



The potential for independent behaviour of children aged 4-5 with play methods

Muhammad Adji Pangestu✉

Universitas Negeri Jakarta, Indonesia

Abstract

The aim of this research is to successfully find out the playing method, to create a sense of independence in children. Independence is one aspect of character formation that is very important in early childhood, especially in the age range of four to five years, but in Indonesia there are still many children who have not achieved independence. This can be caused by several things, such as parents who are too loving and pampering their children, following all the wishes and desires of children and helping if children cannot do something. This study uses a literature review research method with qualitative content analysis using literature from various journals, such as Google Scholar, Sinta, DOAJ, Garuda, and so on. The results of the study show that the play method has a significant role in developing children's independence, including role play, constructive play, outdoor activities, and traditional games. Each type of game makes a unique contribution to developing different aspects of independence, such as decision making, problem solving, and responsibility. However, the implementation of the play method in Indonesia still faces challenges, especially related to the availability of parents' time for their children. This study concludes that the integration of various play methods in early childhood learning, supported by the active role of teachers and parents, is very important to optimize the development of children's independence.

Keywords: *Child Independence; Play Methods; Child Development*

✉ Corresponding author: Muhammad Adji Pangestu

Email Address: muhammad.adji@unj.ac.id

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Introduction

Independence is a crucial component of character development during early childhood, particularly for children aged 0 to 6 years (Khairi, 2018). Children develop and actively explore various fundamental skills during this period. The skills include social, emotional, and cognitive dimensions that play a crucial role in developing an independent attitude. Independence is characterized by a child's capacity to make autonomous decisions, adjust to novel circumstances, and perform daily activities without dependence on adult support. Independence during this period significantly enhances a child's capacity to perform routine tasks and fosters essential characteristics and skills that serve as a foundation for their future lives (Fadilah et al., 2021).

Some children have yet to attain independence skills. Several factors may contribute to this issue, including overly affectionate parents, excessive indulgence of children's desires, and constant assistance when children struggle with tasks. The fundamental parental attitude demonstrates an overabundance of affection. This action will inhibit children's development of independence (Nurnaningsih & Zahrati, 2020). Numerous studies have demonstrated the significance of fostering independence from a young age. Children possessing independence skills typically exhibit positive traits, including self-confidence, discipline, and enhanced resilience in facing challenges. Santrock (2014) indicates that independent children exhibit greater confidence in social interactions, enhanced emotional resilience, and increased motivation for learning. The lack of independence in early childhood may lead to increased dependence on parents, diminished problem-solving abilities, and reduced self-confidence. The development of independence should be a primary focus in early childhood education.

Concrete experiences and social interactions significantly influence early childhood cognitive development. Concrete experiences, including participation in household chores and engagement with educational games, enhance children's comprehension of responsibility and decision-making. Furthermore, language development through active communication with adults and peers significantly contributes to fostering children's independence. Children capable of articulating their thoughts and desires verbally generally exhibit greater confidence in initiating actions and addressing problems (T. E. Putri et al., 2022). Children aged 4-5 years who exhibit independence possess remarkable traits, including self-confidence, discipline, a strong enthusiasm for learning, the courage to pursue achievement, and proficiency in problem-solving, attributed to their enrollment in a critical developmental phase (Aeni & Wulandari, 2023).

Independence serves as a crucial foundation for children, fostering confidence in their ability to confront challenges (Sany et al., 2022). Encouraging an independent attitude in children from an early age is crucial, as it facilitates the natural development of independence in accordance with their developmental stages (Hermawan, 2024). Children exhibit independence through various responsibilities, including self-bathing, neat eating, dressing and undressing without assistance, tying shoelaces, and organizing their belongings by the ages of 4 to 5 years. Independence is intricately linked to children's abilities in problem-solving, initiative, decision-making, daily challenges, as well as resilience, discipline, and comprehension of responsibility. A method to promote independence in early childhood is through play (Puspitasari, 2021).

