



Toilet Training Fosters Self-Confidence and Independent Habits in Early Childhood

Eva Zulita¹✉, Siti Mayang Sari², Mhd. Syafii

Bina Bangsa University, Banda Aceh, Indonesia^{(1), (2), (3)}

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✉ Corresponding author:
[emailcorresponding@gmail.com]

Abstract

Toilet training is an important developmental milestone in early childhood that supports the development of self-confidence and independent habits. This study aims to examine the role of toilet training in fostering independence, self-control, and emotional development in young children. The study employed a qualitative descriptive approach through observations and interviews with early childhood educators and parents to explore changes in children's behavior during the toilet training process. The results show that implementing toilet training in accordance with children's developmental stages can enhance self-confidence, encourage independence in maintaining personal hygiene, and foster responsibility for self-care activities. Supportive guidance and positive reinforcement from adults significantly influence children's success and emotional readiness in undergoing toilet training. Toilet training involves both the acquisition of physical skills and an educational process that contributes to character development and the formation of independent habits in early childhood through the collaborative roles of parents and teachers.

Keywords: *Toilet Training, Self Confidence, Independence, Early Childhood*

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1. INTRODUCTION

Early Childhood Education (ECE) is a fundamental stage in human development that encompasses cognitive, social, emotional, moral, and physical aspects. At this stage, children begin to recognize themselves and their environment, as well as develop basic habits that will influence their future lives (Wijiati et al., 2025). One important form of habituation in ECE is fostering independence, particularly in self-care activities. Independence in early childhood can be developed through simple daily activities, one of which is toilet training (Devega et al., 2022). Toilet training is a learning process that helps children recognize, control, and manage urination and defecation independently (Priyanti, 2025). This process not only focuses on children's physical abilities but also contributes to the development of self-confidence, responsibility, and discipline. Early childhood is a fundamental stage in human development, during which important life skills related to independence, self-regulation, and social-emotional competence begin to form. One key developmental factor during this period is toilet training, which involves a child's ability to manage personal hygiene and bodily functions independently. Toilet training is not only a biological maturation process, but also a complex

developmental task that integrates physical readiness, cognitive awareness, emotional regulation, and social interaction (Wijiati et al., 2025).

Children who successfully undergo toilet training tend to exhibit higher self-confidence because they are able to perform important activities without relying on others. Conversely, inappropriate toilet training practices, such as abuse or punishment, can lead to anxiety, fear, and decreased self-confidence. Teachers and parents play a crucial role in supporting the toilet training process in a positive and developmentally appropriate manner (Anak et al., 2024). Through structured routines, consistent guidance, and positive reinforcement, children learn to recognize body cues, make independent decisions, and assume responsibility for self care behaviors. These experiences support the development of self-control, emotional stability, and adaptive behavior, which are critical to a child's readiness to participate in formal learning environments. The effectiveness of toilet training is greatly influenced by its appropriateness to the child's developmental stage and the quality of adult support provided. Inappropriate practices, such as coercive methods or premature training, can lead to emotional distress, anxiety, or rejection, which can negatively impact a child's psychological well-being. Toilet training should be approached as an educational process that prioritizes child-centered strategies and emotional readiness (Priyanti, 2025).

Toilet training has received limited empirical attention in early childhood education research, particularly regarding its contribution to character formation and the development of independent habits. This study explores the collaborative role between parents and early childhood educators in implementing developmentally appropriate toilet training (Diyanti, 2023). Addressing this gap is crucial for strengthening pedagogical practices in early childhood education settings. This study aimed to examine the role of toilet training in fostering independence, self-control, and emotional development in young children. Using a qualitative descriptive approach, this study explored behavioral changes during the toilet training process and highlighted the importance of supportive guidance and positive reinforcement from parents and teachers (Sianturi et al., 2025); (Sari et al., 2023). The findings are expected to contribute to the development of evidence-based best practices for implementing toilet training as an integral component of early childhood education today.

2. METHODS

This study used a qualitative descriptive research design to explore the role of toilet training in fostering self-confidence, independence, and emotional development in early childhood. A qualitative approach was chosen to gain an in-depth understanding of changes in children's behavior and the experiences of parents and early childhood educators during the toilet training process. Participants consisted of young children aged 3–5 years, their parents, and early childhood educators from selected early childhood education institutions. Participants were selected using purposive sampling, with the criteria being that the children were currently undergoing or had recently completed the toilet training process. Parents and educators directly involved in guiding toilet training activities were included to provide a comprehensive perspective.

