

## The Role of Fathers in Children's Character Development: A Literature Review

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### ABSTRAK

Peran ayah dalam membentuk karakter dan perkembangan emosional pada masa kanak-kanak awal (0-6 tahun) sangatlah penting. Ayah, dengan gaya pengasuhan yang unik, berkontribusi secara signifikan terhadap pembentukan kepribadian, nilai-nilai moral, stabilitas emosional, dan keterampilan sosial anak. Tinjauan pustaka ini mengkaji berbagai studi untuk menganalisis dampak keterlibatan ayah terhadap perkembangan karakter dan emosional anak. Penelitian menunjukkan bahwa ayah tidak hanya berperan sebagai panutan, tetapi juga sebagai pendidik utama nilai-nilai moral, pemberi dukungan emosional, serta fasilitator dalam perkembangan sosial anak. Kehadiran ayah yang aktif dan positif menciptakan lingkungan yang mendukung, di mana anak belajar untuk mempercayai, mengeksplorasi, dan mengekspresikan diri dengan percaya diri. Selain itu, studi menunjukkan bahwa ayah yang terlibat secara bermakna membantu mengembangkan ketahanan emosional, keterampilan memecahkan masalah, dan kemampuan untuk berinteraksi sosial dengan lebih baik. Dampak jangka panjang dari keterlibatan ini tercermin dalam kepercayaan diri, kecerdasan emosional, serta kesiapan anak untuk menghadapi tantangan di masa depan, yang menekankan pentingnya hubungan ayah-anak dalam perkembangan awal anak.

**Kata Kunci:** *Ayah, Emosi, Anak, Pengasuhan*

### ABSTRACT

The role of fathers in shaping the character and emotional development of early childhood (0-6 years) is undeniably crucial. Fathers, with their unique parenting styles and approaches, contribute significantly to the formation of a child's personality, moral values, emotional stability, and social skills. This literature review examines various studies to analyze the impact of father involvement on children's character and emotional development. Research shows that fathers not only act as role models but also as key educators of moral values, providers of emotional support, and facilitators of social development. Active and positive father presence fosters a nurturing environment where children learn to trust, explore, and express themselves confidently. Furthermore, studies indicate that fathers who engage with their children in meaningful ways help cultivate emotional resilience, problem-solving skills, and an enhanced ability to navigate social interactions. The long-term impact of such involvement is reflected in children's self-confidence, emotional intelligence, and preparedness to face

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future challenges, underscoring the importance of father-child relationships in early childhood development.

**Key Words:** *Father, Character, Emotion, Early childhood, Parenting*

## **BACKGROUND**

Fathers have a unique influence in the parenting process that differs from mothers, especially in how they interact with children. Many fathers tend to encourage children to be braver, more independent, and explorative, which ultimately contributes to the development of a strong and resilient character. Through active play, energetic physical interactions, and challenges provided, fathers help children learn their limits, develop problem-solving skills, and build solid self-confidence (Ulfadhilah, 2024). This involvement creates a safe and supportive space for children to grow into resilient individuals, ready to face the various challenges life may present in the future. Researchers have found that a father's involvement in child-rearing tends to be active and responsive, making the father-child relationship closer and more enduring, while also strengthening their emotional bond.

In addition to playing a significant role in character development, the presence of a loving father has a considerable influence on the emotional development of children. Research shows that children who feel a strong emotional bond with their fathers tend to experience healthier emotional management. This emotional bond creates a sense of security and comfort for the child, allowing them to express feelings freely without fear of rejection or judgment. With consistent paternal involvement, children feel emotionally supported, making it easier for them to learn how to identify, understand, and manage their own emotions. Researchers such as Aim & Adelia (2024) emphasize that emotional support from fathers plays an essential role in helping children develop stress management skills. Children who have a close relationship with their fathers are better able to face stressful or conflicting situations calmly and wisely. This also impacts the child's ability to express emotions in a healthy way, whether through verbal communication or behavior, without falling into excessive or destructive reactions.

A father's affection and emotional support serve as a crucial foundation for a child's emotional stability, which has long-term effects on their lives. Children who

grow up with the presence of a loving father tend to have better emotional balance, enabling them to build healthy interpersonal relationships in the future. This emotional stability is a valuable asset that helps children navigate challenges in various contexts—personal, social, or professional—reinforcing the view that the father’s role in a child’s emotional development is irreplaceable (Ayun, 2017).

