



# The Use of Playing Methods to Improve Class Management and Form The Character of Early Childhood at RA Al-Qur'an Benteng Lubuk Sikaping

**Wetti**<sup>1</sup>, RA Al-Qur'an Benteng Pasaman, Indonesia

**Yadi Amarullah**<sup>2</sup>, MTs Persis 112 Bogor, Indonesia

**Watinih**<sup>3</sup>, UIN Syekh Ali Hasan Ahmad Addary Padangsidempuan, Indonesia

**Widodo**<sup>4</sup>, UIN Syekh Ali Hasan Ahmad Addary Padangsidempuan, Indonesia

**Widiastuti**<sup>5</sup>, UIN Syekh Ali Hasan Ahmad Addary Padangsidempuan, Indonesia

## ABSTRACT

Effective classroom management and character building of early childhood are important aspects in education, especially in Islamic educational institutions such as RA Al-Qur'an Benteng Lubuk Sikaping. This study aims to analyze the application of play methods in improving classroom management and forming the character of early childhood through the Classroom Action Research (CAR) approach. The study was conducted in two cycles, with stages of planning, implementation, observation, and reflection. Data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation, then analyzed descriptively qualitatively. The results of the study indicate that the application of play methods can increase children's involvement in learning activities, create a more conducive learning environment, and reduce disturbances in the classroom. In addition, this method also plays a role in the formation of positive character in children, such as discipline, responsibility, cooperation, and independence. By playing, children find it easier to understand moral and social values in everyday life. Therefore, the play method can be an effective strategy for educators in managing classes and instilling character values in early childhood. The implications of this study indicate the importance of innovation in learning strategies to improve the quality of early childhood education.

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## Corresponding Author:

**Wetti**

RA Al-Qur'an Benteng Pasaman, Indonesia

wetti3456@gmail.com

## Introduction

Early childhood education (PAUD) is the main foundation in forming children's character and basic skills before entering formal education. At this stage, children experience rapid development in terms of cognitive, social, and emotional aspects. Therefore, a learning method is needed that is not only fun, but also effective in helping children understand moral values and build their social skills. One method that has proven

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effective in the early childhood learning process is the play method. Through play, children can learn in a more natural way, develop creativity, and build their self-confidence.

However, in reality, many early childhood education institutions still experience challenges in managing classes and instilling positive character in children. Some teachers still use conventional learning methods that are less interesting for early childhood, so that classes often become uncondusive and difficult to control. In addition, the lack of understanding of the importance of play methods in learning makes many educators tend to focus more on academic aspects than character formation. This causes children to lack a fun and meaningful learning experience according to their developmental stages.

At RA Al-Qur'an Benteng Lubuk Sikaping, challenges in class management and character formation of children are also a major concern. Some children show undisciplined behavior, have difficulty working together with friends, and have limitations in understanding moral values. This situation requires innovative solutions that can not only improve classroom management but also instill positive character from an early age. One strategy that can be applied is the use of play methods in daily learning activities.

This study aims to analyze the application of play methods in improving classroom management and shaping the character of early childhood at RA Al-Qur'an Benteng Lubuk Sikaping. By using the Classroom Action Research (CAR) approach, this study is expected to provide practical solutions that can be applied by teachers in managing the classroom better. In addition, this study also aims to see the extent to which play methods can help children understand and apply character values such as discipline, responsibility, and cooperation.

The hope of this study is that play methods can be an effective alternative for educators in creating a conducive and enjoyable learning environment. With a better managed classroom atmosphere, children are expected to be more active in the learning process, have higher learning motivation, and be able to develop positive characters that are beneficial for their lives in the future. In addition, this study is also expected to be a reference for other educators in optimizing play-based learning methods.

The reality in the field shows that many educators still face obstacles in implementing play methods optimally. Some of them are caused by limited facilities, lack of training for teachers, and a mindset that still considers play as a secondary activity in education. Therefore, this study is also expected to provide new insights for educators about the importance of play methods and how to integrate them effectively into the learning process.