The role-playing method effectively enhances the independence of preschool children. Role-playing can assist less independent children in discovering their identity and comprehending the emotions of others, ultimately leading to the acquisition of new behaviors (Utami et al., 2017). Research indicates that the role-playing method implemented at the Pusat PAUD Islam Terpadu Al-Ishlah has effectively enhanced children's independent behavior (Furqoni & Winarno, 2021). This method engages children in imitating adult roles in specific contexts, such as market shopping or office work, enabling them to learn decision-making and task completion independently.

Another instance of fostering children's independence is through project activities. This method aligns well with the characteristics of early childhood learning, particularly through play (S. U. Putri & Taqiudin, 2021). The implementation of the project method resulted in a 40% increase in children's independence following its application. Approximately 86% of children aged 4 to 5 years attain independence, as indicated by instruments measuring children's independence. Project-based learning enhances children's cognitive and social-emotional skills (Sany et al., 2022). While existing research highlights the enhancement of children's independence through role play and project methods, additional studies are required to explore

the potential for fostering independent attitudes in children aged 4-5 through a broader spectrum of play methods. There is a lack of research on the potential for children's independence through alternative play methods. Additionally, the limitation is evident in the research factors that affect the independent attitudes of children aged 4-5.

Considering the significance of fostering independence during early childhood, it is essential to enhance efforts in identifying and applying the most effective strategies. This study aims to analyze the potential for independent attitudes in children aged 4-5 through a broader range of play methods. Understanding the most intense forms of play may enable teachers and parents to foster a supportive learning environment, thereby facilitating children's development into independent, confident individuals prepared to confront future challenges.

Methods

This study employs library research as its methodology, involving a review of pertinent literature to explore the potential for independent behavior in children aged 4-5 years through play methods. This study employs a qualitative methodology with a descriptive framework, aiming to delineate and analyze theories and prior findings pertinent to the development of independence in early childhood. This study's data sourced from a range of written materials, including books, scientific journals, articles, theses, dissertations, and other relevant documents. The data collection process involves the searching, selection, and review of pertinent documents, encompassing both printed and digital formats. The data is analyzed through content analysis techniques, specifically by identifying key concepts related to play methods and children's independent behavior, which are then systematically organized and concluded to provide a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between the two. This study does not entail direct data collection in the field; rather, it emphasizes conceptual understanding and synthesis from diverse existing sources. The analysis focuses on: (1) definitions and indicators of early childhood responsibility; (2) types of play methods employed; and (3) the formation of independent attitudes through play methods. The analysis results are synthesized to draw a comprehensive conclusion.

Result and Discussion

The play significantly contributes to fostering independence in children aged 4-5. This discussion aims to explore how different play methods can enhance independence. In these contexts, play functions as a mechanism through which children acquire vital skills, including independent decision-making, self-directed problem-solving, and personal accountability for their choices, without complete dependence on adults. The play method enhances elements of independence by examining the potential for independent attitudes produced by each approach (Sartinah & Hidayah, 2023). Different categories of games can serve as an effective method to accomplish this objective. Role play offers children opportunities to comprehend and investigate diverse social contexts. Children can acquire an understanding of responsibility, decision-making, and problem-solving by engaging in role-playing activities, such as those of a doctor, teacher, or parent. A child learning the role of a doctor will observe to ascertain the necessary actions based on the patient's symptoms. This activity aids children in comprehending diverse perspectives, which is a crucial element in the development of empathy. Empathy enhances children's capacity to establish positive social relationships in the future (Jacob, 2023). Additionally, understanding others' perspectives enhances children's communication skills, which are crucial in multiple contexts (Nuryati et al., 2023).

Role-playing offers numerous benefits that extend beyond social development to include cognitive development as well. When a child assumes the role of a teacher, they not only imitate the behaviors associated with teaching but also formulate plans or strategies for instructing their peers. This activity promotes the utilization of imagination and understanding of the environment. This process facilitates children's understanding of planning, decision-making, and result evaluation. In early childhood education, the implementation of structured role play enhances children's learning experiences, fostering greater engagement and activity in the learning process (Rosmaya et al., 2019).

