



BUILDING EARLY CHILDHOOD CHARACTER THROUGH MEANINGFUL PLAY ACTIVITIES: A THEORETICAL STUDY

Anis Soleha¹, Intan Putri Aulia²

^{1,2}Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia

Email: anisslhaa@upi.edu¹, intanputriaulia@upi.edu²

Received 20/08/2025, Accepted 2/10/2025, Published 31/10/2025

Abstract

Character education for early childhood is still not fully integrated into play activities in many early childhood education institutions, even though play is an approach that aligns with children's developmental stages. The method applied in this study is a literature study or library research method. The results show that meaningful play activities can foster character values such as honesty, responsibility, empathy, and collaboration through direct experience in social interactions. Children learn to understand game rules, imitate positive behavior from friends and educators, and develop moral awareness when participating in group play. Furthermore, the involvement of educators in designing relevant games and providing role models, along with family support at home, strengthens the process of internalizing character values. The conclusion of this study confirms that meaningful play is an effective and natural means for character formation in early childhood, and therefore needs to be systematically integrated into the early childhood curriculum to ensure the process of character development is sustainable and aligned with children's developmental needs.

Keywords: *Character education for children Early childhood, meaningful play*

INTRODUCTION

Children in their early years require guidance from adults, both at school and at home. The presence of children during this phase is crucial, as each individual experiences this phase only once in their lifetime. Early childhood is a period of life during which individuals experience significant growth. The developmental process at this early age encompasses various dimensions, including religious and moral values, social and emotional development, cognitive development, language skills, physical and motor development, and the arts. Preschool education is education provided to children under the age of seven. In the Indonesian context, children in the early childhood category are those aged zero to six. Every child born into the world comes with God-given potential (intelligence), but this potential will not develop and emerge to its full potential if not stimulated early on (Mahmud et al., 2025).

Early childhood is a golden age that occurs only once in the life cycle and is a very important period for children. Research shows that newborns have approximately 1,000 billion brain cells. These cells need to be stimulated and used to survive and thrive; if not stimulated, these cells will decrease in number and lead to a reduction in a child's potential. The Early Childhood Education Curriculum, released in 2013, consists of four main



competencies developed through children's play activities, one of which is attitudinal and social competencies. Attitudinal competencies relate to an individual's behavior when facing various situations, while social competencies relate to how an individual communicates with others, both peers and adults (Zalnur, 2024). Through play activities, children are taught to improve these two competencies, which are vital in shaping their character and adaptability in society.

Character education from an early age is the main foundation that must be laid in the life of every child, because this is an important process of instilling good values such as honesty, respect, empathy, and responsibility, all of which are very necessary so that children can interact with others and have social behavior that can be accepted and appreciated by the surrounding environment, starting from the school environment, friendships, to the wider community, and this noble task actually cannot only be assigned to teachers in Kindergarten or Early Childhood Education, because parents are actually the first and main educators whose role must be more dominant, because children spend the most time at home and will naturally imitate everything their parents do, so that every action, word, and the way parents solve problems will be a real example and an unwritten curriculum that is directly absorbed by children, therefore, in order to get maximum results and for these values to be truly embedded in children, close cooperation and harmony between what is taught by teachers at school and what is practiced and reaffirmed by parents at home are very necessary, so that a consistent and supportive environment is created so that children grow into individuals who are not only academically smart, but also have a good heart and strong character.(Rahayu et al., 2024).

Character education has a significant impact not only on shaping good behavior but also on children's academic achievement. Through character education, children are taught various constructive habits and mindsets, which can influence their ability to interact and cooperate with others, both at school and in everyday life. (Indriani & Khairiah, 2023) Character education for early childhood is an initiative to foster the development of all children's abilities in understanding, instill positive attitudes, and create behaviors that become daily habits. The goal of this effort is for these values to be ingrained in children throughout their adulthood. This aligns with the views expressed by (Pramesti., et al., 2025), This demonstrates that early childhood character education focuses on developing children's full potential, preparing them for the future and adapting to changing times. Children with good character tend to remain unaffected by negative social interactions and social media, and are protected from violence and bullying.