As part of the solution, this study proposes the implementation of play methods systematically through several stages. Teachers will be given training on educational play techniques, then the method is applied in the classroom with various variations of games that are adjusted to learning objectives. Evaluation is carried out through

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observation and reflection to see the impact of play methods on classroom management and the formation of children's character. With this systematic approach, it is hoped that play methods can truly provide optimal results for the development of early childhood.

Overall, this study seeks to make a real contribution to the world of early childhood education, especially in terms of classroom management and character formation. By proving the effectiveness of play methods through classroom action research, it is hoped that more educational institutions will implement this strategy in their learning activities. Ultimately, the application of play methods not only improves the quality of learning, but also helps create a generation that is characterful, creative, and ready to face future challenges.

## Methods

The data sources in this study consist of primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained from students of RA Al-Qur'an Benteng Lubuk Sikaping aged 4-6 years, totaling 20 children. This data was collected through direct observation of their play activities in the learning process, social interactions with peers, and responses to classroom management by teachers. In addition, the class teacher who is responsible for learning in the classroom is also the main source of data through interviews and reflections on the effectiveness of the applied play methods. The principal also serves as a source of data in providing perspectives on learning policies and evaluations of overall classroom management.

Secondary data in this study were obtained from various documents that support the analysis, such as the RA curriculum used, lesson implementation plans (RPP), teacher observation notes, and documentation in the form of photos and videos of children's play activities in the classroom. In addition, interviews with parents were conducted to understand changes in children's behavior at home after the implementation of the play method at school. With this combination of primary and secondary data, the study can provide a more comprehensive understanding of the effectiveness of the play method in improving classroom management and character formation of early childhood.

Data were analyzed using a qualitative descriptive method, consisting of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. Observation data collected from children's learning activities were categorized based on indicators of children's involvement in playing, level of discipline, cooperation, and responsibility in the classroom. Interviews with teachers and principals were analyzed to understand the effectiveness of the play method from the perspective of educators, while interviews with parents were used to identify the impact of learning on children's behavior outside of school.

After the data were collected, triangulation was carried out to verify the validity of the information by comparing the results of observations, interviews, and documentation. The analyzed data were then presented in the form of a narrative description that describes the development of classroom management and children's character after the

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implementation of the play method. In addition, reflection was carried out at the end of each research cycle to evaluate the impact of the play method and determine improvement strategies in the next cycle. With this approach, research can provide a deeper picture of how the play method can be applied effectively in early childhood learning.

## Result

The results of the study showed that the implementation of the play method at RA Al-Qur'an Benteng Lubuk Sikaping had a positive impact on classroom management and character formation of early childhood. Observations conducted during the study revealed an increase in children's active involvement in the learning process. Before the implementation of the play method, many children showed unfocused behavior, got bored easily, and often disturbed friends while studying. They tended to be less enthusiastic in participating in academic activities, especially if the teaching methods used were conventional such as lectures or Q&A. However, after the play method was implemented, the classroom atmosphere became more conducive, and children were more interested and active in participating in learning activities. They found it easier to understand the material because learning activities were carried out interactively and fun. In addition, indicators of children's character formation also showed significant development. Children began to show discipline, work together with friends, and better understand the rules in the classroom. For example, in role-playing, children learn about responsibility and empathy by playing various roles that teach social values, such as being a doctor, trader, or teacher. This game helps children develop an understanding of tasks and responsibilities in everyday life. In group play activities, children also learn to share, wait their turn, and respect the opinions of their friends. Teachers reported that after the play method was implemented, children were easier to direct in the learning process, because this method made them more motivated to follow the rules that had been agreed upon together.

In addition, the results of interviews with teachers and principals showed that the play method helped reduce conflict between students. Before the implementation of this method, children often fought over toys or argued because of differences of opinion in class. However, after playing became a major part of learning, children were better able to control their emotions, resolve differences peacefully, and work together in groups. Parents also observed changes in behavior at home, such as children becoming more independent in completing simple tasks, more patient in interacting with siblings, and more enthusiastic about sharing their learning experiences at school.

