

Characters of Early Childhood Independence in Children's Storybooks Fairy Tales Main Characters of Independent Early Childhood

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Abstract

Independence is one of the most important aspects of early childhood development. Independence refers to a child's ability to perform daily tasks independently, such as taking care of themselves, organizing activities, and making decisions. This study aims to provide an understanding and describe the independent characters of early childhood in children's storybooks Fairy Tales of the Main Characters of Independent Early Childhood. The need to collect data and sources of information is done by reading and recording. The author reads the children's storybook Fairy Tales of the Main Characters of Independent Early Childhood as a whole and then records the sources of information needed to understand and analyze directly related to the independence of early childhood in the story. Furthermore, data analysis is carried out by collecting, conceptualizing, and sorting or filtering relevant data. From these activities, researchers will find important information or data and will conclude the results and discussion. The results showed that there are independent characters in the storybook Fairy Tales of the Main Characters of Independent Early Childhood, namely: Independent Learning Alone, Independent Bathing Alone, Independent Sleep Alone, Independent Eating Alone, and Independent in Responsibility.

Keywords: Character, Independent, early childhood, children's storybook

1. Introduction

Early childhood is an important period in a child's development, during which they experience rapid growth and learning. Early childhood has several aspects of development that need to be stimulated in order to develop properly. One very important aspect in early childhood development is independence. Independence refers to a child's ability to perform daily tasks independently, such as taking care of themselves, organizing activities, and making decisions. Independence in early childhood has a significant impact in many aspects of their lives. When children become independent, they develop self-confidence, confidence, and responsibility for themselves. It also helps them build social skills, develop independence in learning, and prepare them for future challenges.

However, there are still many families and parents who are still unaware of the importance of introducing and implementing independence starting at an early age. Many parents want children to have independence without wanting to start children to do the process. Parents still assume that children are small creatures who cannot do daily activities. Even though when children have begun to be able to use their limbs to move appropriately, then children can be taught to do their own activities. Such as, eating, bathing, tidying up the room, washing your own cutlery, sweeping and so on. Some parents still think that it can be learned and done as an adult. Meanwhile, the formation of character and good attitude requires a process and needs habituation. Independence in early childhood is not something that happens by itself. It takes attention and guidance from adults, both parents

and educators, to help children develop the skills and attitudes necessary to become independent. Therefore, understanding and introducing the process of developing independence in early childhood becomes very important. Through a better understanding of independence in early childhood, we can design appropriate educational approaches and interventions to help children reach their full potential. This can provide a strong foundation for their future development, both in terms of daily living skills, academic abilities, and sustainable social independence.

Introducing and providing an understanding of independence in early childhood can be in various ways, one of which is through children's story books. Children's story books are one of the learning media that children like. Starting from listening to the story in it, seeing the images in the story, to finding out the content of the story yourself. Children's storybooks can be a bridge of knowledge from parents to children without the impression of patronizing. One of the children's story books that can introduce and teach about independence is a book entitled *Fairy Tales of the Main Characters of Independent Early Childhood* by Heru Kurniawan and Endah Kusumaningrum. The book published by Bhuana Ilmu Popular Gramedia contains 10 fable stories about independence. Fable stories are stories where characters are played by animals.

Introduction and provision of understanding related to characters both through children's story books are still widely carried out, both by parents, educators and practitioners. Therefore, many have conducted previous research, such as research conducted by Fitriatul Masrurah, et al entitled *Character Building Likes to Read in Early Childhood Through Picture Story Book Media*, it is explained that by reading children will gain new information, knowledge and experience. Through picture stories can foster a child's penchant for reading (Masrurah & Ramiati, 2022). Another study was conducted by Enda Sardiana, et al entitled *Analysis of Character Values Contained in Children's Fable Books*, the results of her research explained that the analysis of character values from each fairy tale story in the fable studied illustrates positive values, namely courage, honesty, responsibility, forgiveness, entertaining, ingenious friendship, hard work, please help, creative (Sardiana et al., 2020). In line with the research conducted by Nailil Mziyah, et al entitled *Analysis of Spiritual Values in Character Formation in Wiroadarsono's Folklore Book*, the results of his research explained that Joko Dolok's folklore book contains 34 spiritual values that can shape the character of students. These spiritual values and character values can be seen from the quotations in characterization, and evidenced from the indicators of faith, worship, and morals as well as indicators of 18 character values, some points that affect spiritual values in storybooks can shape character values, namely from the environment, the many spiritual values in the book and the content or plot of the story (Maziyah et al., 2019).