Playing is an important activity for children at an early age which acts as a tool for learning, socializing, and developing characteristics in children. Based on Piaget's view, playing is a type of activity that represents the stage of cognitive growth in children, through playing activities children gain knowledge through direct interaction with their environment, in this process there will be adaptation and integration of new experiences). Playing activities in children are a means for children to understand the world around them, test ideas, and build knowledge through real and valuable experiences. (Azrasabiy & Gery, 2024)

Through play, children gain the opportunity to internalize social norms and cultural values through interactions with peers and adults. In early childhood education, role-playing and group activities are considered effective ways to develop empathy, responsibility, and cooperation, as children are taught to follow rules and respect the position of others. This view aligns with the zone of proximal development (ZPD), which states that children learn optimally when they receive guidance in a social environment (Saputra & Suryandi, 2016). Sementara itu, Erikson dalam (Khadijah, & Zahriani., 2021) Meanwhile, Erikson (in Khadijah & Zahriani, 2021) considers play activities to be a crucial element in the development of a

child's identity and character. He emphasized that through play, children can understand the difference between imagination and reality, and increase self-confidence and initiative. During early childhood (3–6 years), play plays a crucial role in building a sense of independence and decision-making skills, which lay the foundation for independent character later in life.

METHODOLOGY

The method applied in this research is a literature study or library research. This research was conducted by gathering information from various sources, such as books, journals, and articles related to the theme of building character in early childhood through meaningful play activities. The focus of this research is the definition of character development in children through play activities, which are incorporated into daily activities, including early childhood education.

Menurut Nazir (2014:27), According to Nazir (2014:27), a literature review is a method of collecting data by examining various books, notes, reports, and other written sources related to the problem being researched. This method serves as the initial step in research planning, utilizing various library sources to obtain information without having to go directly into the field. In this method, researchers carefully read and examine the contents of each source. This process requires time for researchers to truly understand the available information and process it into a result. The results of the literature review are expected to answer research questions and serve as a basis for consideration, particularly in the context of early childhood education. The following are the steps in a literature review:



Gambar 1. Literature Review Research Steps

Before reviewing various scientific sources, researchers need to prepare the necessary tools and determine which sources are relevant, such as books, journals, or other supporting data. At this stage, researchers ensure that the sources they are searching for are within the 2016–2025 timeframe to ensure the information remains current and in line with the latest research developments. Once all sources have been collected, researchers schedule time to systematically and thoroughly read and understand each material. In the next stage, researchers begin reading and reviewing the contents of these sources to find important information related to the research topic. The information obtained is then analyzed in depth to identify relationships between data. From the results of this analysis, researchers can ultimately draw clearer and more focused conclusions in line with the research objectives.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Character education is a system designed to instill positive behavioral values in all school members. This system encompasses knowledge, awareness, willingness, and concrete actions in applying values related to God, oneself, others, the environment, and the nation. (Rofi'udin and Zuhdi, 2015) state that the goal of character education is to shape individuals with noble morals and able to demonstrate good behavior in everyday life. Character itself is understood as a set of values that are considered good and accepted in social life. These values must be instilled systematically so that they can be integrated with the individual's personality and reflected in actual daily behavior. This instillation is not enough through the delivery of theory, but must be supported by direct experience, habituation, and role models from the

surrounding environment. In line with this thinking, according to (Habibu et al., 2020), character education can be understood as an educational process that aligns moral values, ethics, character, and character. The main goal is to develop individuals' ability to distinguish between right and wrong actions and encourage them to consistently maintain goodness. Furthermore, character education is aimed at enabling individuals to practice these values with full awareness, sincerity, and responsibility in their daily lives. In other words, character education is not merely conceptual, but places a strong emphasis on cultivating positive behavioral habits so that moral values can truly be internalized within students.

According to Asmani (in Ary Kristiyani 2014:253-254) character values can be grouped into five main values:

1. Character values in relation to God, namely, a person's thoughts, words, and actions are always based on divine values or religious teachings.
2. Character values in relation to oneself, such as: honesty, responsibility, a healthy lifestyle, logical thinking, and independence.
3. Character values in relation to others, namely, being aware of the rights and obligations of oneself and others, complying with social rules, and being able to empathize and sympathize with others.
4. Character values in relation to the environment, namely, related to social and environmental concerns, such as protecting the environment and avoiding damage.
5. National values, namely, related to placing the interests of the nation and state above personal and group interests. (Julianti., et al., 2025)

Character education can focus on developing core values such as honesty, responsibility, cooperation, and caring. These values form the initial foundation for developing individuals with good morals and positive behavior in the future. Through habituation, role models, and meaningful play activities in the educational environment, children can learn to internalize character values naturally and enjoyably. In early childhood education, various forms of play have different roles and impacts on children's character development.(Yuliantini., 2019) explains that play can be divided into free play, structured play, and symbolic play. These three types of play provide opportunities for children to internalize important ethical and social values such as responsibility, collaboration, and honesty. Free play gives children the freedom to take initiative and learn to make independent choices, while structured play provides them with opportunities to understand rules and maintain discipline.

