

## Low Independence of Early Childhood in Sakay State Kindergarten, Totikum District, Banggai Kepulauan Regency Through Analysis of Children'S Behavior in Daily Activities at School

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### ABSTRACT

Early childhood independence is an important aspect of growth and development that needs to be stimulated from an early age. This community service research is motivated by the low level of independence of students at Sakay State Kindergarten, Totikum District, Banggai Islands Regency, which is reflected in children's behavior in daily activities at school, such as dependence on teachers for dressing, eating, and completing assignments. The purpose of this study is to analyze children's behavior in daily activities as an indicator of low independence, while also designing and implementing intervention strategies based on habituation and responsive parenting. This study uses a qualitative descriptive method with a participant observation approach, teacher interviews, and activity documentation. The research subjects were 35 students, 5 teachers, and 1 principal at Sakay State Kindergarten. The results showed that most children still needed assistance in basic daily activities and were not yet able to complete assignments independently. After implementing the independence habituation program for 6 weeks, there was a significant improvement where children began to demonstrate independent behavior in routine school activities. The conclusion of this study is that structured habituation, teacher consistency, and parental support are key factors in increasing early childhood independence. Sustainable development of independence programs is essential as part of the early childhood education curriculum

## **INTRODUCTION**

Early Childhood Education (PAUD) plays a very strategic role in forming the foundation for children's character development and basic skills. One important aspect that needs to be developed from an early age is independence, namely the child's ability to carry out various daily activities without always relying on others (Astuti, 2021). Independence relates not only to physical aspects such as dressing themselves or eating without being fed, but also encompasses emotional, social, and cognitive aspects that influence the quality of a child's overall development. One factor influencing children's low Quranic reading ability is family support (Lamadang et al., 2022). However, the phenomenon of low independence in early childhood remains a significant problem in various PAUD institutions in Indonesia, including in remote areas such as Totikum District, Banggai Islands Regency, Central Sulawesi Province. Sakay State Kindergarten, located in Sakay Village, is the only public PAUD institution in the area. Based on initial observations conducted by researchers, it was found that most children are unable to independently complete basic daily activities at school. Of the 35 registered students, around 27 children (76.2%) are still very dependent on teachers for dressing, tidying bags, eating lunch, and completing learning assignments.

This situation is inextricably linked to the socio-economic background of the Sakay Village community, the majority of whom work as fishermen and subsistence farmers. The relatively low level of parental education results in parenting patterns that tend to be overprotective or even less attentive to the development of children's independence (Wahyuni, 2022). Furthermore, limited school facilities and infrastructure, along with minimal teacher training in strategies to foster independence, exacerbate this situation. Sakay Village is geographically located in an archipelago with limited access. This situation results in children growing up in an under-stimulated environment, with little variety in activities that foster independence. Physically, the area is surrounded by sea and has scattered settlements. Socially, the community still upholds communal values that sometimes discourage children from developing individual independence. Economically, most families are in the pre-prosperous category, resulting in limited parental involvement in their children's education.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Sakay Public Kindergarten has 35 students divided into two study groups, with a teaching staff of 5 teachers and 1 principal. The teacher-to-student ratio is 1:7 for each class, which is actually quite ideal. However, the lack of a structured program to stimulate independence is a major obstacle. As noted by (Permata, 2023), the consistent and planned implementation of habituation methods is a prerequisite for successfully developing children's independence in early childhood education institutions. Based on the above background, the research questions are formulated as follows: (1) How is the independent behavior of early childhood children at Sakay State Kindergarten (TK Negeri Sakay) reflected in their daily school activities? (2) What factors influence the low level of independence of early childhood children at Sakay State Kindergarten? (3) How

effective is the independence habituation program in improving children's independent behavior?

The objectives of this community service activity are: (1) Analyze and describe the independent behavior of early childhood children at Sakay State Kindergarten, (2) Identify factors contributing to low levels of independence in children, and (3) Implement and evaluate the independence habituation program as a form of school-based intervention. The literature review shows that early childhood independence (autonomy) is one of the pillars of Erikson's developmental theory, particularly at the initiative vs. guilt stage (ages 3-6 years). At this stage, children need to be given space to take initiative and try to do things on their own (Santrock, 2019). Musfiroh & Tatminingsih suggest that children's independence includes the ability to care for themselves, manage their emotions, adapt to their environment, and make simple decisions (Musfiroh, 2020). Similarly, other research shows that a supportive school environment, including consistent habituation programs, can significantly increase the independence of young children (Rahayu, 2021).

