

## The role of parenting styles in the social skills of young children exhibiting aggressive behavior

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### Abstract

Parents are a child's primary source for understanding their environment, making parenting crucial for early childhood social development. However, inappropriate parenting can fail to stimulate social abilities, leading to aggressive behavior. This qualitative study employs a case study approach at a Raudhatul Athfal (RA) in West Bandung. Subjects include parents and children exhibiting aggressive behavior linked to their family environment. Data were collected through observations and interviews with parents and community members, analyzed using grounded theory. The results indicate that authoritarian parenting is a primary factor in childhood aggression. A significant lack of synchronization between parental methods and the surrounding environment was also identified. Interestingly, while parents adopt authoritarian attitudes to improve their children's social abilities, this approach—alongside environmental factors—actually triggers aggressive behavior. This research highlights the need for balanced parenting to effectively foster social skills without inducing aggression.

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## INTRODUCTION

Early childhood is a period or phase during which children learn to understand themselves and their surroundings. This is because young children continue to develop into social individuals who need to understand the rules that apply in society. Social skills are crucial for young children because, according to Rini, a child's social skills are their ability to behave in accordance with the norms of society. This aligns with the views of Social Development in Early Childhood refers to a young child's ability to interact with their environment as a means of self-adjustment to be accepted by their environment, thereby gaining positive experiences during social interactions with their surroundings. The role of the environment surrounding young children has a significant influence on their social development. Influential environmental factors include the roles of parents, the surrounding community, and the school environment (Khoiruddin, 2018).

Generally, according to (Fuadia, 2022), the social development of children aged 5–6 years is characterized by the ability to demonstrate tolerance, empathy, an understanding of rules and discipline, knowledge of manners and etiquette, and a cooperative attitude toward peers. However, based on field data, some children at this age stage behave in the opposite way, such as not respecting their peers, harming them both physically and verbally, leading to the child being considered to exhibit aggressive behavior. Specifically, children may suddenly hit their peers for no reason, causing them to cry. Children may intentionally kick their peers in vital body parts. Children also refuse to admit their mistakes when caught playing roughly with their peers. The child also appears unable to appreciate a friend's work if they deem it unsatisfactory. The child will offer direct criticism that makes the friend feel sad. Furthermore, the child frequently uses harsh language when angry or frustrated, or behaves rudely toward peers. This is why early childhood issues in real-world social situations are considered underdeveloped, as they do not align with expected developmental milestones.

It is important to stimulate children's social development in order to minimize aggressive behavior that hinders their social skills. There are many causes of aggressive behavior in children, including parenting styles, the child's social environment, and biological or internal factors specific to the child.

The importance of parents' role in providing quality care for young children. Since parents are the first source from which children learn about life—including how to navigate social interactions within the community—this is further supported by the findings from (Wulansuci et al., 2019). Parental involvement also has a significant impact on children's interpersonal skills, particularly in their social lives. Based on this, several researchers have previously conducted numerous studies with titles such as: In 2024, a study titled "Case Study of Aggressive Behavior in Early Childhood" by (Marini et al., 2024), which concluded that aggressive behaviors such as pinching, hitting, and fighting are negative responses in children caused by permissive parenting styles. This is because permissive parenting gives children freedom due to unclear rules and a tendency not to reprimand them; consequently, children perceive their actions as correct. This is also consistent with a 2022 study titled "Parental Child-Rearing Styles and the Social Development of Young Children" which concluded that child-rearing styles play a crucial role in children's social development because children are taught to engage in two-way communication and view situations from different perspectives. This is likely to occur when children are raised using democratic and authoritative parenting styles, compared to those raised with authoritarian or permissive parenting styles. Similarly, regarding children's emotional development, parenting styles have a significant impact: when parenting is emotionally positive, children's emotional development will be positive, and vice versa. In 2021, the study "The Role of Parental Parenting Styles on Aggressive Behavior in Children" by (Muslifah et al., 2021) concluded that authoritarian and permissive parenting styles influence children's aggressive behavior. In 2018, the study titled "Parental Parenting Styles in Children with Aggressive Behavior" by (Sari et al., 2018) concluded that the findings of this study indicate that the parenting styles applied to children who exhibit aggressive behavior are alternating or that parents apply more than one parenting style.

Previous studies have extensively discussed the role of parenting styles and children's aggressive behavior; however, they have not specifically focused on the role of parenting styles in the social skills of young children exhibiting aggressive behavior. Therefore, the researcher aims to determine how parenting styles influence the social skills of young children exhibiting aggressive behavior.