The world of games is very synonymous with children, because through games they gain the true meaning of learning. (Conaster dalam Nur et al., 2020). Playing is a natural need and a fun activity for children that is done voluntarily, brings happiness, and plays an important role in the development of children's thoughts and feelings (Yasbianti, & Gandana, dkk., 2018, hlm. 14). Moreover, playing is also an effective learning tool because it takes place in a fun and pressure-free atmosphere (Asih, et al., 2025). Through play activities, children not only develop cognitive and emotional abilities, but also build positive character traits such as cooperation, honesty, sportsmanship, discipline, and empathy. The interactions that arise during play help children learn to understand rules, respect friends, and control emotions, making play an important medium in shaping children's character in a natural and enjoyable way.

(Hurlock, E. B., 2013) explains that character development in children is not formed suddenly, but rather through a long process built from repeated habits in their social environment. Every interaction, experience, and daily routine contributes to the formation of behavioral patterns and values that ultimately shape a child's character. Thus, consistent play

activities are not only a means of entertainment, but also an important forum for children to practice positive habits that strengthen their character over time. In line with this view, (Mulyasa., 2012) argues that character education in early childhood should not be taught as a separate activity or as a special, stand-alone material. Effective character education needs to be integrated naturally into play activities and daily activities in early childhood education institutions. Through creative, exploratory, and developmentally appropriate play experiences, values such as hard work, honesty, independence, and responsibility are taught. In a pressure-free play environment, children more easily understand the meaning of these values, while also demonstrating behaviors that reflect positive character in various situations.

From the perspective of early childhood education, (Afnan., et al., 2024) emphasized that the early years of life are a critical phase that determines the formation of a child's character, morality, and social interaction patterns, so that all learning experiences must be designed through meaningful and contextual activities, especially play activities that allow children to internalize values naturally. This thinking is in line with the 2013 Early Childhood Education Curriculum which places four core competencies as the basis for developmental stimulation, where two of them—attitude and social competencies—play a fundamental role in shaping children's behavior and abilities to face various social situations (Afrianti., 2018). Attitudinal competence is related to how children demonstrate positive behavior, such as honesty, responsibility, discipline, and empathy, while social competence is related to the ability to interact, cooperate, resolve simple conflicts, and adapt to peers and adults. In line with that, (Muniroh, 2009) emphasized that games do not only function as a means of recreation, but also as an effective educational medium for fostering social and emotional values, because through games children learn to share, negotiate, respect each other, and build healthy relationships. Thus, regarding holistic character education linked to the principles of the 2013 Curriculum regarding the importance of games in fostering prosocial behavior, it can be understood that play activities are not just spontaneous activities for children, but are the main pedagogical strategy in shaping their personality, independence, and social abilities in a sustainable manner.

According to (Harianja., & Nurihsan., 2014) play activities can also foster empathy and self-control. During role-playing, children practice understanding others' perspectives and learn to interact effectively. This type of activity helps children develop social and emotional sensitivity, which is essential for building harmonious relationships with their environment. In other words, play provides a natural platform for children to learn moral values through direct experience. Symbolic play, or role-playing, is one of the most effective forms of play for instilling character. In this game, children assume social roles such as doctor, teacher, or trader, helping them understand moral responsibility and professional ethics. This process strengthens empathy as children learn to put themselves in others' shoes and develops communication and collaboration skills. Through these activities, character values such as caring, courtesy, and responsibility can be naturally internalized.

Meanwhile, research conducted by (Julianti., et al., 2025) shows that the use of role-playing methods is an effective learning strategy in shaping the character of 4-5 year old children at Dharma Maitreya Kindergarten, because through this activity children get the opportunity to practice positive behavior in a context that resembles real life. In its implementation, the teacher creates a family role-playing atmosphere, where each child has the responsibility to play a certain character according to the agreed plot. For example, the child who plays the father is depicted reading a magazine while waiting for the mother to finish cooking, while the younger siblings play together in the living room without any conflict, which directly fosters the character of sharing and the ability to manage emotions.