## METHODOLOGY

This article uses a qualitative descriptive approach supported by simple quantitative data. This approach was chosen because the research aims to describe in-depth the phenomenon of low independence in early childhood based on an analysis of actual behavior in the school setting (Sugiyono, 2020).

**Target Audience.** The subjects of this community service activity were all 35 students at Sakay State Kindergarten, consisting of Group A (ages 4-5 years) and Group B (ages 5-6 years). In addition, five teachers and the principal were also involved as partners in program implementation. Parents/guardians were also involved in outreach activities and home support.

**Activity Location.** The activity took place at Sakay State Kindergarten, Sakay Village, Totikum District, Banggai Islands Regency, Central Sulawesi Province. This location was chosen because it is the only public early childhood education institution in the region facing real issues related to low student independence.

**Methods Used.** The methods used in this activity include: (1) Participant observation to obtain an initial overview of children's independent behavior; (2) In-depth interviews with teachers and principals to explore perceptions and challenges faced; (3) Documentation study of child development reports and teacher notes; (4) Implementation of a two-week daily schedule-based independence habituation program; and (5) Focus Group Discussion (FGD) with parents to strengthen independence at home (Hidayat, 2022).

**Activity Materials.** The activity materials focus on three aspects of independence: (1) Physical independence, including dressing oneself, tidying shoes, carrying and tidying bags, and eating alone; (2) Independent learning tasks, including completing worksheets, independently retrieving and returning stationery; and (3) Social-emotional independence, including asking for help politely, queuing, and independently resolving minor conflicts with friends. This material is compiled based on the Child Development Achievement Level

Standards (STPPA) in the Minister of Education and Culture Regulation No. 137 of 2014.

**Activity Evaluation.** Evaluation was conducted using a structured observation instrument that referred to indicators of early childhood independence. Assessments were conducted at three time points: pre-intervention (baseline), mid-term evaluation, and final evaluation. Data were analyzed descriptively by calculating the percentage of children achieving independence indicators in each observed aspect (Nurdiana, 2023).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Community service activities at Sakay State Kindergarten were implemented in several structured stages, starting with the initial assessment, program planning, implementation, and evaluation. The following describes the results and discussion of each activity stage.

### *Initial State of Children's Independence*

Initial observations revealed a concerning level of student independence. Of the 35 children observed, 27 (76.2%) were still highly dependent on teachers for basic physical activities. Twenty-eight (81%) were unable to complete learning assignments independently, and 23 (66.7%) had not demonstrated adequate social-emotional independence. This situation was exacerbated by parental parenting styles that tended to indulge children, as revealed in interviews with class teachers (Kurniawan, 2021). Factors influencing this low level of independence included: (1) Overprotective parenting styles; (2) Lack of stimulation for independence at home; (3) The absence of a structured independence-building program at school; (4) Limited teacher knowledge of independence-development strategies; and (5) The geographical conditions of the archipelago limit access to learning resources and teacher training (Fitriyani, 2022).

Table 1. Initial Conditions of Student Independence at Sakay State Kindergarten

No	Aspect of Independence	Number of Independent Children	Percentage (%)	Not yet independent	Percentage (%)
1	Physical Independence (dressing, eating, tidying bags)	8	23,8	27	76,2
2	Learning Task Independence (completing worksheets, taking stationery)	7	19,0	28	81,0
3	Social-Emotional Independence (queuing, asking for help, resolving conflicts)	12	33,3	23	66,7

4	Overall average	9	25,4	25,9	74,6
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**Implementation of the Independence Habituation Program**

The independence habituation program was implemented over two weeks, involving all school components. The program was designed in three phases: (1) an introductory phase, where teachers introduced independence routines and provided explicit modeling; (2) a guided practice phase, where children were trained to perform independent activities with gradual guidance; and (3) a consolidation phase, where children were encouraged to carry out all routines independently with minimal supervision (Pratiwi, 2022). During the implementation process, three classroom teachers received technical assistance on scaffolding techniques, providing positive reinforcement, and developing a daily independence schedule. The principal acted as a supervisor and motivator, ensuring consistent program implementation across all classes. Parents were also involved through focus group discussions (FGDs) and provided with independence guidance at home, as continuity between school and home is crucial to the program's success (Sari, 2023).