Data were collected through non-participant observation and semi-structured interviews. Observations focused on children's behavior during toilet training activities, including independence, emotional responses, and self-care practices. Interviews were conducted with parents and teachers to gather information about toilet training strategies, challenges encountered, and perceived impacts on children's self-confidence and independence. Interview results were used to ensure data accuracy. Data were analyzed using thematic analysis. Observation and interview data were transcribed and categorized to identify recurring patterns and themes related to independence, emotional readiness, and character development. Data triangulation between observations and interviews was applied to increase the credibility and trustworthiness of the research findings (Sugiono, 2016).

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Role of Toilet Training in Fostering Self-Confidence

The findings of this study indicate that toilet training plays a significant role in enhancing self-confidence in early childhood. Observational data revealed that children who were guided through consistent and developmentally appropriate toilet training routines demonstrated increased confidence in managing their bodily needs independently. Children showed positive emotional

expressions, such as pride and satisfaction, after successfully completing toilet-related tasks without adult assistance. These findings align with developmental theories suggesting that mastery of self-care skills contributes to a positive self-concept and emotional security in young children. From the perspective of parents and early childhood educators, toilet training was perceived as a critical moment in building children's confidence (Fadhilah & Wulandari, 2025). Supportive verbal encouragement and acknowledgment of children's efforts were identified as key factors in strengthening children's belief in their own abilities. This reinforces the notion that self-confidence in early childhood is not solely derived from task completion but is shaped through meaningful interactions with supportive adults.

Findings show that toilet training, implemented gradually and consistently, can foster self-confidence in young children. Children who were initially hesitant and afraid to use the toilet independently gradually became more confident and self-assured after receiving positive guidance from teachers and parents. Children demonstrated increased independence in several areas, such as going to the toilet without assistance, undressing and dressing themselves, cleaning themselves, and washing their hands after using the toilet. Successfully performing these activities gave children a sense of pride and confidence in their abilities. Teachers and parents reported that praise, motivation, and patience significantly influenced the success of toilet training. Children who were not scolded for making mistakes learned more quickly and were less afraid to try again. Consistent routines and schedules helped children understand the habits they needed to practice.

Toilet Training and the Development of Independent Habits

Toilet training encourages the formation of independent habits related to personal hygiene and self-care. Children gradually develop routines such as recognizing body signals, using the toilet independently, washing their hands, and maintaining hygiene after using the toilet. These behaviors reflect the development of autonomy and responsibility, which are essential components of developing independent habits in childhood. Interviews with parents and teachers highlight that consistency in routines and clear guidance are crucial in strengthening these habits. When toilet training is integrated into daily routines in the classroom and at home, children are more likely to internalize hygiene practices as part of their daily behavior. These findings support previous studies emphasizing the importance of routine-based learning in early childhood education.

Emotional Regulation and Adult Support in Toilet Training

Another important finding from this study relates to the role of adult support in regulating children's emotions during toilet training. Children who received patient guidance, emotional reassurance, and positive reinforcement showed lower levels of anxiety and resistance. Pressure- or punishment-based approaches were reported to cause emotional discomfort, reluctance, and delayed progress. These results underscore the importance of viewing toilet training as an educational and emotional process, not simply the acquisition of physical skills. Collaboration between parents and teachers emerged as a crucial factor in ensuring consistency and emotional security for children. This collaboration allows children to experience toilet training as a learning process that supports and respects their developmental readiness and emotional needs.

Implications for Early Childhood Education

Toilet training can be effectively utilized as a medium for character education in early childhood. Teachers foster habits of independence, responsibility, and self-confidence; toilet training contributes to children's holistic development. Early childhood learning is encouraged to adopt child-centered toilet training practices that emphasize emotional readiness, positive reinforcement, and collaboration with parents. In the context of early childhood pedagogy, these results highlight the need for educators to integrate toilet training into character-building programs rather than treating it as a separate or purely practical activity (Sianturi et al., 2025). This approach aligns with contemporary early childhood education frameworks that emphasize the integration of life skills into everyday learning experiences.

