



## Toilet Training Habit Formation Strategy for 4-5 Year Olds

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### ARTICLE INFO

#### Article history:

Received May 05, 2025

Revised May 15, 2025

Accepted May 25, 2025

Available online June 29, 2025

#### Kata Kunci:

Strategi, Pembiasaan, Toilet Training, Anak

#### Keywords:

Strategy, Habituation, Toilet Training, Child



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### ABSTRACT

Toilet training habits are one of the basic skills that need to be instilled from an early age to foster independence and responsibility in children's daily lives. This research aims to analyze the strategies for establishing toilet training habits applied in early childhood education institutions. The method used is qualitative research with a case study approach. Data collection techniques included observation, interviews with teachers, and documentation of children's habituation activities. Data from the interviews were analyzed through interview transcripts that were thematically examined, while observational data were analyzed based on observational instruments filled out systematically during observations from morning until the children returned home from school. The research results indicate that the toilet training strategy is implemented in a structured and consistent manner, starting from providing understanding of the manners of urination according to religious teachings, queue training, to instilling responsibility for children's personal belongings. Teachers actively play the role of behavior models through direct practice and routine verbal communication. Despite challenges such as environmental differences between home and school and a lack of understanding from parents, the implementation of the toilet training strategy remains effective thanks to collaboration among educators. This study concludes that the success of toilet training highly depends on repetitive habituation, active involvement of teachers, and synergy with parents. The results of this research contribute to the development of strategies for fostering independent behavior in early childhood based on religious values and an applicable pedagogical approach.

### INTRODUCTION

Early childhood is a crucial period in the process of child development which includes physical, cognitive, social, and emotional aspects. One of the basic skills that is important in supporting children's independence from an early age is the ability to manage the urge to defecate independently or known as toilet training. Toilet training is not only related to the aspect of cleanliness, but is also an important part of character building in children in the form of discipline, responsibility, and self-control. Unfortunately, the facts on the ground show that toilet training has not been a primary concern in many early childhood education units. Most teachers and institutions have not included this skill as part of the daily learning process. (Amin sutrisno, Ivanka yudistira, 2021)

Problems in implementing toilet training in early childhood education environments are inseparable from the lack of appropriate strategies and the absence of consistent habits. Many educators still consider this skill as the responsibility of parents at home. In fact, children spend most of their time at school, so teachers are important actors in the process of forming these positive habits. The gap between routines at home and school is also the main cause of the failure of toilet training in children. Lack of guidance, differences in toilet facilities, and lack of teacher knowledge about toilet training strategies that are appropriate to the stages of child development are challenges in this process. (Amalia & Irsyad, 2024)

Several previous studies have indeed discussed the physical and cognitive development of early childhood, but research on toilet training, especially in the context of Islamic educational institutions, is still limited. For example, research (Ardiansyah, Sarinah, dkk, 2022) which focuses more on children's emotional readiness and the role of teachers in assisting children in using the toilet. Meanwhile, Sisilia Indriasari's research emphasizes the importance of routines and positive reinforcement in forming children's habits. However, there is not much research that specifically describes strategies for toilet training habits based on an Islamic approach in formal institutional settings such as integrated Islamic kindergartens. This shows that there is still a gap in the literature that needs to be filled through more contextual and applicable research. (Sisilia Indriasari W, 2019)

As a solution to this gap, the researcher raised the Strategy for forming toilet training habits in TK IT Bunayya 7 as the focus of the research. This school combines toilet training habits with an Islamic values approach, such as instilling toilet manners according to the guidance of the Prophet Muhammad SAW, getting children used to being responsible for their personal belongings, and practicing patience through queuing when using the toilet. This strategy is also equipped with direct practice (modeling) by teachers and positive reinforcement techniques that are carried out routinely. This approach is expected to not only form physical independence, but also shape children's character in the context of Islamic education.

Based on this background, this study aims to describe the strategy for forming toilet training habits in TK IT Bunayya 7. The study focuses on the methods used by teachers in guiding children. In addition, the study also highlights the role of the school environment in supporting these habits. The results of this study are expected to provide theoretical contributions to the development of early childhood education. Practically, these findings can also be a reference for Islamic educational institutions in developing effective and applicable habituation strategies.

## **METHODS**

This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study type. This design was chosen to gain a deep understanding of the strategy for forming toilet training habits in children aged 4-5 years at IT Bunayya 7 Kindergarten. The presence of researchers in the research process is active and participatory, where researchers directly observe and are involved in the process of habituation activities in the field.