It is essential for educators to effectively incorporate role-playing techniques into the early childhood education curriculum. In addition to role-playing, constructive play significantly

influences the development of children's independence. Engaging in activities like constructing towers from blocks or designing various structures enhances critical thinking, planning, and perseverance skills. When children encounter failure, such as with a collapsed tower, they are encouraged to attempt again using a different strategy. The process indicates that failure constitutes an integral aspect of learning. Moreover, constructive play fosters cooperation and communication among peers, thereby enhancing their social experience. Research indicates that constructive play enhances cognitive abilities and bolsters children's creativity (Malau & Handayani, 2022). In constructive play, children frequently encounter challenges related to the construction of taller or more stable structures. These challenges compel individuals to engage in strategic thinking and to base their decisions on logical reasoning. Additionally, they learn to overcome failure. When a structure collapses, children are required to assess the erroneous elements and seek alternative solutions. This process imparts perseverance and the capacity to recover from default (Collins, 2019).

Outdoor play serves as an effective approach to child development. In outdoor environments, children are afforded the opportunity to engage with their surroundings, assess risks, and independently address challenges. For example, while engaging in playground activities, individuals must identify optimal strategies to overcome physical challenges, such as climbing. This experience enhances their confidence in confronting challenges and managing risks. Additionally, outdoor play fosters creativity by allowing children to explore various methods of engaging with nature during their activities. Studies indicate that participation in outdoor activities can enhance motor, social, and cognitive skills significantly. Outdoor activities offer diverse sensory stimuli and engage more active body movements than indoor activities (Husna et al., 2023).

The outdoor environment offers opportunities to engage in various activities, including tree climbing, sand play, and butterfly chasing. These activities enhance physical coordination and offer learning experiences regarding the surrounding environment (Alvina et al., 2024). Outdoor play contributes to enhanced mental resilience. Children who navigate physical challenges, such as traversing a small bridge or ascending a short wall, acquire skills to manage fear and enhance self-confidence. Such experiences are crucial for developing courage and mental resilience in the future. Moreover, outdoor play has the potential to alleviate stress in children. Studies indicate that interaction with nature promotes calmness, enhances focus, and contributes to the overall happiness of children.

The Montessori method is applicable through play to foster greater independence in children. Montessori demonstrates that engagement in daily life significantly enhances independence. This method can enhance independence by 45% for the experimental group relative to the control group. Montessori education encourages children to independently perform simple tasks, such as putting on shoes or cleaning up toys, thereby enhancing their sense of responsibility and self-confidence (Kamil & Asriyani, 2023). In addition to Montessori, various studies have implemented play-based tasks to enhance independent learning among children aged four to five years. Play activities facilitate children's ability to make choices, establish trust, and cooperate with peers (Marlina, Yuniarti, 2023). The games facilitate the development of social interactions, including group dynamics and role play, and are beneficial for enhancing children's social and independent skills (Nurhusnaina et al., 2024).

Moreover, traditional games significantly contribute to the development of children's character and social skills. Engaging in traditional games like congklak, hide-and-seek, or gobak sodor fosters cooperation while simultaneously enhancing decision-making skills and accountability for one's choices (Farida et al., 2025). The utilization of contemporary educational play tools has demonstrated effectiveness in enhancing independence and discipline in early childhood (Muslihan & Akbar, 2021). The educational play method facilitates interactive and independent learning for children, offering real-life experiences that enhance cognitive development. The benefits of play for fostering independence in early childhood are well-documented and significant.