Table 1. Summary of Interview Findings on Toilet Training in Early Childhood

| No | Theme | Key Findings | Indicators | Source |
|----|--|---|---|--------------------|
| 1 | Toilet Training and Self-Confidence | Toilet training is perceived as an important process in building children's self-confidence | Children show pride, confidence, and initiative after successfully using the toilet independently | Parents, Educators |
| 2 | Development of Independent Habits | Toilet training supports the formation of independent habits related to personal hygiene | Children recognize bodily signals, use the toilet independently, clean themselves, and wash hands without reminders | Parents, Educators |
| 3 | Supportive Guidance and Positive Reinforcement | Supportive adult guidance and positive reinforcement facilitate successful toilet training | Use of praise, encouragement, patience, and emotional reassurance reduces anxiety and resistance | Parents, Educators |
| 4 | Emotional Readiness in Toilet Training | Children's emotional readiness influences the success of toilet training | Children feel comfortable, calm, and motivated during toilet training activities | Parents, Educators |
| 5 | Parent-Teacher Collaboration | Collaboration between parents and educators enhances consistency and effectiveness of toilet training | Consistent strategies and communication between home and school support children's progress | Parents, Educators |

Toilet training is a form of life skills learning that is essential for early childhood. Through toilet training, children learn to recognize bodily signals, practice self-control, and take responsibility for personal hygiene. This process indirectly contributes to the development of children's self-confidence. Self-confidence emerges when children feel capable of doing things independently and receive positive reinforcement from their environment. When children successfully use the toilet on their own, they experience a sense of achievement that strengthens their belief in themselves. This aligns with early childhood social-emotional development theory, which emphasizes that success in simple tasks can reinforce a positive self-concept. Independent habituation through toilet training also helps children develop discipline and responsibility. Children learn that maintaining personal hygiene is an obligation that should be performed without dependence on others. Thus, toilet training functions not only as physical training but also as a means of shaping independent and self-confident character.

This toilet is used for cleaning the toilet, cleaning the toilet, and cleaning and drying the toilet. You can use the toilet to clean the toilet and use it as an emotional toilet. Parents and educators report that successful toilet training is characterized by a child's confidence, willingness to take initiative, and reduced dependence on adults. Successful toilet training is closely linked to emotional readiness and supportive adult involvement (Payung & Pekanbaru, n.d.). Children who receive positive reinforcement, patience, and encouragement demonstrate greater motivation and emotional comfort throughout the process. Consistency between home and school practices also emerged as an important factor contributing to successful outcomes. These findings suggest that successful toilet training is determined not only by a child's physical readiness but also by emotional support and collaborative efforts between parents (Bahar & Sundi, 2022).

This statement reflects a holistic and sociocultural paradigm, which emphasizes that successful toilet training is shaped by the child's physical readiness alongside emotional support and collaborative involvement from parents and teachers. Sociocultural Paradigm (Vygotskian Perspective), "*The emphasis on emotional support and collaboration between parents and teachers demonstrates that child development is influenced by social interactions and the learning environment*". Adults act as scaffolds, helping children achieve independence at their developmental stage (Harita et al., 2022).

Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, supportive parenting as an educational practice, aligns with the concept of scaffolding within the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). In the context of toilet training, parents provide gradual assistance, guidance, and emotional support to children to perform self-care tasks they cannot yet perform independently. Through consistent interaction and

encouragement, parental support helps children internalize self-regulation and autonomy, leading to independent toilet use behavior (Juhari et al., 2024).

Praising successful toilet training reflects an educational practice that supports and strengthens autonomy and emotional development in childhood. Praising successful toilet training has been shown to strengthen children's self-confidence and motivation to maintain independent toileting behaviors. Positive recognition for successful toilet training serves as an effective form of reinforcement to increase a child's emotional security and autonomy. Recognizing and appreciating a child's toilet training successes encourages continued independent behaviors and positive emotional responses (Wijiati et al., 2025).

4. CONCLUSION

This study concluded that toilet training plays a crucial role in fostering self-confidence, independence, and emotional development in early childhood. Successful toilet training is not solely determined by a child's physical readiness, but is also strongly influenced by supportive parenting practices, positive emotional reinforcement, and collaborative efforts between parents and early childhood educators. Consistent and developmentally appropriate toilet training allows children to internalize self-care routines, develop emotional regulation, and build a positive sense of autonomy. Positive parental appreciation and support for children's toilet training achievements contribute to sustainable independent habits and emotional well-being. Viewing toilet training as an educational practice, rather than simply mastering physical skills, highlights its importance in early childhood character development. Therefore, early childhood education programs and families are encouraged to implement a child-centered, supportive, and collaborative toilet training approach to foster holistic child development.

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