Father-child interaction also plays a significant role in the development of social skills. Through shared activities with their fathers, such as playing and engaging in social activities, children learn empathy, cooperation, and how to interact positively with others. Research also shows that fathers who are actively involved in child-rearing help instill moral values such as responsibility, discipline, and hard work. A close relationship with their father makes it easier for children to understand the importance of rules and motivates them to achieve their goals (Ningsih, 2024; Vina, 2024).

Moreover, fathers hold a crucial role in shaping a child’s positive self-concept. In the context of a child’s psychological development, self-concept refers to how children perceive and evaluate themselves, shaped by social interactions and everyday experiences. Researchers emphasize that when fathers provide genuine appreciation, emotional support, and recognition for their children’s achievements, both big and small, children begin to internalize positive values about themselves. The recognition and praise given by fathers help strengthen the child’s belief in their abilities and potential, thereby building solid self-confidence.

Furthermore, active encouragement from fathers not only affects the emotional aspect but also impacts the development of the child’s self-identity. A strong sense of identity is an essential foundation for children to understand who they are, what they value, and how they interact with the world around them. According to research by Ega, this positive self-concept has long-term effects, not only helping children overcome emotional and social barriers but also preparing them to face more complex challenges in their personal and professional lives in the future. Children who receive support from their fathers in this process tend to grow into more resilient individuals, better able to handle failure, and more prepared to face adulthood with healthy self-confidence.

The uniqueness of this article lies in its emphasis that the father’s role in early childhood parenting is not merely complementary but crucial in shaping the character,

emotional intelligence, and social skills of children. By focusing on the active involvement of fathers in daily activities, this article demonstrates how positive father-child interactions contribute to a child's ability to manage stress and build empathy. Additionally, the article highlights the need for further research on the father's role in different social and cultural contexts and proposes strategies to increase father involvement in parenting.

## **METHOD**

This research utilizes a literature review method to understand the role of fathers in early childhood development. The study involves the collection, analysis, and evaluation of sources such as books, journals, articles, and relevant websites. This process helps the researcher identify gaps in existing research and offer new perspectives on the topic. Using content analysis, the researcher assesses the quality and relevance of each source, ensuring that the data generated is accurate and representative. The researcher also focuses on recent studies to maintain the relevance of the findings.

Through this systematic approach, the researcher is able to summarize various findings that enrich the understanding of the father's role in child development. The results of the analysis will be compiled to draw conclusions that support practical recommendations or further research. This study is expected to contribute to society's understanding of the importance of father involvement in shaping a child's character and emotional development, taking into account different social and cultural contexts.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

Researchers have long highlighted the crucial role of fathers in shaping a child's character, despite the fact that fathers often spend less time with their children compared to mothers. The assumption that a father's role can be overlooked due to limited time involvement is misguided. On the contrary, studies show that the quality of a father's interaction with the child has a significant impact on character development. Fathers tend to facilitate exploration, physical challenges, and risk-taking, which help children develop independence, courage, and mental resilience. This parenting style complements the mother's more protection-oriented and emotionally

secure approach, creating an essential balance in the child's character formation. The exploratory and challenging interactions provided by fathers allow children to build resilience and problem-solving skills in a way that fosters autonomy.

Moreover, the limited time fathers may spend with their children is often compensated by the emotional depth of their involvement. Fathers who engage emotionally with their children offer a sense of security that differs from the bond with mothers. Research indicates that a strong father-child connection contributes to a child's emotional stability, enhancing their ability to manage stress and handle conflict. Therefore, even though fathers may quantitatively spend less time with their children, the quality of interaction, emotional support, and challenging yet supportive parenting significantly influence the development of resilient and independent character traits. This emphasizes that a father's role is not merely supplementary but an essential element in the dynamic of character development in children.

### ***The Role of Fathers in Shaping Early Childhood Character***

The role of fathers in shaping early childhood character is a crucial element that has long-term impacts on a child's personality development and values. At ages 0-6, children are in a critical phase of development where their character begins to take shape. A father's involvement in this process contributes to the formation of values, ethics, and attitudes that will influence their identity in the future (Fiki & Reza, 2022). Below are some key aspects of the father's role in shaping early childhood character, gathered from previous studies.