The subjects in this study were all students of group A of TK IT Al-Latif Bunayya 7 totaling 20 children. Of that number, the researcher observed all children as the main subjects in seeing the effectiveness of toilet training habits. In addition, the key informants in this study were two homeroom teachers and the principal who were also the resource persons in the in-depth interview process. The researcher was present directly at the location during the data collection process and conducted participatory observations.

Data collection techniques include direct observation using research instruments on toilet training activities, interview techniques using in-depth interview transcripts with teachers and principals, and documentation in the form of photos of activities and teacher diaries. The instruments used serve as a guide to systematically digging up data. (Sugiyono, 2019)

This research was conducted for one active month, starting from the initial observation stage, core data collection, to the analysis process. The research location was at TK IT Bunayya 7 located on Jl. Angkutan Dusun II Teratai, Laut Dendang Village, Percut Sei Tuan District, Deli Serdang Regency, North Sumatra.

## RESULTS

The results of the study showed that the strategy for forming toilet training habits in TK IT Bunayya 7 was carried out in a structured and religious manner. The process began by providing children with knowledge and etiquette for urinating according to the guidance of the Prophet Muhammad SAW, which is the basis of spiritual values in forming children's character from an early age. This strategy not only instills basic life skills but also forms a sense of responsibility and discipline in children. Teachers actively guide children to learn to queue, patiently wait their turn, and be responsible for their personal belongings such as headscarves, socks, and other clothes. This habituation becomes a concrete learning medium in training children's independence in everyday life.

Theoretically, the strategy implemented in TK IT Bunayya 7 is in line with Sigmund Freud's view that toilet training is part of the anal development stage that plays an important role in shaping children's self-control and character. T. Berry Brazelton also emphasized the importance of children's physical, emotional, and social readiness in undergoing toilet training. The use of modeling methods and repetition of habits through consistent habituation is in line with the theory of John B. Watson and Ivan Pavlov which states that behavior is formed through repeated stimulus and response processes.

This study provides an important contribution to the development of early childhood learning strategies, especially in the formation of toilet training habits. These findings confirm that the success of toilet training cannot be achieved only through physical routines, but must be carried out through a comprehensive approach, including habituation, role models, and active cooperation between schools and parents. Teachers not only function as educators, but also as role models that children imitate in forming positive habits. Therefore, an internal training system for teachers and a routine socialization program for parents are needed to create continuity of education between home and school.

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This study has limitations in terms of location and number of subjects, namely it was only conducted in one early childhood education institution, TK IT Bunayya 7, with a limited number of respondents. In addition, the main data sources came from observations, interviews, and documentation so that the results of this study cannot be generalized to all early childhood education contexts. For this reason, further research is recommended to conduct comparative studies on several PAUDs with different cultural backgrounds, environments, and educational approaches. Further research can also explore more deeply about parental involvement and its influence on the success of toilet training, as well as how cultural, social, and religiosity factors can strengthen the formation of children's habits as a whole.

There are 20 students in Al-Latif class, of which 17 students actively participate and pass the toilet training activity and there are 3 students who participate but not routinely but have not passed the toilet training activity, because 2 students have ADHD, and 1 student has a speech delay. Where these 3 students do not actively participate in toilet training activities, and their class teacher also does not force them to follow routinely but only occasionally when they want to do it themselves. Especially the 2 children with ADHD, they do not do toilet training perfectly, but they are used to following slowly, such as when they want to urinate they say so first, and their actions go to the toilet, but they are not yet able to take off their pants by themselves. That way the teacher must still appreciate their success and always provide positive reinforcement.

The strategy implemented involves modeling methods, where teachers directly become examples in practicing good manners in urinating, as well as lecture methods that are carried out routinely and communicatively. The toilet training process is carried out every day, starting at 08.00–09.15 WIB and continuing at 11.00 WIB with monitoring of children who want to urinate independently. The principal is the initiator of this program, which is then implemented collaboratively by the homeroom teachers. This shows that visionary leadership and strong coordination between teachers support the achievement of the goal of habituation.

From the interview results, it is known that in its implementation, teachers face various challenges. One of the most significant challenges is the difference in the toilet environment between home and school. At home, children are accustomed to using private toilets, while at school they have to share public toilets. This makes some children feel uncomfortable and reluctant to participate in toilet training activities. In addition, feelings of

shame because they are not used to being trained at home and the lack of parental understanding of the importance of toilet training are other obstacles that slow down the process of habituation at school. This finding shows the importance of parental involvement in the process of forming children's habits.