On the other hand, the child who plays the older sibling shows curiosity when watching the mother cook, especially regarding the various types of vegetables used, so this activity also fosters curiosity and active involvement in the learning process. Julianti found that children are able to pursue and carry out their respective roles consistently; They work together to keep the drama flowing smoothly, demonstrating that role-playing not only facilitates creativity and imagination, but also strengthens the character of discipline, responsibility, cooperation, and the ability to understand others' perspectives. Thus, this study confirms that role-playing has a significant contribution to the development of children's social-emotional character at an early age.

Research conducted by (Budiarti., 2024) shows that role-playing activities are a highly effective strategy in developing the character of early childhood. In this study, play activities are not only seen as recreational activities, but also as a learning tool that allows children to internalize various character values through direct experience. Children at Pelita Hati Kindergarten in Jelmu Island Hamlet are invited to play various characters such as doctors, teachers, parents, sellers, or other community members, so they learn to understand the responsibilities, duties, and positive attitudes inherent in each role. This process helps children develop empathy by learning to see things from another person's perspective, while also fostering cooperation because they must organize the game flow, share roles, and negotiate with peers. In addition, the values of responsibility and discipline grow naturally when children play roles according to the rules of the game, tidy up equipment, and strive to complete role tasks to completion. Furthermore, children's self-confidence increases when they appear and express themselves in front of their friends, making role-playing activities a safe place for children to explore their abilities and identity. Overall, Erna and Fitriani's research confirms that role-playing not only enriches children's learning experiences, but also serves as an important foundation in the formation of prosocial, resilient, and empowered characters from an early age.

Furthermore, research conducted by (Asih & Yunusi, 2024) shows that children's character can be improved through play activities, one of which is through traditional games that not only provide pleasure but are also rich in cultural, social, and moral values. Play is a basic need for early childhood, and when they engage in traditional games, they not only move or socialize, but also learn to understand rules, respect turns, cooperate, and manage emotions in a real context. Traditional games such as engklek, congklak, petak umpet, or gobak sodor contain various learning aspects that support character development, from practicing honesty, responsibility, sportsmanship, to the ability to empathize. In addition, these games also stimulate the development of logic, creativity, and motor skills needed in everyday life. Through traditional games, children's character formation occurs naturally because it is in accordance with the nature of children who are active, spontaneous, and enjoy exploring their environment. Furthermore, introducing traditional games from an early age not only impacts children's personal development but also contributes to preserving the nation's cultural heritage so that it is not lost to the current of modernization. Thus, traditional games are an important and relevant medium in early childhood education, both for building character and maintaining the sustainability of local cultural values.

Research conducted by (Witasari & Wiyani, 2020) shows that children's character can be effectively formed through meaningful play activities, especially when children engage in traditional games that embody the values of cooperation, discipline, sportsmanship, and social interaction skills. The study explains that children are able to display positive behavior because the play process is carried out through three systematically designed stages and accompanied by active guidance from teachers. During the activities, teachers not only

provide instructions but also directly model positive behaviors such as honesty, patience, mutual assistance, and the ability to manage emotions when winning or losing. This role model is reinforced by attentive guidance, so that children learn through observation and direct experience during play. Under these conditions, children become more willing and able to demonstrate positive behavior because they see models of good behavior, experience them in fun play situations, and gain a concrete understanding of how character values are applied in everyday life.

In a study conducted by (Andini, & Ramiati., 2020) it was found that role-playing can be a learning method that helps children learn responsibility. Through role-playing activities, children are asked to play certain characters, follow the rules of the game, and complete tasks according to their roles. This process provides an opportunity for children to practice responsibility in a fun atmosphere. The research findings are supported by the results of the T-Test statistical test which showed a significance value greater than 0.005. This value indicates that there is a real influence between the use of role-playing methods and the improvement of responsible character in children. Thus, role-playing is not only a fun activity, but it can also help develop children's character, especially in the aspect of responsibility. Another study by (Dariah., 2018) shows that parental involvement through role-playing activities has a significant impact on shaping the character of young children at Al-Munawar Kindergarten. Actively involved parents help instill values such as discipline, independence, cooperation, honesty, and courtesy. Role-playing is an effective method because children learn to imitate positive behavior, communicate, and understand the rules and feelings of others naturally. The study concluded that collaboration between parents and teachers is crucial for strengthening children's character development.