Figure 1. Socialization of Independence Habituation for Early Childhood

The Early Childhood Independence Socialization Program aims to instill a sense of independence from an early age so that children can perform various basic activities without always relying on others for help. Through this program, children are guided to get used to carrying out daily activities such as tidying up toys, dressing themselves, maintaining personal hygiene, and making simple decisions appropriate to their developmental stage. The program's purpose is to build character, increase self-confidence, and reinforce responsibility in children within the family and school environment. Furthermore, this program also plays a role in aligning the roles of educators and parents by providing consistent stimulation, so that children's social-emotional, cognitive, and motor development can occur optimally and sustainably.

**Program Evaluation Results**

The evaluation at the end of the 6th week showed a significant increase in students' levels of independence. Table 2 presents a comparison of conditions before and after program implementation.

Table 2. Comparison of Children's Independence Before and After the Program

N o	Aspect	Pra (n)	Pra (%)	Pasca (n)	Pasca (%)	Improve ment (n)	Improve ment (%)
1	Physical Independence	19	54,2	30	85,7	11	31,5
2	Learning Task Independence	17	48,5	29	82,8	12	34,3
3	Social-Emotional Independence	15	42,8	27	77,1	12	34,3
4	Average	17	48,5	28,6	81,8	11,6	33,3

Based on the table above, there was a significant increase in the three measured aspects of independence. Physical independence increased from 54.2% to 85.7% (a 31.5 percentage point increase). Learning task independence increased from 48.5% to 82.8%, and social-emotional independence increased from 42.8% to 77.1%. The overall average showed an increase of 33.3 percentage points, from 48.5% to 81.8% of children declared independent.

**Indicators of Success and Level of Difficulty**

The program's success indicators were determined based on two criteria: (1) at least 60% of children achieving independence in each measured aspect, and (2) positive changes in teacher practices related to promoting independence. Based on the final evaluation, both indicators had been achieved. All three measured aspects of independence exceeded the 60% threshold, with the highest achievement being social-emotional independence (76.2%) (Handayani, 2021). The difficulties encountered during the program's implementation included: (1) Resistance from some parents who felt their children were too young to be independent; (2) Inconsistency in implementing routines at home due to a lack of parental understanding; (3) Some children showed negative emotional reactions (crying, anger) when asked to carry out activities independently at the start of the program; and (4) Time constraints for teachers who had to divide their attention between 35 children with diverse needs.

Table 3. Analysis of Strengths, Weaknesses, and Opportunities for Program Development

Superiority	Weakness	Development Opportunities
Habituation-based programs in accordance with the cultural context of the local community	Dependence on teacher consistency that is not guaranteed in the long term	Integration of the program into the school's official PAUD curriculum

Actively involve all school components and parents	There is no standard written guide/module available yet	Development of independence modules based on local wisdom of the Banggai Islands
Significant improvement in a relatively short time (8 weeks)	Limited follow-up data to monitor sustainability	Formation of PAUD clusters in Totikum District for program replication
Easily adaptable by teachers without complex technical training	Not involving child psychologists/counselors	Collaboration with the Department of Education for regular teacher capacity development

This program has significant potential for development, given that Banggai Kepulauan Regency has numerous early childhood education institutions across the archipelago facing similar challenges. With support from the Education Office and local government, this program has the potential for wider replication and could even become a model for developing early childhood independence based on local wisdom (Nuraini, 2023).

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This community service research revealed that the level of independence of early childhood children at Sakay State Kindergarten in Totikum District, Banggai Islands Regency, was low at baseline, with an average of only 48.5% of children demonstrating independent behavior. The main contributing factors included overprotective parenting, a lack of structured habituation programs at the school, and the island geography that limited access to learning resources.

The six-week independence habituation program proved effective in increasing the average level of independence from 48.5% to 81.8%, exceeding the minimum target of 60%. The program's strengths lie in its holistic approach involving teachers, principals, and parents, as well as its suitability to the local cultural context. The program's weaknesses include the lack of standardized modules, the lack of involvement of child psychology experts, and limited long-term monitoring. In the future, this program needs to be integrated into the official PAUD curriculum, supplemented with modules based on Banggai Kepulauan local wisdom, and replicated to other PAUD institutions in the archipelago with full support from the local government and the Banggai Kepulauan Regency Education Office.

## FURTHER STUDY

This research still has limitations, so it is necessary to conduct further research related to the topic of Low Independence of Early Childhood in Sakay State Kindergarten, Totikum District, Banggai Islands Regency Through Analysis

of Children's Behavior in Daily Activities at School in order to perfect this research and increase insight for readers.

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