With the description of previous research that has been done, there are similarities with the research that will be carried out by the author, namely the research carried out together about children's story books. That way, the author wants to conduct more in-depth research related to the good character of early childhood with a focus on independence.

2. Research Methods

The research was conducted using a type of qualitative research with library research methods. A text study that focuses on explaining and studying in depth the content of a children's storybook entitled *Dongeng Karakter Utama Anak Awal Mandiri* by Heru Kurniawan and Endah Kusumaningrum published by Bhuana Ilmu Popular Gramedia. Contains 10 stories entitled: *Taking Care of My Sister, Diligent in Studying, Diligent in Bathing, I Dare to Sleep Alone, Save Honey, I Can Eat Alone, Responsible, Never Give Up, Diligent in Saving, and Can Shop*. The need to collect data and sources of information is done by reading and recording. The author read the children's storybook *Fairy Tales of the Main Characters of Independent Early Childhood* in its entirety and chose 5 stories to research. That is the story entitled: *Diligent Study, Diligent Bathing, I Dare to Sleep Alone, I Can Eat Alone and Responsible*. Then record the sources of information needed to understand and analyze directly the early childhood independence in the story. Furthermore, data analysis is carried out by collecting, conceptualizing, and sorting or filtering relevant data. From these activities, researchers will find important information or data and will conclude the results and discussion. (Sugiyono, 2016)

3. Results and Discussion

Through events and characters, characters in storybooks will provide educational learning to stimulate good attitudes and characters for children (Hidayat et al., 2021). As in the children's storybook *Fairy Tales of the Main Characters of Independent Early Childhood*, fable stories with animal characters who have independent characters. Each story is played by a different animal that will not make children bored. The characters and attitudes possessed

by the characters in the story can provide understanding and instill independent characters in early childhood. By listening to stories, looking at pictures and reading. Independence in early childhood is very important to have so that children can have confidence and ease of life in the community. Characters and characters in the story can be a matter of discussion and attachment between parents and children to introduce various characters and independent attitudes. As in the storybook, the Fairy Tale of the Main Character of Independent Early Childhood describes several characters and attitudes of independence that can be introduced to early childhood, including:

3.1 Auto-apprentissage indépendant

Independence is an attitude that does not depend on others and fights for itself in solving problems. Independence is part of a child's personality that can determine the difference in behavior of each child (Wulandari et al., 2018). Independent self-study is an activity carried out on the basis of self-awareness without command. Learning itself is not only done by adults and can even be done by children. The teaching bell itself is a desire to find out what you want to know. Looking for information to answer his curiosity. In addition, self-study is done to bind knowledge and remember things that have been learned. As in the story entitled Diligent Learning. The story of a very forgetful little donkey. Little Donkey is often ridiculed by his friends but he never gets angry. Until one day, donkey and his friends will take the school exam. Donkey chose to study independently while the rest of his friends did not study because they thought the exam was easy. The next day the donkey got good grades while his friends didn't. Donkeys get good grades because they want to learn to be independent without being influenced by their peers. As in the following story excerpt:

Keledai kecil tetap rajin belajar, agar tidak mudah lupa. Seperti malam itu, dia belajar karena besok akan ujian.

The little donkey remains studious, so as not to forget easily. Like that night, she studied because tomorrow was going to an exam

Self-learning refers to a child's ability to take initiative, self-organize, and learn independently without relying entirely on adult guidance or supervision. This ability is invaluable in developing independence, self-confidence, and lifelong learning skills. When children can learn independently, they develop problem-solving skills, self-confidence, and self-regulation. They learn to take responsibility for their own learning process and develop intrinsic motivation to explore, seek information, and complete academic tasks.