Meanwhile, (Ma'sumah et al., 2022) stated that traditional games are an effort to instill positive character in children from an early age. Character education is crucial from an early age so that children can behave and act in accordance with the values and norms prevailing in society. School is the perfect place to shape character because children spend a lot of time there interacting with teachers and their peers. There is no specific method for instilling character, so teachers are free to choose the method they deem most effective. One method that can be used is integrating traditional games into learning activities, extracurricular activities, or playtime. Besides being fun, traditional games can foster the values of cooperation, sportsmanship, and responsibility, as well as introduce local culture and wisdom. By preserving traditional games, we help shape a generation with good character in accordance with the values of Pancasila. Research conducted by Srikandi et al., 2020, shows that regular play of traditional games like Engklek and Petak Umpet can shape the character of children aged 4–6 years. Through daily play, children experience significant improvements in religious, independent, responsible, cooperative, and nationalistic traits.

Traditional games have been shown to play a powerful role in shaping children's character because, during play, children directly experience social interactions, challenges, rules, and emotional dynamics that naturally foster moral values. As explained by (Agustini, 2020), traditional games—for example, tug-of-war—specifically foster the characteristics of cooperation, cohesiveness, discipline, and the ability to suppress ego for group goals, thus enabling children to learn to value shared decisions and support their peers. Meanwhile, findings by (Maghfiroh, 2020) indicate that various games such as congklak, marbles, hide-and-seek, and dragon snake can stimulate the character of honesty, discipline, creativity, responsibility, perseverance, communication, and empathy, because each game has rules, strategies, and interaction patterns that require children to behave positively to ensure the game runs smoothly. Through these direct experiences, children not only learn how to play

but also understand how to be a sportsman, dare to try, respect friends, control emotions, and complete challenges to the end. Therefore, traditional games become an important vehicle for instilling positive character that is formed not by instructions, but by meaningful experiences in the play activity itself.

Traditional games have been shown to be highly effective in helping shape children's character. Through play, children are directly involved in various social situations, learn to follow rules, collaborate with peers, and experience winning and losing, which naturally fosters moral understanding. During play, children not only move and enjoy themselves, but also learn to recognize their own feelings, understand the actions of others, and adapt to the rules of the game. Research (Wulandari et al., 2022) has shown that the Gempuran game provides numerous opportunities for children to learn to work together in groups, make decisions together, obey teacher instructions, and accept their respective roles within the team. All of these values emerge through concrete activities, such as children stacking pottery shards together, taking turns throwing a ball without competing for turns, or trying to help their friends so their group can maintain the game. These simple situations allow children to practice patience, empathy, and understanding that they cannot play alone without involving others. This finding is reinforced by research (Adi, 2020) which explains that other traditional games such as cublak-cublak suweng, engklek, boi-boian, ular naga, gobag sodor, and petak umpet, can be modified to be more age-appropriate for children while still having strong character education values. Each game has its own value: engklek trains tenacity and balance, cublak-cublak suweng develops honesty and sportsmanship, boi-boian fosters self-confidence and courage, while ular naga helps children practice cooperation, understand rules, and accept the results of the game.

Furthermore, various studies have shown that play plays a significant role in shaping children's character from an early age, as it is through play that children learn directly about rules, social interaction, and emotional control in a fun way. According to (Widiastuni et al., 2021), traditional regional games, such as those from Bali, help children learn cooperation, honesty, and empathy. However, they also highlight that these games are becoming less popular due to the shift in technology. Meanwhile, (Saidah & Setiawan, 2023) emphasize that play in a real-world setting is highly effective in shaping character because children interact directly with their peers, learn to solve small problems, obey rules, and take responsibility for their group. Furthermore, (Rosita et al., 2021) show that games designed using structured methods such as Play Centers can also foster discipline, independence, and a sense of responsibility because children become accustomed to following rules, caring for play equipment, and completing activities thoroughly. Overall, experts agree that games—both traditional and systematically designed—are an important means of building children's character, because it is through play experiences that children grow into individuals who are able to cooperate, be disciplined, responsible, and empathetic without having to be forced.

Various studies show that play plays a significant role in shaping the character of early childhood (Kusmiran, 2022). He explains that the early years of life are a golden period, making play the most effective way to help children learn and develop. Through play, children can understand rules, learn to cooperate, try to solve problems, and naturally develop their emotions. In line with this, (Hapidin & Yenina, 2016) developed a Traditional Educational Game Model that has been proven to foster positive character traits in children, such as discipline, responsibility, and caring. This model demonstrates that well-structured traditional games still provide a fun play atmosphere while also helping children develop good habits and behaviors. These two opinions reinforce the fact that traditional games, whether they occur naturally or are developed as educational models, are an effective means of instilling

character values in children through enjoyable, real-life experiences.