In addition to behavioral aspects, the play method also contributes to children's cognitive development. In educational games such as puzzles, number games, and nature exploration, children showed increased logical thinking skills, problem solving, and memory. Children recognized letters and numbers faster than before because they learned in a non-burdensome atmosphere. Thus, the play method not only improves classroom management and children's character, but also has a positive impact on their academic aspects.

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To ensure the validity of the research results, data validation was carried out through several techniques, namely source triangulation, method triangulation, and member checking. Source triangulation was carried out by comparing the results of teacher observations, interviews with the principal, and responses from parents regarding changes in children's behavior after the implementation of the play method. The similarity of the results from various sources shows that the play method has a consistent positive impact on classroom management and the formation of children's character. Teachers reported increased student involvement in learning activities, the principal confirmed that the learning environment was more conducive, and parents saw changes in children's behavior at home, such as increased independence and social awareness.

Triangulation of methods was carried out by combining direct observation, interviews, and documentation in the form of photos and videos of learning activities. Direct observation provides a real picture of how the play method is applied in the classroom and how children respond to it. Interviews with teachers and principals helped clarify the factors that support or hinder the effectiveness of this method, while visual documentation such as photos and videos were used to strengthen the findings from observations and interviews. From the results of this triangulation, it was found that there was a match between the data obtained through various methods, which further strengthened the validity of the research results.

In addition, member checking was carried out, where the research results were reconfirmed with teachers and principals to ensure that the analysis carried out was in accordance with real conditions in the field. Teachers were given the opportunity to review the research report and provide input if there were differences in perception or interpretation. The majority of teachers stated that the research results had accurately described the changes that occurred in the classroom after the implementation of the play method. The principal also stated that the findings of this study were in line with the institution's goal of creating a more interactive learning environment that is oriented towards the development of early childhood character.

To further strengthen data validation, a longitudinal analysis was also carried out by comparing children's development from the beginning to the end of the research cycle. Changes in behavior and classroom management are measured based on established indicators, such as the level of child involvement in learning, compliance with classroom rules, and the ability to work together with friends. The results of this analysis show a consistent upward trend from the first cycle to the second cycle, which further confirms the effectiveness of the play method in improving the quality of learning at RA Al-Qur'an Benteng Lubuk Sikaping.

## Discussion

In this study, data validation was carried out through several techniques, namely source triangulation, method triangulation, member checking, and longitudinal analysis. This

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validation aims to ensure that the data obtained truly reflects the real conditions in the field and avoid bias in the interpretation of research results.

Source triangulation was carried out by comparing information from various parties involved in the study, namely teachers, principals, and parents. The results of observations showed that after the implementation of the play method, children were more active in learning, more disciplined, and had better social skills. Teachers supported this finding by stating that the classroom atmosphere became more manageable, with fewer disturbances from children who were previously difficult to control. The principal also confirmed that there was an increase in the quality of learning and interaction in the classroom. Meanwhile, parents provided additional perspectives by reporting changes in children's behavior at home, such as increased independence, communication skills, and a more caring attitude towards others. The consistency of the results from various sources strengthens the belief that the play method does have a positive impact on classroom management and character formation of early childhood.

Method triangulation was carried out by combining three data collection techniques, namely direct observation, interviews, and documentation. Observation results showed real changes in children's behavior in class, where they were more enthusiastic about participating in learning activities. Interviews with teachers and principals revealed that the play method made it easier to manage the class, because children were easier to direct and enjoyed the learning process more. Meanwhile, documentation in the form of photos and videos supported the observation results by recording moments where children were actively involved in playing while learning. The alignment of data from these various methods provides more confidence in the validity of the research findings.