In addition, independent self-learning can also encourage children to motivate themselves in achieving their learning goals. They learn to face challenges, overcome obstacles, and stay motivated even without direct supervision from adults. This helps them develop a sense of responsibility and initiative in achieving academic and personal success. However, this will not work well if it does not get environmental support. It is important for the educational environment to support the independent development of self-learning. Teachers and parents can provide guidance, role models, and give freedom and responsibility to children to take initiative in learning. They can provide resources, learning materials, and an environment that facilitates self-directed exploration and discovery.

3.2 self-contained Own bath

Self-bathing in early childhood is an important aspect in the development of independence and personal hygiene. Self-bathing refers to a child's ability to bathe and cleanse their own body without adult help. Early childhood independent character will be achieved if parents make efforts through various activities that support the development of independence k (Angkur et al., n.d.). Like self-reliance so that children can bathe themselves. Parents need to introduce and involve the process of understanding bathing procedures, using soap and water properly, and maintaining body hygiene independently. Self-reliance in early childhood can't be done suddenly, it is necessary to go through several stages first. Giving understanding, bathing, practicing courage and giving trust. Giving early childhood the opportunity to be able to bathe alone provides a sense of worry for parents. Parents need to understand the right time to let the child be able to bathe on their own. Independent bathing alone can provide understanding to children that their bodies are valuable things that should not be known to others.

In addition, bathing alone can provide understanding to children the importance of maintaining personal hygiene. As in the story entitled Diligent Bathing. The story is about Koalas who are always lazy to bathe on holidays. On holidays, koalas love to play in the park with their friends. Mom had told him to take a bath, but Koala ignored him. Until his friends realized and smelled the unpleasant scent from Koala's body. Koalas

go home embarrassed and take a bath so that their breaches don't smell anymore. This makes Koala realize that he must keep his own body clean. As in the following story excerpt:

Koala malu sekali. Dia cepat-cepat berlari untuk pulang. Koala mandi. Koala berjanji. Koala akan rajin mandi agar tidak bau dan malu.

Koalas are so embarrassed. He quickly ran to go home. Koalas bathe. Koalas promised. Koalas will diligently bathe so as not to smell and shy

Bathing itself is a process in which early childhood is able to bathe and cleanse their own bodies without the help of adults. Bathing itself plays an important role in maintaining the cleanliness and health of children. Children who bathe independently can ensure that they cleanse their bodies well, removing dirt and germs that can cause infection or disease. It also helps in preventing skin problems like irritation or rashes. This is an important step in the development of independence and personal hygiene in children. From bathing alone children learn many things, including: Skill development, Bathing itself involves the development of fine and gross motor skills. The child learns to use his hands to hold soap, brush his teeth, and wash the body in a proper way. They also learn to use toiletries such as showers or buckets with good coordination; Bathing alone gives children a sense of responsibility for their own hygiene and self-care. They learn to manage bath time, gather toiletries, and maintain regularity in the bathing routine. This helps in the development of independence and the child's ability to take responsibility for themselves; Safety in bathing, Bathing itself also involves the child's understanding of safety in bathing. They are taught to be careful when moving in wet areas, avoid slipping, and use toiletries properly. This helps develop safety awareness and reduces the risk of injury while bathing. Through the development of self-bathing skills, early childhood can feel pride and confidence in caring for themselves. Bathing themselves also gives them a strong foundation in understanding the importance of hygiene.

3.3 Independently Sleep Alone

Sleep is one of the things that are needed by humans. Sleep can be a phase of rest after doing activities. For early childhood, sleep is not only a relief from fatigue after a day's activities, but also as a time for the brain to process knowledge. Children should get enough sleep so that all aspects of their development can develop properly. Independent sleep itself has not been done by many children in Indonesia. The habit of children sleeping with parents since infancy makes it difficult for children to sleep alone. It is necessary to do several stages for children to be able to independently sleep on their own. This requires strong determination and willingness from parents. Teaching children to independently sleep alone is not easy. It needs to be given encouragement and motivation. As in the story entitled *I Dare to Sleep Alone*, it tells the story of a little panda who always sleeps with Mom. Since there is a baby brother, the little panda is asked to be able to sleep alone. Little Panda was terrified, but his father tried to accompany him by reading him fairy tales about adventurous pandas living alone in forests and mountains. From the story, the little panda's father wants to follow the adventurous panda who dares to sleep alone. Even the little panda tries to sleep on its own. As in the following story excerpt:

Malam itu, Ayah Panda menemani Panda Kecil tidur di kamarnya. Ayah mendongeng tentang Panda Petualang. Setiap hari, Panda petualang tidur sendiri di gunung dan hutan. Panda Kecil sangat kagum. Dia ingin sehebat Panda Petualang. Malam itu, Panda Kecil tidur sendiri sambil tersenyum.

That night, Panda's father accompanied Little Panda to sleep in his room. Dad told a story about the Adventurer's Panda. Every day, adventurous pandas sleep alone in mountains and forests. Little Panda was amazed. He wanted to be as great as the Adventurer's Panda. That night, Little Panda slept alone with a smile

Through the quote above, it can be known, that teaching and introducing independent sleep alone to children can be in various ways. One of them is by reading stories. Children can listen and emulate the story. Indirectly, children will understand the meaning of the message conveyed. This can be done by discussion between parents and children after finishing reading. In addition to providing understanding to children, this can also build good attachment. There are several things that need to be considered in implementing independent sleep routines in early childhood, including: Creating a comfortable sleep environment; Implement a regular sleep routine; Help the child overcome fears; Provide encouragement and positive

reinforcement such as praise and so on. In this case, parents play a role in providing trust and confidence for children to be able to independently sleep alone. The process of independence of children is greatly influenced by their environment, especially in the attachment of children with their parents, children will be independent starting from the process of diversity and togetherness in their immediate environment (Andhy Surya Hapsara, 2019).

3.4 Self-feeding

Eating is one of the basic needs activities in humans. Eating makes humans energized and can move more easily. One of the things that affects is the food eaten. The same goes for early childhood. Early childhood food plays an important role in their growth, development, and health. At this stage, children are developing eating habits that will form the basis of their future diet. Therefore, it is important to provide a balanced and quality diet so that they can grow well. In Indonesia, some families have distinctive characteristics in implementing the process of eating in early childhood. After the child reaches old enough to eat, there are parents who immediately provide habituation for children to eat alone with assistance. There are also those who accustom children to being fed every meal. Each parent has their own way of introducing activities and eating processes to children, as in the story entitled I Can Eat Alone. This story tells the story of a Penguin cub who always asks to be fed at mealtime. Once old enough, his mother asked the penguin cub to eat by himself. However, he always refused and still wanted to be fed. Until one time the penguin cub participated in school activities, far from his mother forced the penguin cub to eat alone. Since then, penguin cubs have become fond of eating on their own. This is stated in the following excerpt of the story:

Hari itu, ada piknik di sekolah. Semua anak menginap. Waktu sarapan, Penguin tidak mau makan. Dia ingin disuapi oleh Ibu. Tiba-tiba, perutnya sakit. Penguin lapar. terpaksa, penguin makan sendiri. Ternyata makan sendiri sangat menyenangkan. Mulai hari itu, Penguin rajin makan sendiri.

That day, there was a picnic at school. All children stayed. Breakfast time, Penguin won't eat. He wanted to be fed by Mom. Suddenly, his stomach hurts. Penguins are hungry. Forced, penguins eat on their own. It turns out that eating alone is so fun. From that day on, Penguins diligently feed themselves

Independent feeding alone can be a child's first step in forming independence. The process of learning to eat on your own is an important milestone in a child's development. As children begin to independently feed themselves, they develop the fine motor skills and coordination necessary to control food and cutlery. In addition, it is the beginning of the development of independence and decision-making in everyday life. The initial stage of independent eating begins with giving children safe, easy-to-grip foods, such as soft pieces of fruit or vegetables or small meals they can hold with their fingers. At first, food may fall apart and children need adult help to control spoons or forks, but as time goes by, they will get more skilled.