Based on the analysis of various theoretical studies and research findings, it is clear that meaningful play plays a central role in the character formation process of early childhood. Play in early development is not merely an activity to entertain or fill time, but rather the most natural, effective, and appropriate learning medium for children. Through play, children learn in ways they understand—through direct experience, exploration, and social interaction. This makes play an important strategy for instilling moral, social, and emotional values from an early age. The analysis findings indicate that play provides children with the opportunity to concretely experience various character values, such as discipline, responsibility, cooperation, empathy, and the ability to control emotions. When children follow the rules of the game, they learn to abide by agreements and understand consequences. When playing with friends, children develop the ability to cooperate, share, wait their turn, and resolve conflicts constructively. Furthermore, interactions in play also help children understand the feelings of others, foster empathy, and improve social skills, which are important foundations for future character development.

In this context, most games proven effective in character building are traditional games, as they contain elements of culture and local wisdom, allowing children not only to play but also to learn about cultural heritage, values of togetherness, mutual cooperation, and respect for tradition, which are part of their social identity. Traditional games involve intense social interaction, clear rules, physical and cognitive challenges, and group work dynamics that encourage children to spontaneously learn moral and social values. Traditional games require children to interact, negotiate, and make decisions together, thus practicing communication skills, problem-solving, sportsmanship, and self-confidence. Furthermore, traditional games also contain elements of culture and local wisdom, allowing children not only to play but also to learn about cultural heritage, values of togetherness, mutual cooperation, and respect for tradition, which are part of their social identity. The meaning of traditional games is clearly seen in their active and collaborative nature, where children learn to strategize, face failure, bounce back, and understand the perspectives of their peers. This makes the entire process of playing an emotional experience that shapes character. Because children must actively participate, communicate, obey rules, and complete games with their peers, this experience becomes a profound and more effective learning process than instruction-based learning alone. Thus, traditional games are meaningful because they combine fun, learning, cultural preservation, and character building in one integrated activity that provides an important foundation for early childhood social-emotional and moral development.

Research also confirms that character education in early childhood will be much more optimal if integrated into every play activity they engage in. Children at this age are not yet fully able to distinguish appropriate behavior without guidance, so moral learning presented abstractly or in isolation tends to be difficult to understand. Conversely, when these values are embedded in real-life play situations, children can internalize and practice them directly. For example, role-playing can be used to introduce the spirit of mutual assistance, while group play can cultivate the ability to respect others and make decisions together. In this process, teacher guidance and role modeling are crucial factors. Teachers are tasked with guiding play so that it remains meaningful, providing examples of positive behavior, and helping children reflect on their actions. Parental support is also needed to create continuity between the values children learn at school and the family environment. Synergy between teachers, parents, and a conducive play environment allows for more effective character formation in children and in accordance with their developmental needs.

Thus, it can be concluded that meaningful play not only supports cognitive and motor

development but also forms a strong foundation for character formation. Early childhood, as a golden period for child development, should be optimally utilized by providing structured, enjoyable, and value-rich play activities. Integrating character education into play activities enables children to grow into individuals with noble morals, independence, responsibility, the ability to work together, and integrity from an early age. Therefore, meaningful play deserves to be a primary strategy in efforts to build a generation that is not only intelligent but also has strong character.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the theoretical study and discussion, it can be concluded that meaningful play activities play a very important role in character formation in early childhood. Play serves not only as a means of entertainment, but also as an educational medium that allows children to learn moral, social, and emotional values naturally. Through play, children learn to understand rules, cooperate, respect others, and develop empathy and responsibility. Character education in early childhood needs to be integrated into every play activity so that positive values can be instilled from an early age. The involvement of educators and parents in creating a safe, fun, and educational play environment is a crucial factor for effective character formation. Thus, meaningful play can be a primary learning strategy in supporting the growth of a generation with noble character, independence, and integrity.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Adi, B. S., & Muthmainah, M. (2020). Implementasi Permainan Tradisional Dalam Pembelajaran Anak Usia Dini Sebagai Pembentuk Karakter Bangsa. *Jurnal Pendidikan Anak*. <Https://Journal. Uny. Ac. Id/V3/Jpa>, 33-39.