## DISCUSSION

The results of the study showed that the toilet training habituation strategy implemented in TK IT Bunayya 7 used a structured habituation approach, including three main stages: habituation through examples from teachers, habituation with direct guidance by teachers, and independent habituation by children. Based on observations and interviews, it was found that teachers consistently set an example by using the toilet according to procedure and giving clear verbal instructions to children, such as reminding them of toilet times and giving praise after the child successfully uses the toilet independently. This strategy is in line with the behaviorist theory put forward by B.F. Skinner, which emphasizes the importance of positive reinforcement in shaping behavior. In this context, reinforcement is given in the form of praise or small gifts that motivate children to repeat the expected behavior. (Klassen et al., 2016)

Brazelton also argues that toilet training is ideally done when the child is biologically and psychologically ready. If done too early or without the right approach, the child can experience anxiety or trauma in using the toilet. A positive, patient, and consistent approach is the key to creating a fun learning experience for children. The child's unpreparedness in accepting this process will actually cause developmental obstacles. In practice at school, teachers need to observe signs of the child's readiness before starting training. This is important to ensure the success of toilet training without pressure. (Khasyi'in, 2019)

In addition, habituation is also carried out through cooperation with parents in providing assistance at home, for example by maintaining consistency in toilet time and giving children light responsibilities such as flushing the toilet themselves. These results are in accordance with Vygotsky's view that child development occurs in a social context through interaction with more competent adults. In practice, teachers and parents become scaffolding for children in the process of learning to use the toilet independently. This is also reinforced by Jean Piaget's theory which states that in the preoperational stage (ages 2–7 years), children begin to understand symbols and form behavioral schemes, including understanding toilet training routines (Zahriani, 2021). Meanwhile, Sigmund Freud's psychosexual theory emphasizes that toilet training is at the anal stage, namely the age of 1.5 to 3 years. In this phase, children learn to control their desires and form self-control. Freud stated that toilet training methods that are too strict or too loose can affect the development of a child's personality. As a result, children can experience excessive perfectionism or difficulty regulating emotions later in life. This theory is the basis for psychological understanding in early childhood education practices. Therefore, the strategy for implementing toilet training must consider the psychological and emotional aspects of the child. (Ardiansyah et al., 2022)

Toilet training also helps children internalize hygiene habits, such as washing hands after going to the toilet and cleaning themselves properly. These aspects not only form short-term habits, but also lifelong healthy behaviors. (Mashar & Sari, 2024)

(Hamdanesti et al., 2023) emphasizes that toilet training introduces the concept of personal hygiene as part of the daily routine. Children are taught how to use the toilet properly, maintain personal hygiene, and wash their hands as a form of disease prevention. This process also has religious value as stated in Q.S. Al-Baqarah: 222:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُتَوَّيِّنَ وَيُحِبُّ الْمُتَطَهِّرِينَ

Artinya : “Sesungguhnya Allah menyukai orang-orang yang bertaubat dan menyukai orang-orang yang mensucikan diri” (Q.S. Al-Baqarah:222).

Previous research conducted by (Husna, 2019) with the title "Implementation of Toilet Training in Early Childhood (Descriptive Study at Al Ghoniya Islamic Kindergarten Malang)" focuses on educators' efforts in implementing toilet training through a descriptive approach. Meanwhile, this latest study not only describes the practice of implementing toilet training on one side (from the teacher's perspective only), but also analyzes more comprehensively how habit formation strategies are formed through synergy between the school environment, the role of teachers, and children's responses. This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study type that focuses on the habituation process that is formed gradually through direct mentoring strategies by teachers in daily routines. This study also emphasizes the character values instilled during the toilet training process, such as discipline, responsibility, and independence of children from an early age.

The implementation of toilet training in early childhood presents various challenges, especially because of the differences in readiness of each child. Children have different rates of physical and emotional development. Some children quickly understand the process, while others need more time. According to T. Berry Brazelton, the child's readiness must be considered so that the toilet training process does not cause stress. Lack of readiness can cause the child to refuse when asked to use the toilet. (Apriana et al., 2023)

Children's fear of the toilet can also be a barrier. Children may be afraid of the sound of the flush, the large shape of the toilet, or previous bad experiences. This causes them to refuse to use the toilet and become dependent on diapers again. According to Freud, negative experiences during toilet training can affect a child's emotional condition in the long term. Therefore, it is important to create a pleasant experience during training. (Darlin & Zaida, 2022)