During this stage, it is important for parents or caregivers to give the child the necessary time and patience. Eating alone is a learning process, and the child may need time to master it. Using praise and positive encouragement when they successfully eat on their own can boost their confidence and motivate them to keep trying. However, keep in mind that eating alone also means giving children the opportunity to experiment and learn. Although the food will fall apart at first, it is a natural part of the process. It is important to create a safe environment and supervise the child to ensure they do not face the risk of choking or accidents.

As time goes by, your child will become more skilled in feeding himself and can better control spoons, forks, and knives. They will learn to make decisions about the foods they like and dislike, as well as understand hunger and satiety. This is an important first step in forming a healthy diet and building a positive relationship with food. Self-feeding yourself is a worthwhile journey for children. In this process, they learn important skills that will help them grow into independent and responsible individuals. Proper support, patience and supervision from parents and caregivers are essential in facilitating the development of this independence.

3.5 Independent in responsibility

Being responsible can be one of the character education that must be instilled in children. Character education is not just about instilling right and wrong. Character education is an effort to instill good habits (Habituation) so that students are able to behave and act based on the values that have become their personalities, must involve good knowledge (moral knowing) good feelings or loving good (moral feeling) and good behavior (Moral action), so as to form the embodiment of unity of behavior and attitudes to life of children (Sutarmanto, Fadillah, 2015). Being responsible is one of the important attitudes in living an independent life. A responsible attitude involves being aware of the consequences of our own actions, as well as being ready to take responsibility for the actions and decisions we make. By having a responsible attitude, one can develop strong independence and become a reliable individual. They can make wise decisions, manage time and resources effectively, and work independently to achieve their goals. In everyday life, a responsible attitude involves taking responsibility for our duties and obligations, be it in the household, school, or social environment. A responsible attitude also includes admitting our mistakes and learning from them, as well as respecting the rights and interests of others. As in the story entitled Responsible, the story is about a white goose who accidentally dropped grandma's beloved cup and broke. The white goose then went to the panda's house to be taught how to make cups from bamboo. The cup was ready-made and White Swan directly gave it to grandma. Grandma is not angry and happy that the White Swan wants to take responsibility. This is stated in the following excerpt of the story:

Angsa Putih belajar cara membuat cangkir dari bambu untuk neneknya. Nenek sangat terkejut saat melihat cangkir barunya. "Wow, unik sekali!" kata Nenek. Angsa Putih segera meminta maaf, Nenek tidak Marah!

White Swan learned how to make cups from bamboo for her grandmother. Grandma was very surprised when she saw her new cup. "Wow, it's so unique!" said Grandma. Goose Putih apologized immediately, Grandma was not Angry!

Early childhood is in an important stage in the formation of their independence, and responsibility is one of the main aspects that need to be developed in this process. Responsibility plays a central role in helping children understand the consequences of their actions, develop self-awareness, and become independent individuals. As early childhood begins to take responsibility in everyday tasks, such as cleaning their toys or making their beds, they learn to appreciate the importance of caring for and organizing their own belongings. They realize that they have a role to play in maintaining the cleanliness and regularity of their environment. In building responsibility in early childhood independence, parents and caregivers play an important role. They set a good example by being responsible in daily tasks and making good decisions regarding food. They also provide opportunities for the child to take responsibility and provide positive feedback when the child does well. Through the development of responsibility, early childhood builds a strong foundation for their future independence. They learn to appreciate the importance of taking responsibility for their actions, making good decisions, and respecting others. In this process, they feel supported and empowered to become responsible and independent individuals.

4. Conclusion

The character of early childhood independence in the children's storybook entitled Fairy Tales of the Main Character of Independent Early Childhood by Heru Kurniawan and Endah Kusumaningrum contains several characters of independence carried out through several activities, namely: Independent self-study, independent self-bathing, independent sleeping alone, independent self-feeding, and independent in responsibility. This behavior of independence is told through stories played by binatang characters, this story is called a fable story. Fable stories are loved by children because the stories are closer to the child's world. That way the self-righteous characters in the Fairy Tale book of the Main Character of Independent Early Childhood can be introduced to early childhood with children's story books.

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