Afrianti, N. (2018). Permainan Tradisional, Alternatif Media Pengembangan Kompetensi Sosial-Emosi Anak Usia Dini. *Cakrawala Dini: Jurnal Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini*, 5(1).

Agustini, F. (2020). Integrasi Nilai Karakter Melalui Permainan Tradisional Tarik Tambang Dalam Pembelajaran Ipa. *Jurnal Ilmiah Sekolah Dasar*, 4(2), 114-120.

Ahmad Roffi'udin Dan Darmiyati Zuhdi, (2015). Pendidikan Bahasa Dan Sastra Indonesia Di Kelas Tinggi,Malang : UNM

Andini, Y. T., & Ramiati, E. (2020). Penggunaan Metode Bermain Peran Guna Meningkatkan Karakter Tanggung Jawab Anak. *Jurnal Ilmiah Potensia*, 5(1), 8-15.

Asih, R. A. P., & Rizqi, A. M. (2025). Implementasi Pembiasaan Aturan Bermain dalam Kegiatan Sehari-Hari Sebagai Upaya Membentuk Karakter Disiplinanak Usia 4-5 Tahun. *Atthiflah: Journal Of Early Childhood Islamiceducation*, 12(1), 62-72

Azrasabiy, H., & Gery, M. I. (2024). *Peningkatan Karakter Siswa melalui Pendekatan Pembelajaran Aktif dengan Metode Bermain Peran di MI Muhammadiyah Lebaksiuh 1 Sukabumi*. 2, 2684–2696.

Budiarti, E. (2024). *Implementasi Kemampuan Berbahasa Melalui Kegiatan Bermain Peran Dalam Menumbuhkan Karakter Anak Usia Dini*. 142–153.

Dariah, N. (2018). Peran Orang Tua Dalam Membentuk Karakter Anak Usia Dini Melalui Bermain Peran (Study Kasus Di Kelompok Bermain Al-Munawar). *Comm-Edu (Community Education Journal)*, 1(3), 154-164.

Habibu, P. S., Wondal, R., & Alhadad, B. (2020). Kajian Strategi Implementasi Pendidikan Karakter Anak Usia Dini. *Cahaya Paud*, 2(2), 383414.

Harianja, S. I., & Nurihsan, A. J. (2016). Efektivitas Metode Bermain Peran Dalam Meningkatkan Kemampuan Empati Anak Usia Dini. *Utile: Jurnal Kependidikan*, 2(1),

59-71.

Asih, S. W., & El-Yunusi, M. Y. M. (2024). Permainan Tradisional Dalam Membentuk Karakter Anak Usia Dini. *Ceria: Jurnal Program Studi Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini*, 13(1), 150-160.

Hapidin, H., & Yenina, Y. (2016). Pengembangan Model Permainan Tradisional Dalam Membangun Karakter Anak Usia Dini. *Jpud-Jurnal Pendidikan Usia Dini*, 10(2), 201-212.

Hurlock, E. B. (2013). Psikologi Perkembangan: Suatu Pendekatan Sepanjang Rentang Kehidupan.

Indriani, L., & Khairiah, D. (2023). Pentingnya Pendidikan Karakter Pada Anak Usia Dini. *Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Konseling (Jpdk)*, 5(1), 2342-2346

Julianti, L., & Kurnia, N. (2025). Penggunaan Metode Bermain Peran Dalam Membentuk Karakter Anak Usia 4-5 Tahun Di Tk Dharma Maitreya Bengkalis. *Jurnal Integrasi Pengetahuan Disiplin*, 6(1).

Julianti, L., & Kurnia, N. (2025). Penggunaan Metode Bermain Peran Dalam Membentuk Karakter Anak Usia 4-5 Tahun Di Tk Dharma Maitreya Bengkalis. *Jurnal Integrasi Pengetahuan Disiplin*, 6(1).

Khadijah, M. A., & Jf, N. Z. (2021). *Perkembangan sosial anak usia dini teori dan strateginya*. Merdeka kreasi group : Medan

Kusmiran. (2020). Permainan Tradisional Dalam Membentuk Karakter Anak Usia Dini. *Journal Of Innovation Rerch And Knowledge*, 1(12)

Maghfiroh, Y. (2020). Peran Permainan Tradisional Dalam Membentuk Karakter Anak Usia 4-6 Tahun. *Jurnal Pendidikan Anak*, 6(1), 1-9.