In addition, member checking was carried out by confirming the research results with teachers and principals. They were asked to review the research report and provide feedback on whether the results were in accordance with their experiences in the field. As a result, the majority of teachers stated that the research report accurately reflected the changes that occurred in the classroom after the play method was implemented. The principal also emphasized that these findings were in line with the institution's efforts to improve the quality of early childhood education.

In addition, a longitudinal analysis was carried out by comparing children's development from the beginning to the end of the research cycle. Data was collected and analyzed in stages to see changes that occurred over a certain period of time. The results showed a consistent increase in children's involvement in learning, compliance with rules, and the ability to work together with peers. Thus, this data validation further strengthens the belief that the play method is an effective strategy in managing classes and shaping the character of early childhood.

The results of the study showed that the use of play methods had a significant impact on two main aspects, namely classroom management and character formation of early childhood.

### 1. Class Management

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In terms of classroom management, observations showed that play methods helped create a more conducive learning atmosphere. Before this method was implemented, children tended to be difficult to control, often unfocused, and easily bored with conventional learning methods. However, after the play method was integrated into the learning process, children became more orderly, more focused on following instructions, and more enthusiastic about learning. Teachers reported that the number of disturbances during learning activities decreased significantly, because children were more involved in activities that were interesting and in accordance with their interests. In addition, the play method also helped improve social interaction in the classroom, so that conflicts between students were reduced.

## 2. Character formation

In terms of character formation, research shows that play methods can help instill positive values in children from an early age. For example, in role-playing, children learn about responsibility and empathy by playing various characters, such as doctors, teachers, or traders. Group games also teach children about the importance of cooperation, sharing, and following agreed rules. Teachers reported that children who were previously less disciplined now understand the classroom rules better and are willing to follow them. In addition, children who were previously less confident are now more active in communicating and expressing themselves through play.

Interviews with parents revealed that the positive impact of the play method was also seen in the home environment. Several parents reported that their children became more independent in carrying out simple tasks, such as tidying up toys, helping parents, and showing a more patient and tolerant attitude towards siblings. Parents also saw an improvement in their children's communication skills, especially in expressing feelings and conveying ideas in a more structured way. This shows that the play method not only has an impact in the school environment but also brings changes to children's daily lives.

Overall, the results of this study confirm that the play method is an effective approach in improving the quality of early childhood learning. By combining aspects of play in the learning process, teachers can create a more enjoyable and meaningful learning environment for children. In addition, this method also helps children develop positive characters that will be beneficial for their lives in the future. Therefore, the results of this study are expected to be a reference for other educational institutions in implementing the play method as the main strategy in early childhood learning.

## Conclusion

Based on the results of the study, it can be concluded that the implementation of the play method at RA Al-Qur'an Benteng Lubuk Sikaping has a significant impact on classroom management and character formation of early childhood. This study found that the play method helps increase children's involvement in learning, creates a more conducive classroom atmosphere, and fosters character values such as discipline,

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cooperation, and responsibility. Observations show that after the play method was implemented, children were more focused on learning, more easily directed by teachers, and more orderly in following class rules. Games designed in learning also strengthen children's social skills, such as the ability to share, take turns, and resolve conflicts in a more positive way.

Academically, the play method helps improve children's understanding of the subject matter because they learn through fun direct experiences. Children find it easier to recognize letters, numbers, shapes, and other basic concepts when they learn through interactive games. In addition, exploration-based games such as puzzles and role-playing games help develop children's critical thinking skills, problem solving, and creativity in facing challenges. Thus, the play method not only increases children's motivation to learn, but also supports their cognitive development optimally.

In the social aspect, the play method has a positive influence on the development of children's character. Children show improvements in communication skills, social interaction, and empathy towards peers. They are better able to work in groups, respect the opinions of others, and develop a sense of responsibility. This impact is not only seen at school, but also at home, where parents report changes in children's attitudes who become more independent, more patient, and easier to work with. Overall, this study confirms that the play method is an effective strategy for improving classroom management while shaping the character of early childhood. Therefore, the application of this method can be a reference for other educational institutions in creating a more interactive, fun, and meaningful learning environment for children.

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