this, it is evident that there are variations in strategies based on each parent's experience and emotional tendencies. However, in general, there is an awareness that self-control and emotional

Time	Activity	Person in charge
07:00	Welcomes children	Caregiver (ama)
07:00-09:00	Play / breakfast / bath (depending on the condition of the child at that time)	Caregiver (ama)
09:00-10:00	Children enter the classroom for learning activities. The learning activities conducted at the daycare include painting classes with instructors from the Braga Painting Area, music classes from Jonim Music, cooking classes, drawing, collage, folding, sensory activities, gross and fine motor skills guided by the assigned teacher, as well as regular outing classes once a month.	Other partners are also assisted by teachers and caregivers or assigned teachers.
10:00 – 11:00	Lunch	Caregiver (ama)
11:00 – 12:00	Cleaning up then nap time	Caregiver (ama)
12:00 – 14:00	Nap time	
12:00-13:00	Teacher stimulates children aged 6-16 months teacher	Teacher
14.30-15.00	Alternate bathing and snack time	Caregiver (ama)
15.00	Reading the Quran or short surats	Teacher
15.30	Imtaq	Teacher nd caregiver (sama)
15.30-pick up time	Playing time	Caregiver (sama)

communication are important parts of the child's learning process. The daycare centre where the research was conducted provides structured learning activities integrated into the children's daily routines. Activities are carried out in the form of play-based learning and collaboration with external partners, such as art activities with Area Lukis Braga and music activities with Jonim Music.

Through direct observation, it appears that caregivers actively provide positive verbal reinforcement when children try new things or show small successes. Praise, hugs, or simple acknowledgements such as 'Well done!' or 'You're smart!' have a significant impact on increasing children's self-confidence. Activities with external partners such as painting and performing on stage also broaden children's social experiences and accustom them to performing in front of others. This aligns with the view (Susanti & Shomedran, 2023) that a child's self-confidence can be observed through their willingness to speak, perform, and express their desires.

Through this approach, children not only receive cognitive and motor stimulation but also adequate social-emotional support.

While the findings demonstrate the importance of positive reinforcement and collaborative roles of parents and caregivers, the study's discussion remains limited by its reliance on adults' perspectives. Unlike Kurniasih et al. (2021), who directly engaged children through participatory learning activities such as morning journals, this research did not involve children as direct subjects in interviews or participatory observation. As a result, the data are more reflective of parents' and caregivers' views than of children's subjective experiences. Future studies could address this gap by involving children more actively through play-based interviews or observational participation, which would allow their voices and perspectives to emerge more clearly.

In addition, compared with Budyawati et al. (2023), who highlighted the importance of daycare services in supporting working parents from diverse backgrounds, this study is contextually limited to one daycare in Bandung. The socio-economic homogeneity of the research site restricts the applicability of findings to other settings. Therefore, the results should be interpreted as descriptive and exploratory, with transferability to similar contexts rather than broad generalisation.

Overall, this study highlights that the development of self-confidence in young children depends not only on structured daycare activities and positive caregiver attitudes but also on the quality of collaboration between home and daycare. It provides contextual insights that complement existing research, while acknowledging the need for broader and more inclusive future studies that involve children directly and cover diverse socio-economic settings.

Discussion

The results of this study indicate that children's self-confidence develops through consistent routines, structured play-based activities, and positive reinforcement from caregivers and parents. These findings align with Anggraeni (2017) and Kurniasih et al. (2021), who showed that creative and play-based learning supports children's courage to express themselves. However, compared with Kamaruddin et al. (2022), who emphasised *self-esteem* as the basis for confidence, this study focuses more on observable behaviours shaped by collaboration between home and daycare. This novelty highlights the importance of two-way reinforcement between parents and caregivers in sustaining children's confidence.

Nonetheless, the study has limitations, as children were not directly involved as active subjects, so the data mainly represent adults' perspectives. In addition, the study was conducted in a single daycare in Bandung, making the findings contextually specific. Table 1 summarises the main activities observed to contribute to children's self-confidence.

Table 2. Indicators of Children's Self-Confidence Development

Activity/ Routine	Observed impact on confidence	Supporting role
Performing arts (singing/dancing)	Children dared to appear in front of peers, even if not fully prepared	Caregiver encouragement parental approval
Art and music Classes	Children expressed creativity and felt proud of achievements	External instructors, caregiver praise
Outing activities	Children interacted with new environments and people	Care giver guidance, peer interaction
Daily routines (eating, playing)	Children showed independence and confidence in completing task	Caregiver supervision parental consistency at home

CONCLUSION

This study shows that early childhood self-confidence can develop through collaboration between parents and caregivers at daycare. Effective communication and consistent reinforcement at home and daycare are essential in building confidence. One effective strategy is caregivers' verbal encouragement before children engage in activities such as performing or trying new tasks. Parents' support at home strengthens these habits. When facing fear or rejection, children are guided with gradual approaches, emotional communication, and positive distraction, fostering self-regulation and self-esteem. Structured activities such as art, music, and outings provide opportunities for expression, interaction, and recognition, supporting courage and independence.

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