## METHOD

This study employs a qualitative research method using a case study approach. This is because the study focuses specifically on a particular subject to be examined. The objective of this study is to provide an in-depth description of how the family environment influences the social skills of young children exhibiting aggressive behavior. The research subjects were parents and children exhibiting aggressive behavior, in relation to the study of the family environment's role in children's social skills, which leads to aggressive behavior. The research was conducted at one of the RA (Raudhatul Athfal) schools in West Bandung. The data collection techniques and instruments used included interviews with parents and those around them, as well as observations to obtain relevant information. The data analysis method employed was grounded theory, utilizing the research stages of data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Result

Based on the results of the interviews and observations, the following findings were obtained:

#### a. Authoritarian Parenting Style

During the observation, it was evident that the parent was somewhat strict, though their stern facial expression seemed to be holding back anger and frustration when the child did not comply with the mother's wishes. However, this was because S was throwing an excessive tantrum—refusing to enter the classroom and crying. This behavior also led to criticism from several parties when S's mother was seen glaring at her child and acting roughly, such as pinching the child, because the child refused to enter the classroom.

According to the parent identified as S, the parenting style applied so far has been authoritarian or strict toward the child. This is because the parents want their child to be like them—especially the mother—who could obey her parents' wishes and behave well. However, in reality, this parenting style has caused the child to become even less compliant with the parents' wishes. It has even led to aggressive behavior toward others.

“At home, I'm strict with S. I do this because my parents were strict with me too, and I obeyed them. But why is S the opposite? I'm really confused, ma'am.”  
(Interview, September 2025)

Based on the interview results, it was concluded that S's parents' strict attitude stems from their desire for S to be like her mother—who was raised strictly and obedient to her parents' wishes—without considering the consequences this ultimately has on their child.

#### b. The lack of alignment between parenting styles and the surrounding environment

Her mother also mentioned that there were differences in parenting styles between his parents and those around him, particularly his grandmother and relatives.

“S sometimes overreacts when I try to correct her; sometimes she cries loudly, but sometimes I just let her cry it out. However, when her grandmother or aunt sees this, they'll try to comfort or soothe S. Even though my intention was to be firm with my child, I end up being called strict”  
(Interview, September 2025)

Additionally, during observations, it was noted several times that S did indeed have minor tantrums and only wanted to be accompanied by her relatives—she didn't want to be with her mother because her mother would try to act indifferent, causing S to become even more upset. Ultimately, her relatives accompanied S because that was what S wanted. According to her parents, sometimes the relatives would suggest that when S has a tantrum, the relatives should simply take over

“Sometimes they like to say: ‘It's okay, I'll take care of him; if I leave him with D, he'll just cry more.’”

In addition, her mother also mentioned that people often think she's always scolding her child. But her true intention is for her child to behave well. However, her relatives and grandmother always say

“Don't keep scolding the child, for heaven's sake,”  
and because of that, his mother could only choose  
“Fine then” (Interview September 2025).

This means she feels her parenting style stands out compared to those around her. As a result, the mother feels S acts that way and becomes manipulative when her parents advise her on what's best. The child throws tantrums and tells others things that didn't actually happen, reacting excessively to her mother's firm responses

Based on the results of observations and interviews, it was concluded that parents realize that the parenting style or approach provided by parents differs significantly from that of the surrounding environment in calming the child when the child has a tantrum due to being advised or because the child's desires are not met.

### **c. The parents' authoritarian approach aims to improve the child's social skills**

Based on the results of interviews in September, the parents emphasized that the reason the mother and father were firm with their child was because they wanted their child to behave well. In fact, they wanted to ensure their child did not become aggressive toward their friends.

This was also evident during an observation when S played roughly and ended up kicking his friend in the groin, causing pain. Another incident occurred when S suddenly took turns hitting his friend's cheeks; this was eventually reported to S's parents.

“What should I do, Mrs. S? I'm really confused as a parent.” (September 2025)

“What should I do, Mrs. S, so that S becomes good and obedient—at least he'll listen and isn't so aggressive, that's the point.”

This was triggered because, according to Mrs. S, she had been strict in the hope that her child would become well-behaved and obedient, and not aggressive or mean toward his friends. However, the opposite has happened; her child has not been able to heed her advice and has acted contrary to her wishes.