Mahmud, S. N., Ibrahim, S. A., Puspita, C., & Haji, S. (2025). *Hubungan Pengetahuan Orang Tua Dengan Kejadian Temper Tantrum Pada Anak Usia Prasekolah Di Tk Permata Kecamatan Limboto The Relationship Between Parental Knowledge And Temper Tantrums In Preschool Children At Permata Kindergarten , Limboto District*. 8(11), 6958-6969. <https://doi.org/10.56338/jks.v8i11.9188>

Ma'sumah, M. S., Nurwahidin, M., & Sudjarwo, S. (2022). Permainan Tradisional Daerah Sebagai Sarana Penguatan Karakter Siswa Sekolah Dasar. *Journal Of Innovation Research And Knowledge*, 2(6), 2587-2596.

Mulyasa, E. (2012). Manajemen Pendidikan Karakter. Bandung: Pt Remaja Rosdakarya.

Muniroh, S. M. (2009). Pengembangan Kecerdasan Interpersonal Anak. *Jurnal Penelitian*, 6(1), 1-16.

Moh. Nazir. 2014. Metode Penelitian. Bogot: Ghalia Indonesia.

Nur, L., Hafina, A., & Rusmana, N. (2020). Kemampuan Kognitif Anak Usia Dini Dalam Pembelajaran Akuatik. *Scholaria: Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Kebudayaan*, 10(1), 42-50. <https://doi.org/10.24246/jjs.2020.v10.i1.p42-50>

Pendidikan, P. M., Republik, K., Nomor, I., Kurikulum, T., Anak, P., & Dini, U. (2019). *No Title. Ii(2)*, 200-212.

Pramesti, H., Almarda, E. B., & Nugrahanta, G. A. (2025). Peran Cooking Class Sebagai Integrasi Aspek Practical Life Montessori Dalam Penguatan Karakter Tanggung Jawab Sosial Siswa Upper Class. *Pendas: Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan Dasar*, 10(04).

Rahayu, S., Fitri, R., Makassar, U. I., Makassar, U. I., & Makassar, U. I. (2024). *Implementasi Pendidikan Karakter Dalam Perkembangan Sosial Emosional Anak Tk*. 2(2), 212-222.

Rosita, R., Alawiyah, N., & Diananda, A. (2021). Pendidikan Karakter Anak Usia Dini Dalam Kegiatan Bermain Sentra. *Jecies: Journal Of Early Childhood Islamic Education Study*, 2(1), 1-17.

Saidah, N. Z. B., & Setiawan, U. (2023). Permainan Tradisionaldalam Membentuk Karakter Anak Usia Dini Di Kampung Tegal Heas. *Jurnal Pengabdian Masyarakat: Pemberdayaan, Inovasi Dan Perubahan*, 3(3).

Srikandi, S., Suardana, I. M., & Sulthoni, S. (2020). *Membentuk Karakter Anak Usia Dini Melalui Permainan Tradisional* (Doctoral Dissertation, State University Of Malang).

Widiastuti, N. M. D., & Kusuma, P. S. D. (2021). Kajian Permainan Tradisional Bali Untuk Membantu Pembentukan Karakter Dan Keterampilan Sosial Anak. *Segara Widya: Jurnal Penelitian Seni*, 9(2), 98-105.

Witasari, O., & Wiyani, N. A. (2020). Permainan Tradisional Untuk Membentuk Karakter Anak Usia Dini: Studi Pada Tk Diponegoro 140 Rawalo Banyumas. *Jeced: Journal Of Early Childhood Education And Development*, 2(1), 52-63.

Wulandari, W. (2022). Penanaman Nilai-Nilai Karakter Anak Usia Dini Melalui Permainan Tradisional “Gempuran”. *Jurnal Anak Usia Dini Holistik Integratif (Audhi)*, 4(2), 56-63.

Yasbianti, M. P., & Gandana, G. (2018). Alat Permainan Edukatif Untuk Anak Usia Dini (Teori Dan Konsep Dasar). Tasikmalaya: Kestagria Siliwangi Publisher

Yuliantini, S. (2019). Permainan Dan Bermain Di Paud. *Primearly: Jurnal Kajian Pendidikan Dasar Dan Anak Usia Dini*, 2(2), 200-212

Zalnur, M. (2024). *Pembentukan Kepribadian Muslim Anak Di Masa Golden Age Melalui Pendidikan Profetik Keluarga Di Era Digital*. 23(1), 130–140. <Https://Doi.Org/10.24014/Af.V23i1>.