Inconsistencies between parenting patterns at home and at school complicate the habit-forming process. Young children need routine and repetition to get used to it. John B. Watson emphasized the importance of consistency and positive reinforcement in forming toilet training habits. If at home the child is still wearing diapers, while at school they are taught to use the toilet, the child can be confused. Alignment of methods between home and school is key. (Noprasari, 2024)



Thus, toilet training challenges include the child's readiness, fear, and misalignment of methods. The role of educators and parents is very important in creating a supportive, patient, and consistent environment. An empathetic and positive approach can help children go through this process comfortably. Collaboration between schools and families is needed for training to run effectively. Toilet training is not only about technical matters, but also concerns the emotional development of children. (Khasyi'in, 2019)

Addressing the challenges of toilet training requires a patient, systematic, and child-readiness-based approach. One effective strategy is to recognize the child's physical and emotional signs of readiness, such as the ability to keep a diaper dry for several hours or showing interest in the toilet. Parents and teachers should not rush the process if the child is not ready. According to Brazelton, strategies that are responsive to the child's readiness reduce the risk of stress and trauma. This means that toilet training is not just a routine, but an individual process that requires close observation. With these strategies, the process becomes more comfortable for the child and the educator. (Rahayu et al., 2023)

Creating a positive experience during toilet training is another key strategy. A safe and pleasant environment, such as using a child-friendly toilet or toys as rewards, can help reduce a child's fears. Parents and teachers can also use role-playing methods to introduce the function of the toilet. According to Freud, positive experiences will form good emotional associations in a child's development. Verbal reinforcement such as praise when the child succeeds also helps increase motivation. By creating a pleasant atmosphere, the learning process becomes more effective and less frightening. (Tri Susanty et al., 2021)

Consistency between home and school is an important strategy in building toilet training habits. Parents and teachers must establish intensive communication about the approach used so that children do not experience confusion. According to Watson, consistent reinforcement of behavior in the child's two main environments will accelerate the process of forming habits. A concrete example is using the same toilet schedule at home and school. This conformity will make children feel safer and more confident in following the process. Good coordination will produce more optimal results in toilet training. (Umairi, 2024)

Strategy is a planned approach to achieve certain goals, including in the toilet training process. Michael Porter views strategy as a series of decisions to achieve excellence, while Mintzberg emphasizes flexibility and adaptation to change. The strategy implemented must be in accordance with the needs of the child and the environment. In the context of education, strategy is very important to form new habits systematically. The goal is to create optimal results through directed and consistent steps. (Nuraeni, 2014)

A consistent daily routine helps children recognize appropriate toileting patterns. Young children respond well to being introduced to regular toileting schedules, such as after meals or before bedtime. This helps them recognize their own body signals. A consistent toileting schedule also helps children avoid feeling confused. This strategy is effective in supporting the formation of stable, repetitive habits. (Sa'adah, 2022)

Positive reinforcement such as praise, star stickers, or small gifts encourage children to repeat good behavior. When children successfully use the toilet, positive responses build their self-confidence. This form of motivation helps children associate toilet training with a pleasant experience. Children are encouraged to be independent and consistent in maintaining personal hygiene. This strategy is very effective in forming long-term habits. (Masganti Sit, 2019)

Children also learn through observation and example. Through models, children see the correct process of using the toilet and feel more confident in imitating it. Teachers or parents can be role models or use educational dolls as aids. This demonstration strategy reduces fear and fosters courage. By watching and imitating, children understand the steps of toilet training more quickly. (Hidjanah, Dtakiyyatuddaaimah, 2024)

Patience is key in all strategies implemented. Not all children learn at the same pace, so pressure can actually hinder the process. If failure occurs, adults need to provide encouragement and understanding. Children will feel safe when they are appreciated and given the opportunity to learn without pressure. This emotional support is important in forming healthy habits. (Tri Susanty et al., 2021)

## CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the strategy for forming toilet training habits in TK IT Bunayya 7 is carried out in a planned, structured, and religious manner. This process begins with providing knowledge and etiquette for urinating according to the guidance of the Prophet Muhammad SAW, and is continued with the habituation of discipline, responsibility, and independence in children. The role of teachers as models is very important in this learning process, especially through modeling methods and lectures that are delivered routinely. Consistent implementation of toilet training activities every day is the key to forming positive habits in children. However, the success of this strategy is also influenced by parental involvement, environmental readiness, and a holistic approach between home and school. These findings reinforce the importance of synergy between teachers and parents in forming character and life skills in early childhood. Thus, toilet training is not just physical learning, but also an important part of ongoing character education. Educational institutions are expected to be able to develop strategies that are appropriate to children's needs.

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