#### ***Role Model and Example***

Fathers act as role models for their children (Kusdani & Santi, 2019). Through their everyday actions, fathers demonstrate how to behave responsibly and ethically. For instance, when a father treats others with respect, the child learns to value others. Positive behaviors displayed by fathers, such as honesty, discipline, and hard work, serve as examples that children are likely to imitate. As they grow, children tend to adopt these values as part of their own character.

#### ***Moral and Value Education***

The father's involvement in the moral and value education of the child is essential (Syamsiah & Riris, 2021). Fathers can teach children about responsibility,

ethics, and social norms through various activities such as discussions, play, or reading stories. In these interactions, fathers can explain the consequences of certain actions, helping the child understand what is right and wrong. By providing a clear understanding of these values, fathers help children build a solid foundation for their character.

### ***Encouraging Independence and Courage***

Fathers often take a bolder approach to parenting, encouraging children to be more independent and brave in facing challenges (Aim & Adelia, 2024). Through activities that require courage, such as outdoor play or physical tasks, fathers help children learn about their own limits and how to overcome fears. These experiences are essential in shaping children's character, making them more confident and capable of tackling obstacles in the future.

### ***Social Skills and Empathy***

A father's presence in a child's life significantly contributes to the development of social skills and empathy (Vina, 2024). Through interactions with their father, children learn how to communicate, cooperate, and build positive relationships with others. Fathers can help children understand others' feelings, thus fostering empathy. Strong social skills will equip children to interact effectively with peers and adults in the future.

### ***Emotional Support and Confidence***

A loving and supportive father greatly influences a child's character development (Ayi et al., 2024). Children who feel loved and supported by their father are more likely to have higher self-confidence. When fathers offer praise and encouragement, children learn to value their efforts and achievements. This emotional support enables children to feel secure in expressing themselves, which strengthens their character and identity.

### ***Discipline and Responsibility Development***

A father's role in teaching discipline and responsibility is also essential (Yoyon, 2014). By setting consistent rules and providing clear consequences for actions, fathers help children understand the importance of discipline. For example, if a child neglects their duties, the father can explain why responsibility is vital and how it affects others.

This process aids children in developing a sense of responsibility and discipline in their lives.

### ***Long-Term Impact on Character***

The role of a father in shaping a child's character extends beyond childhood and influences adulthood (Andhika, 2021). Children raised with an involved and supportive father tend to become balanced individuals with strong moral values and good social skills. They are better equipped to face life's challenges and make positive contributions to society.

Researchers conclude that the father's role in early childhood character development is essential and has profound long-term effects. Fathers not only serve as role models but also as value educators, emotional supporters, and disciplinarians. Through active involvement, fathers shape children's personalities by providing clear moral guidance, fostering self-confidence, and building strong social skills. Investing in early parenting strengthens children's readiness to face life's challenges and build positive relationships in the future. With consistent commitment, fathers help prepare children to become resilient, independent, and adaptable individuals in complex social environments.

### ***The Role of Fathers in the Emotional Development of Early Childhood***

The next point the author aims to highlight within the topic of the father's role in emotional development during early childhood is its significant impact on the psychological and social well-being of children. Early childhood, particularly between the ages of 0-6 years, is a critical phase during which children begin to learn how to recognize, understand, and manage their emotions. A father's involvement in this process plays a crucial role in fostering a supportive environment for healthy emotional development (Khoiruddin). Below are several key aspects of the father's role in shaping the emotional development of young children, gathered from previous studies.

### ***Emotional Support and Presence***

The consistent presence of a father in a child's life provides a sense of safety and comfort (Yuli et al.). Children who share a close relationship with their fathers tend to feel more confident and possess a positive sense of self. Emotional support from fathers helps children feel accepted, which is vital for their emotional

development. When fathers show affection, care, and understanding, children feel valued and loved, which forms the foundation for strong emotional health.

### ***Modeling Emotional Regulation***

Fathers serve as role models for managing emotions (Wandansari, 2020). Through daily interactions, children observe how their fathers express and handle their feelings. For instance, when fathers demonstrate appropriate ways to cope with anger or disappointment, children learn how to recognize and manage similar emotions. This teaching equips children with skills to handle stress and negative emotions in a healthy manner, such as talking about their feelings or seeking solutions.

### ***Encouraging Emotional Expression***

Fathers who are supportive and open to their children's emotional expression help create a space where children feel comfortable sharing their feelings (Syefira et al., 2024). When fathers allow their children to express emotions, whether happy, sad, or angry, children learn that all emotions are valid and important to express. This encourages the development of emotional intelligence, which includes the ability to recognize, understand, and manage both their own emotions and those of others.