However, although S's mother realizes that her firm approach to parenting still requires guidance and advice from others—or, in other words, S's mother is open to receiving input on how to prevent her child from behaving aggressively, particularly regarding the parenting style that should be applied to S—her response when given advice by a teacher was:

“It's okay, ma'am, let's just share about the child. With feedback, things will get even better.”  
(Interview, September 2025)

Based on the results of the interview, it was concluded that S's authoritarian parenting style is merely firm in order to make their child a good and obedient child. This is driven by the parent's desire for their child to become a socially well-adjusted individual who does not disturb others or make them feel uncomfortable. The parent also acknowledges the need to improve the parenting approach applied to S, as a firm attitude alone only causes the child to behave in the opposite way.

## **Discussion**

### **a. Authoritarian Parenting Style**

Parents always want to give their children the best so they grow up to have good character and behavior within the family, among friends, and in their community. Parents are happy when their children are obedient and comply with all their wishes. This is because no parent wants their child to be labeled a rebel or a

troublemaker due to disobedient behavior in society. Unconsciously, parents end up becoming overly ambitious and adopting an authoritarian parenting style. Based on the findings, it is concluded that parents' strict attitude stems from their desire for their child to be like their mother, who was raised strictly and obedient to her parents' wishes. Without considering the consequences this ultimately has on their child. Parents' tendency to control and command arises from their ambition for their child through a method filled with rules and coercion, leading parents to implement an authoritarian parenting style (Murdoko, 2017)

In this context, parents who should serve as role models for their children's good behavior end up backfiring, as children are, by nature, imitators. In this context, children observe, feel, and imitate what their parents do and how they behave. Consequently, whether consciously or unconsciously, the behavior parents intend to foster—obedience—actually produces the opposite effect because parents unconsciously instill authoritarian tendencies in their children. The difference is that children then impose their will and desires on their peers or their environment (Mudaim & Rani, 2018) .

### **b. Inconsistency between Parental Parenting Styles and the Surrounding Environment**

Another cause of children's aggressive behavior stems from the inconsistency between parental roles and the surrounding environment. Field findings indicate that parents—particularly mothers—employ authoritarian parenting styles. Conversely, the surrounding environment often perceives this parenting style as inappropriate and consequently adopts a permissive approach. Based on these findings, this also becomes a factor in why children exhibit aggressive behavior; this is because, in addition to authoritarian parenting styles, they can produce children with characteristics such as impulsivity, aggression, disobedience, and social immaturity (Straubhaar, 2004 in Saadah et al., 2022)

This is further supported by the views at , which state that one characteristic of children raised under an authoritarian parenting style is a rebellious nature. Permissive parenting is another factor contributing to children's aggressive behavior. Permissive parenting involves a style that is somewhat lax regarding rules, leading children to become disobedient, aggressive, and prone to tantrums when their desires are not met (Zakiyah et al., 2021)

This inconsistency in parenting styles leads children to exhibit aggressive behavior because both styles have a greater negative impact on children, contributing to their aggressive behavior.

### **c. Authoritarian parenting aims to enhance the child's social skills**

Based on these findings, it is concluded that the authoritarian parenting style of Parent S is merely strict to ensure their child becomes a well-behaved and obedient child. This stems from the parent's desire for their child to be a socially well-adjusted individual who does not disturb others or make them feel uncomfortable. However, the parent acknowledges that they still need to improve the parenting approach applied to S, as strictness alone only leads the child to behave in the opposite manner.

In this context, the conscious and unconscious influence of authoritarian parenting paradoxically results in children not becoming better as expected. Instead, it leads to increasingly aggressive behavior. In line with the research (Pratiwi et al., 2019) , authoritarian parenting itself has an influence or impact on children. One of these negative impacts is that it leads children to exhibit aggressive behavior. The more authoritarian parents are toward their children, the higher the level of the child's aggressive behavior. Conversely, the lower the level of authoritarian parenting provided to the child, the lower the level of their aggressive behavior.

Based on these findings and previous research, it is concluded that the role of authoritarian parenting in preventing children's aggressive behavior toward their surroundings and in raising obedient children can be considered inappropriate.

## **CONCLUSION**

Based on the findings in the field, the roles of authoritarian and permissive parenting styles are among the factors contributing to children exhibiting aggressive behavior. This is because children tend to imitate their parents. Additionally, the roles of permissive and authoritarian parenting styles result in children having

low social skills, as their aggressive behavior or attitudes make their surroundings and peers feel uncomfortable around them.

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