Children can explore their boundaries and develop solutions to various challenges through engaging experiences. During construction, it is determined that failure constitutes the initial step toward success. The activity fosters a resilient mindset and promotes perseverance in the face of challenges. Engaging in role play enables children to develop critical thinking skills and

make independent decisions. This facilitates the analysis of choices and the assumption of responsibility for actions (Maladjai et al., 2025). Outdoor play with increased freedom facilitates the development of initiative and confidence in children, independent of direct adult supervision. Teachers and parents are essential in fostering a supportive environment to enhance the benefits of play in promoting independence. Teachers in educational settings can incorporate various forms of play into instructional activities. Playing serves as a method for imparting social values, whereas construction activities facilitate cognitive and motor development. Parents can provide children with free time and space for play at home, while also engaging them in daily activities that involve minor responsibilities. Simple activities like organizing toys or assisting in food preparation can enhance children's sense of responsibility and foster their independence. Outdoor play provides children with enhanced opportunities to cultivate initiative and confidence independently of direct adult intervention (Iskandar et al., 2023).

Teachers and parents play a crucial role in establishing an environment that maximizes the benefits of play, thereby enhancing children's independence. Educators can incorporate various forms of play into educational activities, including role-playing games to promote social values and constructive games to develop cognitive and motor skills. Parents can provide children with time and space for free play at home, while also engaging them in routine household tasks that involve minor responsibilities, such as tidying toys or assisting in meal preparation. These activities enhance children's sense of security and boost their confidence (Fitriani et al., 2023). Nonetheless, various obstacles continue to impede the implementation of play methods aimed at fostering children's independence in Indonesia. Teachers and parents often prioritize academic achievement over the significance of play in developing character and independence. Research indicates that a limited number of educators possess a comprehensive understanding of integrating play to foster independence (Maghfiroh et al., 2020). Highlighting the necessity for training to effectively employ play as a learning tool. Furthermore, the role of parents is significant. In certain instances, working parents often substitute children's playtime with technology or electronic devices, despite the fact that direct interaction with the environment and peers is significantly more beneficial for their development of independence. Traditional games play a significant role in fostering children's independence. Games like congklak, hide and seek, and gobak sodor facilitate the development of cooperation, decision-making, and accountability in children. Contemporary educational games serve as an effective medium within the play method.

They offer practical experiences that enhance cognitive development and facilitate interactive and independent learning in children. The integration of traditional and modern games provides children with a broader range of advantages. Early childhood development (ECD) is a critical component of education, providing the foundational basis for children's growth and development. In this context, play serves as an effective learning method, enabling children to acquire various social, emotional, and cognitive skills in an engaging manner. Teachers and the family environment serve as primary learning resources in early childhood, with positive interactions enhancing the quality of learning (Fadilah et al., 2021). The Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia (2022) underscores the significance of high-quality early childhood development (ECD) services to guarantee that each child receives an optimal learning experience (Anonymous, 2023).

Challenges persist in the implementation of the play method concerning quality independence potential, particularly regarding the availability of parents' time for their children. Many parents find it challenging to manage their children's talkativeness or reluctance to engage in independent activities at home. Furthermore, parents often lack sufficient time for their children due to demanding work commitments (Meisaroh & Salim, 2024). These limitations may hinder children's capacity to explore and learn effectively in both home and school environments. Consequently, it is essential to provide training for teachers and to enhance parents' understanding of the significance of play as a learning instrument. Collaboration among educators, parents, and governmental bodies is essential for fostering a learning environment conducive to optimal early childhood development, particularly through the promotion of independent development in children via play-based methods.

Conclusion

The play methods demonstrate significant potential in fostering children's independence. Various forms of play, including role-play, constructive play, outdoor play, and traditional games, facilitate the development of decision-making skills, responsibility, and resilience in children. Play activities serve not only as sources of enjoyment but also as effective means for fostering independence. Additional research is required to identify various factors that may facilitate or impede the development of children's independence through play. It is essential for educators and parents to acknowledge the significant advantages of play and incorporate it into children's daily activities. Creating a supportive environment in which parents consistently accompany their children during play and allow them the freedom to explore fosters the development of independent, confident individuals prepared to confront future challenges. Play activities appear straightforward; however, they significantly influence the development of children's character and skills, fostering resilience and independence.

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