### ***Involvement in Play Activities***

Play is one of the most effective ways for children to express themselves and manage their emotions. Fathers who actively engage in play activities with their children not only strengthen their bond but also provide opportunities for emotional learning (Dian & Karyono, 2011). Through play, children can practice expressing their feelings, coping with failure, and learning how to cooperate with others. Fathers who actively participate in play offer essential emotional stimulation, which is crucial for the child's emotional development. Play creates a safe space where children can explore their emotions while receiving guidance and support from their fathers, promoting healthy emotional growth.

### ***Teaching Empathy and Consideration for Others***

A father's role in teaching empathy is critical to a child's emotional development (Setianingsih, 2017). By encouraging children to be attentive to others' feelings, fathers help them understand that emotions are an integral part of social interactions. For example, when fathers show concern for how others feel or talk about



how their actions may affect others, children begin to develop a sense of empathy. This ability to empathize is essential for building healthy social relationships later in life. Empathy, taught through both example and instruction, equips children with the social awareness necessary to navigate emotional dynamics in various settings.

### ***Handling Confrontation and Conflict***

A father's involvement in managing conflict and difficult situations also contributes to the emotional development of a child (Lismanda, 2017). When fathers model positive ways of resolving disputes or facing challenges, children learn strategies for dealing with future difficult situations. Through discussions and problem-solving, children are taught not to shy away from conflict but to seek solutions constructively. This helps them develop emotional resilience and equips them with the necessary skills to face challenges. The ability to navigate confrontation in a healthy manner supports the child's long-term emotional well-being and adaptability in social interactions.

### **Long-Term Impact on Emotional Health**

The role of fathers in the emotional development of early childhood has a significant impact on the long-term emotional well-being of children (Ariyanti et al., 2017). Children who receive emotional support from involved fathers tend to grow up to be more emotionally balanced individuals, capable of effectively managing stress and maintaining healthy social relationships. Moreover, they often possess a higher level of self-confidence and the ability to face life's challenges with optimism.

Active involvement of fathers not only shapes children's character but also provides essential skills for establishing healthy relationships in the future. By strengthening emotional bonds and creating a supportive environment, fathers serve as a crucial pillar in the mental and social development of their children. Fathers who offer emotional support from an early age help prepare their children to tackle life's challenges with greater confidence.

### ***Importance of Father Involvement in Parenting***

Father involvement in early childhood parenting, particularly in character and emotional formation, is critical to children's overall development. During this critical phase, fathers, through physical interactions, emotional support, and moral education, help children form a healthy and stable identity (Raden & Ulfadhilah, 2024). Fathers

often encourage their children to explore and take risks, which in turn builds self-confidence and courage needed to face life's challenges.

Additionally, fathers serve as important behavioral role models, instilling moral values such as responsibility, honesty, and integrity through their actions. Children engaged in social activities with their fathers and learning from these interactions will possess richer social skills and a stronger self-concept, which serve as the foundation for their emotional and social balance in the future (Andhika, 2021; Arif & U., 2019).

### ***Long-Term Effects of Father Involvement***

Active father involvement in the parenting process during early childhood has significant long-term effects. Children raised with the presence of fathers who are physically and emotionally engaged tend to become more balanced individuals with good social skills and effective emotional regulation (Ngewa, 2021). Through supportive parenting styles and active involvement in learning processes, fathers provide a strong foundation for children to develop self-confidence and emotional balance, which are crucial for their social lives and future success.

With consistently involved fathers, children are equipped with emotional and social skills that will help them navigate life's challenges and form healthy relationships. This role leaves a profound and lasting positive impact on children's lives, preparing them to become healthy, happy, and successful individuals in the future.

## **CONCLUSION**

Various studies confirm that the role of fathers in shaping children's character is significant. Fathers play an essential role in supporting the emotional, social, and moral development of children. The love and support from fathers can strengthen children's self-confidence and their ability to establish healthy interpersonal relationships. Although fathers' contributions have a positive impact on children's development, this research emphasizes the importance of understanding the different social and cultural contexts of father involvement. Thus, the findings of this study are expected to provide broader insights into the importance of fathers' roles in parenting, as well as encourage more inclusive and balanced approaches in parenting practices.

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